All brackets are for efficiency or gendered language.

We begin with the first part of the parable of The Prodigal Son…

The younger of two children asked their parent for their share of the estate early in advance of their parent’s death. The parent agreed and divided their estate between both children. Upon receiving their portion of the inheritance, the younger child travels to a distant country and wastes all their money in extravagant living. Immediately thereafter, a famine strikes the land and they become desperately poor and are forced to take work as a swineherd. When they reach the point of envying the food of the pigs they are watching, they comes to their senses saying "How many hired servants of my parent have bread enough to spare, and I'm dying with hunger! I will get up and go to my parent, and will tell them, ‘I have sinned. I am no more worthy to be called your child. Make me as one of your hired servants.'"

The resolution in asking if adolescents should make autonomous medical choices is a question of whether or not adolescents should be allowed to make choices on their own or whether their parents should have control over their choices. The above parable clearly articulates that the former is preferable. **Dobson 88[[1]](#footnote--1)**

It is difficult for anyone to know exactly how he would face a given crisis, but I can tell you what I think would be the best reaction under those circumstances. Without nagging and whining, I would hope to influence the boy to change his mind before he made a mistake. If he could not be dissuaded, I would have to let him go. It is not wise for parents to be too demanding and authoritative with an older teenager; they may force him to defy their authority just to prove his independence and adulthood. Besides this, if they pound on the table, wring their hands and scream at their wayward son, he will not feel the full responsibility for his own behavior. When Mom and Dad are too emotionally involved with him, he can expect them to bail him out if he runs into trouble. **I think it is** much **wise**r **to treat the** late **adolescent like an adult**; he's more likely to act like one if he is given the status offered to other adults. The appropriate parental reaction should be: "John, you know I feel you are making a choice that will haunt you for many years. I want you to sit down with me and we will analyze the pros and cons; then the final decision will be yours. I will not stand in your way." John knows that responsibility is on his shoulders. Beginning in middle adolescence, parents should give a child more and more responsibility each year, **so** that **when** he **[they] get**s **beyond their control he [they] will no longer need it. There is** The Gospel of St. Luke contains **a**n amazingly **relevant story** of a young dropout. It Is commonly **known as the parable of the Prodigal son**. Read the story in Luke 15 and then **note that it contains** several important **messages that are** highly **relevant** to our day. **First, the** father **[parent] did not try to locate** his son **[their child] and drag** him **[them] home.** **The** boy **[child] was** apparently **old enough to make** **his [their] own decision and the** father **[parent] allowed [them]** him **the privilege** of determining his course. **Second, the** father **[parent] did not come to** his **[their] rescue** during financial stress that followed. He **[they] didn't send money**. There were no well-meaning church groups that helped support his folly. Note in verse 16 and 17, "No one gave him anything.. . . He **[the child]** finally **came to** his **[their] senses**" (TBL). Perhaps **we** sometimes **keep** our **children from coming to their senses by preventing them from feeling** the **consequences of their** own **mistakes. When a teenager gets a** speeding **citation**, *he* **[they] should pay for it**. When wrecks his car, *he* should have it fixed. When he gets suspended from school, *he* should take the consequences without parental protests to the school. He **[they] will learn from these adversities. The parent who is too quick to bail** his **[their] child out** of difficulty **may be doing** him **a disservice**. Third, the father welcomed his son home without belittling him of demanding reparations. He didn't say, "I told you you'd make a mess of things!" or "You've embarrassed your mom and me to death. Everyone is talking about what a terrible son we've raised!" Instead, he revealed the depth of his love by saying, "He was lost and is found!"

The role of the ballot is to endorse the debater that best uses parables to prove the truth or falsity of the resolution. **Labiak No Date[[2]](#footnote-0)** defines a parable

**Parables are** short **stories** in simple form **used to illustrate a** universal **truth**. The storyline usually consists of a single character with a moral dilemma or who has made a questionable decision and is now suffering the consequences. **The meaning of the parable is** always **implied**, and never directly stated. **It is usually obvious, though**.

