AT: The Specter of Vietnam Kritik

[AT: The Specter of Vietnam Kritik 1](#_Toc266998616)

[Permutation Solves 2](#_Toc266998617)

[Military Bases => Colonialism 3](#_Toc266998618)

[Military Bases => Colonialism 4](#_Toc266998619)

[Military Bases => Colonialism 5](#_Toc266998620)

[Military Bases => War & Terrorism 6](#_Toc266998621)

[Military Bases => Relations Crises & Environmental Damage 7](#_Toc266998622)

[Reformism Good 8](#_Toc266998623)

[Reformism Good 9](#_Toc266998624)

[Reformism Good 10](#_Toc266998625)

[Reformism Good 11](#_Toc266998626)

[Reformism Good 12](#_Toc266998627)

[AT: Enlightenment Thought 13](#_Toc266998628)

[AT: Calculative Thought 14](#_Toc266998629)

[AT: Calculative Thought 15](#_Toc266998630)

Permutation Solves

**( ) The permutation solves – completely** rejecting humanism is self-marginalizing and disabling to effective coalitional politics.

J. Russell Perkin, Professor of English @ St. Mary’s, 1993, “Theorizing the Culture Wars,” Postmodern Culture, Volume 3, Number 3

My final criticism is that Spanos, by his attempt to put all humanists into the same category and to break totally with the tradition of humanism, isolates himself in a posture of ultraleftist purity that cuts him off from many potential political allies, especially when, as I will note in conclusion, his practical recommendations for the practical role of an adversarial intellectual seem similar to those of the liberal pluralists he attacks. He seems ill-informed about what goes on in the everyday work of the academy, for instance, in the field of composition studies. Spanos laments the "unwarranted neglect" (202) of the work of Paulo Freire, yet in reading composition and pedagogy journals over the last few years, I have noticed few thinkers who have been so consistently cited. Spanos refers several times to the fact that the discourse of the documents comprising The Pentagon Papers was linked to the kind of discourse that first-year composition courses produce (this was Richard Ohmann's argument); here again, however, Spanos is not up to date. For the last decade the field of composition studies has been the most vigorous site of the kind of oppositional practices The End of Education recommends. The academy, in short, is more diverse, more complex, more genuinely full of difference than Spanos allows, and it is precisely that difference that neoconservatives want to erase. By seeking to separate out only the pure (posthumanist) believers, Spanos seems to me to ensure his self-marginalization. For example, several times he includes pluralists like Wayne Booth and even Gerald Graff in lists of "humanists" that include William Bennett, Roger Kimball and Dinesh D'Souza. Of course, there is a polemical purpose to this, but it is one that is counterproductive. In fact, I would even question the validity of calling shoddy and often inaccurate journalists like Kimball and D'Souza with the title "humanist intellectuals." Henry Louis Gates's final chapter contains some cogent criticism of the kind of position which Spanos has taken. Gates argues that the "hard" left's opposition to liberalism is as mistaken as its opposition to conservatism, and refers to Cornel West's remarks about the field of critical legal studies, "If you don't build on liberalism, you build on air" (187). Building on air seems to me precisely what Spanos is recommending. Gates, on the other hand, criticizes "those massively totalizing theories that marginalize practical political action as a jejune indulgence" (192), and endorses a coalition of liberalism and the left.

( ) Critical realism as per the plan solves best.

Alastair J.H. Murray, Prof. of Politics @ Wales, Reconstructing Realism, 1997, 178-9

In Wendt’s constructivism, the argument appears in its most basic version, presenting an analysis of realist assumptions which associate it with a conservative account of human nature. In Linklater’s critical theory it moves a stage further, presenting an analysis of realist theory which locates it within a conservative discourse of state-centrism. In Ashley’s post-structuralism it reaches its highest form, presenting an analysis of realist strategy which locates it not merely within a conservative statist order, but, moreover, within an active conspiracy of silence to reproduce it. Finally, in Tickner’s feminism, realism becomes all three simultaneously and more besides, a vital player in a greater, overarching, masculine conspiracy against femininity. Realism thus appears, first, as a doctrine providing the grounds for a relentless pessimism, second, as a theory which provides an active justification for such pessimism, and, third, as a strategy which proactively seeks to enforce this pessimism, before it becomes the vital foundation underlying all such pessimism in international theory. Yet, an examination of the arguments put forward from each of these perspectives suggests not only that the effort to locate realism within a conservative, rationalist camp is untenable but, beyond this, that realism is able to provide reformist strategies which are superior to those that they can generate themselves. The progressive purpose which motivates the critique of realism in these perspectives ultimately generates a bias which undermines their own ability to generate effective strategies of transition. In constructivism, this bias appears in its most limited version, producing strategies so divorced from the obstacles presented by the current structure of international politics that they threaten to become counter-productive. In critical theory it moves a stage further, producing strategies so abstract that one is at a loss to determine what they actually imply in terms of the current structure of international politics. And, in post-modernism, it reaches its highest form producing an absence of such strategies altogether, until we reach the point at which we are left with nothing but critique. Against this failure, realism contains the potential to act as the basis of a more constructive approach to international relations, incorporating many of the strengths of reflectivism and yet avoiding its weaknesses. It appears, in the final analysis, as an opening within which some synthesis of rationalism and reflectivism, of conservatism and progressivism, might be built.

Military Bases => Colonialism

( ) US military presence abroad is the lynchpin of colonialism – the plan is a link turn.

The Monthly Review, “US Military Bases and Empire,” Volume 53, Number 10, March 2002, http://monthlyreview.org/0302editr.htm

U.S. global political, economic, and financial power thus require the periodic exercise of military power. The other advanced capitalist countries tied into this system have also become reliant on the United States as the main enforcer of the rules of the game. The positioning of U.S. military bases should therefore be judged not as a purely military phenomenon, but as a mapping out of the U.S.-dominated imperial sphere and of its spearheads within the periphery. What is clear at present and bears repeating is that such bases are now being acquired in areas where the United States had previously lost much of its “forward presence,” such as in South Asia, the Middle East/Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, or in regions where U.S. bases have not existed previously, such as the Balkans and Central Asia. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the last remaining superpower is presently on a course of imperial expansion, as a means of promoting its political and economic interests, and that the present war on terrorism, which is in many ways an indirect product of the projection of U.S. power, is now being used to justify the further projection of that power. For those who choose to oppose these developments there should be no illusion. The global expansion of military power on the part of the hegemonic state of world capitalism is an integral part of economic globalization. To say no to this form of military expansionism is to say no at the same time to capitalist globalization and imperialism and hence to capitalism itself.

( ) US Military bases are modern empire.

Hugh Gusterson, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, March 10, 2009, http://www.thebulletin.org/web-edition/columnists/hugh-gusterson/empire-of-bases

The old way of doing colonialism, practiced by the Europeans, was to take over entire countries and administer them. But this was clumsy. The United States has pioneered a leaner approach to global empire. As historian Chalmers Johnson says, "America's version of the colony is the military base." The United States, says Johnson, has an "empire of bases." Its 'empire of bases' gives the United States global reach, but the shape of this empire, insofar as it tilts toward Europe, is a bloated and anachronistic holdover from the Cold War." These bases do not come cheap. Excluding U.S. bases in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States spends about $102 billion a year to run its overseas bases, according to Miriam Pemberton of the Institute for Policy Studies. And in many cases you have to ask what purpose they serve. For example, the United States has 227 bases in Germany. Maybe this made sense during the Cold War, when Germany was split in two by the iron curtain and U.S. policy makers sought to persuade the Soviets that the American people would see an attack on Europe as an attack on itself. But in a new era when Germany is reunited and the United States is concerned about flashpoints of conflict in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, it makes as much sense for the Pentagon to hold onto 227 military bases in Germany as it would for the post office to maintain a fleet of horses and buggies. Drowning in red ink, the White House is desperate to cut unnecessary costs in the federal budget, and Massachusetts Cong. Barney Frank, a Democrat, has suggested that the Pentagon budget could be cut by 25 percent. Whether or not one thinks Frank's number is politically realistic, foreign bases are surely a lucrative target for the budget cutter's axe. In 2004 Donald Rumsfeld estimated that the United States could save $12 billion by closing 200 or so foreign bases. This would also be relatively cost-free politically since the locals who may have become economically dependent upon the bases are foreigners and cannot vote retribution in U.S. elections. Yet those foreign bases seem invisible as budget cutters squint at the Pentagon's $664 billion proposed budget. Take the March 1st editorial in the New York Times, "The Pentagon Meets the Real World." The Times's editorialists called for "political courage" from the White House in cutting the defense budget. Their suggestions? Cut the air force's F-22 fighter and the navy's DDG-1000 destroyer and scale back missile defense and the army's Future Combat System to save $10 billion plus a year. All good suggestions, but what about those foreign bases?

Military Bases => Colonialism

( ) US military presence serves as a conflict magnifier – failure to withdraw makes all of their militarization impacts worse and turns the kritik.

Joseph Gerson, US Foreign Military Bases & Military Colonialism, ZCommunications, December 5, 2003, http://www.zcommunications.org/u-s-foreign-military-bases-and-military-colonialism-by-joseph-gerson

In Europe, Assistant Secretary of State, Strobe Talbot and the U.S. military were busy re-dividing and containing that continent. They pressed for the inclusion of nearly all of Eastern Europe into an enlarged NATO to counter French and Germany ambitions. They renewed the 19th century game of playing Russia off against Western Europe. And, in the aftermath of the illegal "Kosovo" war against Serbia, the U.S. emerged with a massive new military base, Camp Bondsteel. Bondsteel was the first of what Washington hopes will become a new system of U.S. military bases contributing to the encirclement of Western Europe and Russia and, as we have seen this year, as jumping off points for U.S. wars in the Middle East.

( ) US military presence is part of the neoconservative agenda – withdrawing troops is a step away from American neocolonialism.

Joseph Gerson, US Foreign Military Bases & Military Colonialism, ZCommunications, December 5, 2003, http://www.zcommunications.org/u-s-foreign-military-bases-and-military-colonialism-by-joseph-gerson

Which brings us to the second catastrophic Bush presidency. As I explained at the ARENA workshop several days ago, the Bush Administration came to power with the commitment to impose what Vice President Cheney called, "the arrangement for the 21st century" to ensure that "the United States will continue to be the dominant political, economic, and military power in the world.": As they came to power, Cheney, Rumsfeld and their neo-con allies let it be known that they modeled themselves after Teddy Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge and Admiral Mahan, the men who - in the 1880s and 1890s envisioned the possibility of the U.S. replacing Britain as the world's dominant power, and then built the military needed to do it. Well before 9-11 and the publication of the unilateralist, first-strike, "National Strategy Statement" a year later, Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld were clear that they were committed to the so-called "Revolution in Military Affairs" - the near-complete integration of information technologies into U.S. war fighting doctrines; its air, land, sea and space based weapons systems; and the military infrastructure - including its global network of foreign military bases. As the pre-inaugural reports prepared under the direction of (now) Assistant Secretary of State Armitage and (now) Ambassador Khalilzad recommended, in the Asia Pacific this meant reaffirming the commitment to U.S. military bases and forward deployed troops across the region. Yes, some bases will be close in Rumsfeld's re-configuration, and some will be merged, but this will be done in the context of augmenting U.S. military power through "diversification"- moving their center of gravity of U.S. forward deployed troops and bases from Northeast Asia further south. The goal is to better encircle China, to fight the so-called "War on Terrorism" across Southeast Asia, and to more completely control the sea lanes over which Persian Gulf oil - the life of East Asia's economies - must travel. Guam will again become a hub for U.S. Asia-Pacific forces. So much for its people and natural resources! U.S. bases in Australia will be augmented. The Bush agenda is to build on the "Visiting Forces" and access agreements with the Philippines, and Singapore, and to open the way for U.S. forces in Thailand. In fact, as the Philippine press reports, U.S. military officials are privately exploring the possibility of reestablishing its bases in the former colony.

Military Bases => Colonialism

( ) US military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan perpetuates American colonialism.

Joseph Gerson, US Foreign Military Bases & Military Colonialism, ZCommunications, December 5, 2003, http://www.zcommunications.org/u-s-foreign-military-bases-and-military-colonialism-by-joseph-gerson

The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq served to begin the long-planned campaign of "re-configuration," and "diversification." The way was opened with the threat of Washington's intimidating new "for us or against us" doctrine. Dictatorships in Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kygristan, and Tajikistan were forced to surrender sovereignty and to invite the Pentagon to establish what will likely become permanent U.S. military bases. A year later, with Germany balking at joining in the invasion of Iraq and limiting the roles that U.S. bases there could play, Washington began "diversifying" its European military infrastructure . Threats to punish Germany by withdrawing all U.S. bases from Germany were made. More than a few Germans, I am sure, celebrated this prospect; it is something they have been working for for many years. . New bases were established in those bastions of democracy and human rights Romania and Bulgaria To the south, under cover of preparations for the war, Bush and company removed one of the precipitating causes of the 9-11 attacks: the vast majority of U.S. troops and bases in Saudi Arabia. Many Moslems experienced those bases as sullying Islam's holiest land. These troops, bases and functions were transferred to Qatar and Kuwait. Bases in Djibouti and Baharain were expanded. And now, in addition to plans for Iraq to serve the U.S. as a source of oil that can be used to leverage Saudi Arabia and OPEC, U.S. military planners look forward to Iraq serving as a bastion of U.S. military power in the Middle East for decades to come.

Military Bases => War & Terrorism

( ) US military presence causes economic dependence, violence against women, blowback, war, and global terrorism – only dismantling those bases solves.

Hugh Gusterson, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, March 10, 2009, http://www.thebulletin.org/web-edition/columnists/hugh-gusterson/empire-of-bases

American leaders speak of foreign bases as cementing alliances with foreign nations, largely through the trade and aid agreements that often accompany base leases. Yet, U.S. soldiers live in a sort of cocooned simulacrum of America in their bases, watching American TV, listening to American rap and heavy metal, and eating American fast food, so that the transplanted farm boys and street kids have little exposure to another way of life. Meanwhile, on the other side of the barbed-wire fence, local residents and businesses often become economically dependent on the soldiers and have a stake in their staying. These bases can become flashpoints for conflict. Military bases invariably discharge toxic waste into local ecosystems, as in Guam where military bases have led to no fewer than 19 superfund sites. Such contamination generates resentment and sometimes, as in Vieques in the 1990s, full-blown social movements against the bases. The United States used Vieques for live-bombing practice 180 days a year, and by the time the United States withdrew in 2003, the landscape was littered with exploded and unexploded ordinance, depleted uranium rounds, heavy metals, oil, lubricants, solvents, and acids. According to local activists, the cancer rate on Vieques was 30 percent higher than on the rest of Puerto Rico. It is also inevitable that, from time to time, U.S. soldiers--often drunk--commit crimes. The resentment these crimes cause is only exacerbated by the U.S. government's frequent insistence that such crimes not be prosecuted in local courts. In 2002, two U.S. soldiers killed two teenage girls in Korea as they walked to a birthday party. Korean campaigners claim this was one of 52,000 crimes committed by U.S. soldiers in Korea between 1967 and 2002. The two U.S. soldiers were immediately repatriated to the United States so they could escape prosecution in Korea. In 1998, a marine pilot sliced through the cable of a ski gondola in Italy, killing 20 people, but U.S. officials slapped him on the wrist and refused to allow Italian authorities to try him. These and other similar incidents injured U.S. relations with important allies. The 9/11 attacks are arguably the most spectacular example of the kind of blowback that can be generated from local resentment against U.S. bases. In the 1990s, the presence of U.S. military bases near the holiest sites of Sunni Islam in Saudi Arabia angered Osama bin Laden and provided Al Qaeda with a potent recruitment tool. The United States wisely closed its largest bases in Saudi Arabia, but it opened additional bases in Iraq and Afghanistan that are rapidly becoming new sources of friction in the relationship between the United States and the peoples of the Middle East.

Military Bases => Relations Crises & Environmental Damage

( ) US military presence abroad causes relations crises, environmental damage, budget crises and empire – only the affirmative steps away from militarism.

Hugh Gusterson, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, March 10, 2009, http://www.thebulletin.org/web-edition/columnists/hugh-gusterson/empire-of-bases

Its "empire of bases" gives the United States global reach, but the shape of this empire, insofar as it tilts toward Europe, is a bloated and anachronistic holdover from the Cold War. Many of these bases are a luxury the United States can no longer afford at a time of record budget deficits. Moreover, U.S. foreign bases have a double edge: they project American power across the globe, but they also inflame U.S. foreign relations, generating resentment against the prostitution, environmental damage, petty crime, and everyday ethnocentrism that are their inevitable corollaries. Such resentments have recently forced the closure of U.S. bases in Ecuador, Puerto Rico, and Kyrgyzstan, and if past is prologue, more movements against U.S. bases can be expected in the future. Over the next 50 years, I believe we will witness the emergence of a new international norm according to which foreign military bases will be as indefensible as the colonial occupation of another country has become during the last 50 years.

Reformism Good

( ) Refusing partial military withdrawal is worse – only reformism solves.

Dr. Richard Barbrook, Hypermedia Research Centre @ U. of Westminster, June 5, 1997, Amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-1-9706/msg00034.html

I thought that this position is clear from my remarks about the ultra-left posturing of the ‘zero-work’ demand. In Europe, we have real social problems of deprivation and poverty which, in part, can only be solved by state action. This does not make me a statist, but rather anti-anti-statist. By opposing such intervention because they are carried out by the state anarchists are tacitly lining up with the neo-liberals. Even worse, refusing even to vote for the left, they acquiese to rule by neo-liberal parties. I deeply admire direct action movements. I was a radio pirate and we provide server space for anti-roads and environmental movements. However, this doesn’t mean that I support political abstentionism or, even worse, the mystical nonsense produced by Hakim Bey. It is great for artists and others to adopt a marginality as a life style choice, but most of the people who are economically and socially marginalised were never given any choice. They are excluded from society as a result of deliberate policies of deregulation, privatisation and welfare cutbacks carried out by neo-liberal governments. During the ‘70s. I was a pro-situ punk rocker until Thatcher got elected. Then we learnt the hard way that voting did change things and lots of people suffered if state power was withdrawn from certain areas of our life, such as welfare and employment. Anarchism can be a fun artistic pose. However, human suffering is not.

( ) Proposing reform doesn’t legitimize the state – there’s no link.

Mervyn Frost, Professor @ U. of Kent, 1996, *Ethics in International Relations*, 90

A first objection which seems inherent in Donelan’s approach is that utilizing the modern state domain of discourse in effect sanctifies the state: it assumes that people will always live in states and that it is not possible within such a language to consider alternatives to the system. This objection is not well founded, by having recourse to the ordinary language of international relations I am not thereby committed to argue that the state system as it exists is the best mode of human political organization or that people ought always to live in states as we know them. As I have said, my argument is that whatever proposals for piecemeal or large-scale reform of the state system are made, they must of necessity be made in the language of the modern state. Whatever proposals are made, whether in justification or in criticism of the state system, will have to make use of concepts which are at present part and parcel of the theory of states. Thus,for example. any proposal for a new global institutional arrangement superseding the state system will itself have to be justified, and that justification will have to include within it reference to a new and good form of individual citizenship, reference to a new legislative machinery equipped with satisfactory checks and balances, reference to satisfactory law enforcement procedures, reference to a satisfactory arrangement for distributing the goods produced in the world, and so on. All of these notions are notions which have been developed and finely honed within the theory of the modern state. It is not possible to imagine a justification of a new world order succeeding which used, for example, feudal, or traditional/tribal, discourse. More generally there is no worldwide language of political morality which is not completely shot through with state-related notions such as citizenship, rights under law, representative government and so on.

Reformism Good

( ) The aim of Enlightenment-inspired liberal politics should be seized back from conservative interests on behalf of the disenfranchised – concrete political action is vital to reclaiming institutions and solving their impacts.

Stephen Eric Bronner, Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University, 2004, *Reclaiming the Enlightenment: Toward a Politics of Radical Engagement*, xii-xiii

To be sure: universalism can be found in western imperialist propaganda and notions like “the sun never sets on the British Empire.” In reality, how­ever, such universalism is not universal at all: it lacks reciprocity, an open dis­course, and a concern with protecting the individual from the arbitrary exer­cise of power: That is what differentiates Enlightenment universalism from its imitators, provides it with a self-critical quality, and enables it to contest Euro-centrism and the prevalent belief in a “clash of civilizations.” Let there be no mistake: it has no use for misguided tolerance. Refusals to entertain “western” criticisms can easily be used to insulate repressive non-western tra­ditions from criticism if only because non-western elites can also be authori­tarian. Enlightenment political theory was never willing to justify tradition simply because it exists. Its best representatives argued for tolerance over prejudice, innovation over stasis, the rights of the minority over the enthusi­asms of the majority, and the moral autonomy of the individual over the re­vealed claims of religious authority. The radical moment of the Enlighten­ment lies in its universal assault on privilege and prejudice. Its reflexive and critical character enables its most distinctive political theory to call for constraining the arbitrary exercise of institutional power and expand the possi­bilities of individual experience in both western and nonwestern societies. Enlightenment intellectuals provide an analogy for what contemporary intellectuals should strive to accomplish and a model of how to combat op­pressive institutions, unjustifiable privileges, and anachronistic cultural practices. Viewing their political theory as the source of bureaucratic con­formism or totalitarianism is a profound mistake. Their insistence upon demonstrating a plausible—not a perfect, but a plausible—connection be­tween means and ends with respect to political action and social change was not merely to be directed against the ruling elites but against those who would resist them. They anticipated how the collapse of this connection would historically work against the interests of the lowly and the insulted. They sensed that it would turn individuals into a means for political ends and let them be seen as nothing more than economic “costs of production.” Resisting this state of affairs is the most radical purpose of the two most important political products of the Enlightenment: liberalism and socialism. Both inspired progressive mass movements and, for good reasons, inspire them still. The point of their intersection has become the intellectual point of departure for any genuinely progressive politics. Identification with the disenfranchised and the exploited from a cosmopolitan standpoint is the necessary implication of this position. Such is the legacy of the Enlighten­ment. Making good on it, however, calls for privileging the satisfactions and benefits of political interpretation over the esoteric and metaphysical vagaries of fashionable pseudo-political philosophical currents. If philosophy really has been an expression of what Novalis termed “transcendental home­lessness,” which I doubt, then perhaps it is time to confront the philosoph­ical with the political and, finally, for the prodigal to return home.

Reformism Good

Reformismcan be used to undermine systems of power

Chris Dixon, Activist and founding member of Direct Action Network, 2005, “Reflections on Privilege, Reformism, and Activism,” www.geocities.com/kk\_abacus/ioaa/dixon2.html, accessed 3-6-05

Evidently sasha doesn't grasp my argument in "Finding Hope." Or else he disagrees. It's difficult to tell because, while skillfully sidestepping engagement with my discussion of privilege, he also sidesteps the main thrust of my essay: rethinking radicalism, particularly in the context of privilege. As I wrote, "we have to move beyond the myopic view--often endemic among anarchists--that the most 'important' activism only or mainly happens in the streets, enmeshed in police confrontations." In other words, spheres of traditional 'radical action' are limited and limiting. And though I don't believe that sasha fundamentally disagrees with this criticism, he refuses to accept its broader consequences. For instance, where I question the bounds of 'radicalism' with examples of struggles like opposing prison construction and establishing community and cultural centers, he conclusively points to "a set of demands and goals of which none suggest any serious critique of capitalism and the state in their totality." There is much more to the "totality" that we all confront than capitalism and the state. That's unequivocal. Furthermore, a "totality" has an undeniable physical presence, and people do in fact contest and resist it every day through a variety of struggles using a variety of means--not all containing the "serious critique" necessary to satisfy sasha. J. Kellstadt nicely observes this, noting that an 'activist' perspective (not unlike sasha's) overlooks a whole layer of more "everyday" forms of resistance - from slacking off, absenteeism, and sabotage, to shopfloor "counter-planning" and other forms of autonomous and "unofficial" organizing - which conventional activists and leftists (including most anarchists) have a bad track record of acknowledging. And this still leaves out all of those modes of struggle which take place beyond the shopfloor, such as various forms of cultural and sexual revolution. Unfortunately, sasha doesn't deign to discuss these all-too-pedestrian realities, many of which potentially embrace the very anarchist ethics he touts. They certainly have bearing on the lives of many folks and speak to a breadth of social struggle, but they apparently don't constitute a sufficient "critique." Even if sasha were to acknowledge their importance, my sense is that he would erect a rationalized theoretical division between Kellstadt's "everyday forms of resistance" and 'reformism.' No doubt, he would use a rhetorical sleight of hand on par with the "simple fact of language that those who want to reform the present system are called reformists." A seemingly irrefutable, self-apparent statement, this actually glosses over legitimate questions: Are 'reformists' so easily discernable and cleanly categorized? Are all 'reforms' equal? Can they be part of a long-term revolutionary strategy? So let's talk plainly about reformism. No matter how much some might wish otherwise, it simply isn't a cut-and-dry issue. And while it actually deserves a book-length examination, here I'll sketch some general considerations. Principally, I ask, assuming that we share the goal of dismantling systems of power and restructuring our entire society in nonhierarchical ways, what role does reform play? Must we eschew it, unconditionally embrace it, or is there another approach? sasha steadfastly represents one rather limited 'radical' view. To bolster his critique of 'reformism,' for instance, he critically cites one of the examples in my essay: demanding authentic public oversight of police. "[This] might be a small step for social change in some general sense," he argues, "but ultimately it is a step backwards as it strengthens the legitimacy of the police and of imposed decision." I respect the intent of this critique; it makes sense if one is privileged enough to engage with the police on terms of one's own choosing. Yet in real life, it's both simplistic and insulated. Look at it this way: accepting sasha's argument, are we to wait until the coming insurrectionary upheaval before enjoying an end to police brutality? More specifically, are African-American men to patiently endure the continued targeting of "driving while Black"? Should they hold off their demands for police accountability so as to avoid strengthening "the legitimacy of the police and of imposed decision"? And if they don't, are they 'reformists'? Many folks who experience daily police occupation understand that ending the "imposed decision" (often epitomized by police) will require radical change, and they work toward it. At the same time, they demand authentic public oversight of police forces. The two don't have to be mutually exclusive. I'll even suggest that they can be complementary, especially if we acknowledge the legacies of white supremacy and class stratification embedded in policing. Ultimately, we need a lucid conception of social change that articulates this kind of complementarity. That is, we need revolutionary strategy that links diverse, everyday struggles and demands to long-term radical objectives, without sacrificing either. Of course, this isn't to say that every so-called 'progressive' ballot initiative or organizing campaign is necessarily radical or strategic. Reforms are not all created equal. But some can fundamentally shake systems of power, leading to enlarged gains and greater space for further advances. Andre Gorz, in his seminal book Strategy for Labor, refers to these as "non-reformist" or "structural" reforms. He contends, "a struggle for non-reformist reforms--for anti-capitalist reforms--is one which does not base its validity and its right to exist on capitalist needs, criteria, and rationales. A non-reformist reform is determined not in terms of what can be, but what should be." Look to history for <CONTINUED>

Reformism Good

<CONTINUED>

examples: the end of slavery, the eight-hour workday, desegregation. All were born from long, hard

struggles, and none were endpoints. Yet they all struck at the foundations of power (in these cases, the state, white supremacy, and capitalism), and in the process, they created new prospects for revolutionary change. Now consider contemporary struggles: amnesty for undocumented immigrants, socialized health care, expansive environmental protections, indigenous sovereignty. These and many more are arguably non-reformist reforms as well. None will single-handedly dismantle capitalism or other systems of power, but each has the potential to escalate struggles and sharpen social contradictions. And we shouldn't misinterpret these efforts as simply meliorative incrementalism, making 'adjustments' to a fundamentally flawed system. Certainly that tendency exists, but there are plenty of other folks working very consciously within a far more radical strategy, pushing for a qualitative shift in struggle. "To fight for alternative solutions," Gorz writes, "and for structural reforms (that is to say, for intermediate objectives) is not to fight for improvements in the capitalist system; it is rather to break it up, to restrict it, to create counter-powers which, instead of creating a new equilibrium, undermine its very foundations." Thankfully, this is one approach among a diverse array of strategies, all of which encompass a breadth of struggles and movements. Altogether, they give me hope.

Reformism Good

Relying on individual-level strategies fails and guarantees global politics is dominated by violence

George Monbiot, journalist, academic, and political and environmental activist, 2004, Manifesto for a New World Order, p. 11-13

The quest for global solutions is difficult and divisive. Some members of this movement are deeply suspicious of all institutional power at the global level, fearing that it could never be held to account by the world’s people. Others are concerned that a single set of universal prescriptions would threaten the diversity of dissent. A smaller faction has argued that all political programmes are oppressive: our task should not be to replace one form of power with another, but to replace all power with a magical essence called ‘anti-power’. But most of the members of this movement are coming to recognize that if we propose solutions which can be effected only at the local or the national level, we remove ourselves from any meaningful role in solving precisely those problems which most concern us. Issues such as cli­mate change, international debt, nuclear proliferation, war, peace and the balance of trade between nations can be addressed only globally or internationally. Without global measures and global institutions, it is impossible to see how we might distribute wealth from rich nations to poor ones, tax the mobile rich and their even more mobile money, control the shipment of toxic waste, sustain the ban on landmines, prevent the use of nuclear weapons, broker peace between nations or prevent powerful states from forcing weaker ones to trade on their terms. If we were to work only at the local level, we would leave these, the most critical of issues, for other people to tackle. Global governance will take place whether we participate in it or not. Indeed, it must take place if the issues which concern us are not to be resolved by the brute force of the powerful. That the international institutions have been designed or captured by the dictatorship of vested interests is not an argument against the existence of international institutions, but a reason for overthrowing them and re­placing them with our own. It is an argument for a global political system which holds power to account. In the absence of an effective global politics, moreover, local solutions will always be undermined by communities of interest which do not share our vision. We might, for example, manage to persuade the people of the street in which we live to give up their cars in the hope of preventing climate change, but unless everyone, in all communities, either shares our politics or is bound by the same rules, we simply open new road space into which the neighbouring communities can expand. We might declare our neighbour­hood nuclear-free, but unless we are simultaneously work­ing, at the international level, for the abandonment of nuclear weapons, we can do nothing to prevent ourselves and everyone else from being threatened by people who are not as nice as we are. We would deprive ourselves, in other words, of the power of restraint. By first rebuilding the global politics, we establish the political space in which our local alternatives can flourish. If, by contrast, we were to leave the governance of the necessary global institutions to others, then those institutions will pick off our local, even our national, solutions one by one. There is little point in devising an alternative economic policy for your nation, as Luis Inacio ‘Lula’ da Silva, now president of Brazil, once advocated, if the International Monetary Fund and the financial speculators have not first been overthrown. There is little point in fighting to protect a coral reef from local pollution, if nothing has been done to prevent climate change from destroying the conditions it requires for its survival.

AT: Enlightenment Thought

( ) Enlightenment thought is inescapable – and giving up on it guarantees extinction.

Tony Davies, Prof. of English @ Birmingham, 1997, Humanism, 130-132

So there will not after all be, nor indeed could there be, any tidy definitions. The several humanisms – the civic humanism of the quattrocento Italian city-states, the Protestant humanism of sixteenth century northern Europe, the rationalistic humanism that attended at the revolutions of enlightened modernity, and the romantic and positivistic humanisms through which the European bourgeoisies established their hegemony over it, the revolutionary humanism that shook the world and the liberal humanism that sought to tame it, the humanism of the Nazis and the humanism of their victims and opponents, the antihumanist humanism of Heidegger and the humanist antihumanism of Foucault and Althusser – are not reducible to one, or even to a single line or pattern. Each has its distinctive historical curve, its particular discursive poetics, its own problematic scansion of the human. Each seeks, as all discourses must, to impose its own answer to the question of ‘which is to be master’. Meanwhile, the problem of humanism remains, for the present, an inescapable horizon within which all attempts to think about the ways in which human being have, do, might live together in and on the world are contained. Not that the actual humanisms described here necessarily provide a model, or even a useful history, least of all for those very numerous people, and peoples, for whom they have been alien and oppressive. Some, at least, offer a grim warning. Certainly it should no longer be possible to formulate phrases like ‘the destiny of man’ or ‘the triumph of human reason’ without an instant consciousness of the folly and brutality they drag behind them. All humanisms, until now, have been imperial. They speak of the human in the accents and the interests of a class, a sex, a ‘race’. Their embrace suffocates those whom it does not ignore. The first humanists scripted the tyranny of Borgias, Medicis and Tudors. Later humanisms dreamed of freedom and celebrated Frederick II, Bonaparte, Bismarck, Stalin. The liberators of colonial America, like the Greek and Roman thinkers they emulated, owned slaves. At various times, not excluding the present, the circuit of the human has excluded women, those who do not speak Greek or Latin or English, those whose complexions are not pink, children, Jews. It is almost impossible to think of a crime that has not been committed in the name of humanity. At the same time, though it is clear that the master narrative of transcendental Man has outlasted its usefulness, it would be unwise simply to abandon the ground occupied by the historical humanisms. For one thing, some variety of humanism remains, on many occasions, the only available alternative to bigotry and persecution. The freedom to speak and write, to organize and campaign in defence of individual or collective interests, to protest and disobey: all these, and the prospect of a world in which they will be secured, can only be articulated in humanist terms. It is true that the Baconian ‘Knowledge of Causes, and Secrett Motions of Things’, harnessed to an overweening rationality and an unbridled technological will to power, has enlarged the bounds of human empire to the point of endangering the survival of the violated planet on which we live. But how, if not by mobilizing collective resources of human understanding and responsibility of ‘enlightened self-interest’ even, can that danger be turned aside?

AT: Calculative Thought

( ) Calculative thought is inevitable – complete rejection ensures political inaction.

Stephen Eric Bronner, Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University, 2004, *Reclaiming the Enlightenment: Toward a Politics of Radical Engagement*, 3-5

“Instrumental reason” was seen as merging with what Marx termed the “commodity form” underpinning capitalist social relations. Everything thereby became subject to the calculation of costs and benefits. Even art and aesthetic tastes would become defined by a “culture industry”—intent only upon maximizing profits by seeking the lowest common denominator for its products. Instrumental rationality was thus seen as stripping the supposed­ly “autonomous” individual, envisioned by the philosophes, of both the means and the will to resist manipulation by totalitarian movements. En­lightenment now received two connotations: its historical epoch was grounded in an anthropological understanding of civilization that, from the first, projected the opposite of progress. This gave the book its power: Horkheimer and Adorno offered not simply the critique of some prior his­torical moment in time, but of all human development. This made it possi­ble to identify enlightenment not with progress, as the philistine bourgeois might like to believe, but rather—unwittingly—with barbarism, Auschwitz, and what is still often called “the totally administered society.” Such is the picture painted by Dialectic of Enlightenment.. But it should not be forgotten that its authors were concerned with criticizing enlightenment generally, and the historical epoch known as the Enlightenment in particular, from the standpoint of enlightenment itself: thus the title of the work. Their masterpiece was actually “intended to prepare the way for a positive notion of enlightenment, which will release it from entanglement in blind domina­tion.”4 Later, in fact, Horkheimer and Adorno even talked about writing a se­quel that would have carried a title like “Rescuing the Enlightenment” (Ret­tung der Aufklarung).5 This reclamation project was never completed, and much time has been spent speculating about why it wasn’t. The reason, I be­lieve, is that the logic of their argument ultimately left them with little positive to say. Viewing instrumental rationality as equivalent with the rationality of domination, and this rationality with an increasingly seamless bureaucratic order, no room existed any longer for a concrete or effective political form of opposition: Horkheimer would thus ultimately embrace a quasi-religious “yearning for the totally other” while Adorno became interested in a form of aesthetic resistance grounded in “negative dialectics.” Their great work initiated a radical change in critical theory, but its metaphysical subjectivism sur­rendered any systematic concern with social movements and political insti­tutions. Neither of them ever genuinely appreciated the democratic inheritance of the Enlightenment and thus, not only did they render critique independent of its philosophical foundations,6 but also of any practical inter­est it might serve. Horkheimer and Adorno never really grasped that, in contrast to the sys­tem builder, the blinkered empiricist, or the fanatic, the philosophe always evidenced a “greater interest in the things of this world, a greater confidence in man and his works and his reason, the growing appetite of curiosity and the growing restlessness of the unsatisfied mind—all these things form less a doctrine than a spirit.”7 Just as Montesquieu believed it was the spirit of the laws, rather than any system of laws, that manifested the commitment to jus­tice, the spirit of Enlightenment projected the radical quality of that commit­ment and a critique of the historical limitations with which even its best thinkers are always tainted. Empiricists may deny the existence of a “spirit of the times.” Nevertheless, historical epochs can generate an ethos, an existen­tial stance toward reality, or what might even be termed a “project” uniting the diverse participants in a broader intellectual trend or movement. The Enlightenment evidenced such an ethos and a peculiar stance toward reality with respect toward its transformation. Making sense of this, howev­er, is impossible without recognizing what became a general stylistic com­mitment to clarity, communicability, and what rhetoricians term “plain speech.” For their parts, however, Horkheimer and Adorno believed that re­sistance against the incursions of the culture industry justified the extreme­ly difficult, if not often opaque, writing style for which they would become famous—or, better, infamous. Their esoteric and academic style is a far cry from that of Enlightenment intellectuals who debated first principles in pub­lic, who introduced freelance writing, who employed satire and wit to demol­ish puffery and dogma, and who were preoccupied with reaching a general audience of educated readers: Lessing put the matter in the most radical form in what became a popular saying—”Write just as you speak and it will be beautiful”—while, in a letter written to D’Alembert in April of 1766, Voltaire noted that “Twenty folio volumes will never make a revolution: it’s the small, portable books at thirty sous that are dangerous. If the Gospel had cost 1,200 sesterces, the Christian religion would never have been established.”9 Appropriating the Enlightenment for modernity calls for reconnecting with the vernacular. This does not imply some endorsement of anti-intellectualism. Debates in highly specialized fields, especially those of the natural sciences, obviously demand expertise and insisting that intellectuals must “reach the masses” has always been a questionable strategy. The sub­ject under discussion should define the language in which it is discussed and the terms employed are valid insofar as they illuminate what cannot be said in a simpler way. Horkheimer and Adorno, however, saw the matter differ­ently. They feared being integrated by the culture industry, avoided political engagement, and turned freedom into the metaphysical-aesthetic preserve of the connoisseur. They became increasingly incapable of appreciating the egalitarian impulses generated by the Enlightenment and the ability of its advocates—Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Thomas Paine, and Rousseau—to argue clearly and with a political purpose.1’ Thus, whether or not their “critical” enterprise was “dialectically” in keeping with the impulses of the past, its assumptions prevented them from articulating anything positive for the present or the future.

AT: Calculative Thought

( ) Calculative thought is inevitable – only the plan calculates for the Other.

Jacques Derrida, Acts of Religion, 255-57, 2002

This excess of justice over law and calculation, this overflowing of the unpre­sentable over the determinable, cannot and should not [ne peut pas et ne doit pas] serve as an alibi for staying out of juridico-political battles, within an institution or a state, between institutions or states. Abandoned to itself, the incalculable and giv­ing [donatrice] idea of justice is always very close to the bad, even to the worst for it can always be reappropriated by the most perverse calculation. It is always possible, and this is part of the madness of which we were speaking. An absolute assurance against this risk can only saturate or suture the opening of the call to justice, a call that is always wounded. But incalculable justice commands calculation. And first of all, closest to what one associates with justice, namely, law, the juridical field that one cannot isolate within sure frontiers, but also in all the fields from which one cannot separate it, which intervene in it and are no longer simply fields: the ethical, the political, the economical, the psycho-sociological, the philosophical, the liter­ary, etc. Not only must one [il faut] calculate, negotiate the relation between the calculable and the incalculable, and negotiate without a rule that would not have to be reinvented there where we are “thrown’ there where we find ourselves; but one must [il faut] do so and take it as far as possible, beyond the place we find our­selves and beyond the already identifiable zones of morality, politics, or law, beyond the distinctions between national and international, public and private, and so on. The order of this il faut does not properly belong either to justice or to law. It only belongs to either realm by exceeding each one in the direction of the other—which means that, in their very heterogeneity, these two orders are undis­sociable: de facto and de jure [en fait et en droit]. Politicization, for example, is interminable even if it cannot and should not ever be total. To keep this from being a truism, or a triviality, one must recognize in it the following consequence: each advance in politicization obliges one to reconsider, and so to reinterpret the very foundations of law such as they had previously been calculated or delimited. This was true for example in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, in the abolition of slavery, in all the emancipatory battles that remain and will have to remain in progress, everywhere in the world, for men and for women. Nothing seems to me less outdated than the classical emancipatory ideal. One cannot attempt to disqualify it today, whether crudely or with sophistication, without at least some thoughtlessness and without forming the worst complicities. It is true that it is also necessary to re-elaborate, without renouncing, the concept of eman­cipation, enfranchisement, or liberation while taking into account the strange structures we have been describing. But beyond these identified territories of juridico-politicization on the grand geo-political scale, beyond all self-serving misappropriations and hijackings, beyond all determined and particular reappropria­tions of international law, other areas must constantly open up that can at first resemble secondary or marginal areas. This marginality also signifies that a vio­lence, even a terrorism and other forms of hostage taking are at work. The exam­ples closest to us would be found in the area of laws [lois] on the teaching and practice of languages, the legitimization of canons, the military use of scientific research, abortion, euthanasia, problems of organ transplant, extra-uterine con­ception, bio-engineering, medical experimentation, the “social treatment” of AIDS, the macro- or micro-politics of drugs, homelessness, and so on, without forgetting; of course, the treatment of what one calls animal life, the immense question of so-called animality. On this last problem, the Benjamin text that I am coming to now shows that its author was not deaf or insensitive to it, even if his propositions on this subject remain quite obscure or traditional.

( ) Calculative thought is vital to ethics and survival.

David Campbell, Prof. of International Politics @ University of Newcastle, 1999, MORAL SPACES: RETHINKING ETHICS AND WORLD POLITICS, 56.

Levinas has also argued for a politics that respects a double injunction. When asked "Is not ethical obligation to the other a purely negative ideal, impossible to realize in our everyday being-in-the-world," which is governed by "ontological drives and practices"; and "Is ethics practicable in human society as we know it? Or is it merely an invitation to apolitical acquiescence?" Levinas's response was that "of course we inhabit an ontological world of technological mastery and political self-preservation. Indeed, without these political and technological structures of organization we would not be able to feed mankind. This is the greatest paradox of human existence: we must use the ontological for the sake of the other, to ensure the survival of the other we must resort to the technico-political systems of means and ends."