Next reasons to prefer, first: Debate turns us into mere spectators in what ought to be an engaging activity **Mitchell 98**[[3]](#footnote-1)

While an isolated academic space that affords students an opportunity to learn in a protected environment has significant pedagogical value (see e.g. Coverstone 1995, p. 8-9), the notion of the academic **debate** tournament **as a** sterile **laboratory carries** with it some **disturbing implications**, when the metaphor is extended to its limit. To the extent that the academic space begins to take on characteristics of a laboratory, **the barriers demarcating such a space** from other spheres of deliberation beyond the school **grow** taller and less permeable. **When** such **barriers reach insurmountable** **dimensions, argumentation** in the academic setting **unfolds on a** purely **simulated plane, with students** practicing critical **thinking** and advocacy skills **in strictly hypothetical** thought-**spaces**. Although they may research and track public argument as it unfolds outside the confines of the laboratory for research purposes, in this approach, students witness argumentation beyond the walls of the academy as spectators, with little or no apparent recourse to directly participate or alter the course of events (see Mitchell 1995; 1998). **The sense of detachment** associated with the spectator posture **is highlighted** during episodes of alienation in which **[when] debaters cheer** news of human **suffering** or misfortune. **Instead of** focusing on **the visceral** negative **responses** to news accounts of human death and misery, **debaters overcome with** the **competitive zeal** of contest round competition **show a tendency to concentrate on** the meanings that such **evidence** might hold for the strength of their academic debate arguments. For example, **news reports of** mass **starvation** might **tidy up** the "**uniqueness** of a disadvantage" or bolster the "inherency of an affirmative case" (in the technical parlance of debate-speak). Murchland categorizes cultivation of **this** "spectator" **mentality as one of the** most politically debilitating **failures of** contemporary **education**: "Educational **institutions have failed** even more grievously **to provide the** kind of civic **forums we need**. In fact, one could easily conclude that **the** principle **purposes** of our schools **is to deprive** successor **generations of their** civic **voice, to turn them into mute** and uncomprehending **spectators** in the drama of political life" (1991,p. 8

And, trophies and bids are fantastic but at the end of the day we need something to point at and say “This is what debate taught me.” The answer should be the ability to live, to deliberate, and act **Mitchell 98**

**Academics can no longer retreat** in**to** their careers, **classrooms**, or symposiums **as** if they were **the only** public **spheres** available **for engaging** the power of ideas and the relations of **power**. Foucault's (1977) notion of the specific intellectual taking up struggles connected to particular issues and contexts must be combined with Gramsci's (1971) notion of the engaged intellectual who connects his or her work to broader social concerns that deeply affect how people live, work, and survive (Giroux 1991, p. 57; see also Giroux 1988, p. 35). **Within** the limited horizon of zero-sum competition in the contest round framework for academic **debate, questions of** purpose, strategy, and **practice** tend to **collapse into** formulaic **axioms for** competitive **success** under the crushing weight of tournament pressure. **The purpose of debate becomes** unrelenting **pursuit of victory** at a zero-sum game. Strategies are developed to gain competitive edges that translate into contest round success. **Debate** practice **involves** debaters **"spewing"** a highly **technical**, specialized **discourse at expert judges** trained to understand enough of the speeches to render decisions. Even in "kritik rounds," where the political status and meaning of the participants' own discourse is up for grabs, (see Shanahan 1993) the contest round framework tends to freeze the discussion into bipolar, zero-sum terms that highlight competitive payoffs at the expense of opportunities for co-operative "rethinking." When the cultivation of argumentative agency is pursued as a central pedagogical goal in academic debate, questions of purpose, strategy, and practice take on much broader meanings. **The purpose of participating in debate gets extended beyond** just **winning** contest **rounds** (although that purpose does not need to be abandoned completely), **as debaters intervene** in public affairs directly **to affect** social **change, and** in the process, **bolster their** own senses of political **agency. In this approach**, debate **strategy begins to bear a resemblance to** social **movement strategizing**, with questions of timing, coalition-building, and publicity taking on increasing importance. **Finally, debate** practice itself **becomes dynamic as debaters invent** new forms of argumentative **expression tailored** specifically **to support** particular **projects** of political intervention **into** fields of social **action.**

And, parables solve they create a sense of identity – empirically this was true for the civil rights movement**. Rowland 05[[4]](#footnote-2)**

**The** second rhetorical **function of narrative is to create** a sense of **identification between the audience and** the narrator or **characters** in the narrative. Great novels such as Harper Lee's***To Kill a Mockingbird* played a role in the civil rights movement because they helped create** a sense of **identification between white and black Americans**. Lee's novel and many other stories showed the audience that the black characters in the books were people just like them. Similarly, **narrative can allow us to see the world through the** eyes of a **Palestinian** terrorist and understand what might drive him or her to terrorist acts. **One of the most powerful functions** of narrative **is to generate** in the reader/viewer/listener **the understanding that "I'm like him or her."**

Second, Parables are key to education, it is easy to understand and can be taught and applied to all people and in every circumstance. **Labiak No Date[[5]](#footnote-3)**

**Parables** commonly contain metaphors to **make it easier** for the reader **to understand** complex or difficult **ideas. Parables** also **teach** abstract **arguments using** concrete **narratives, making them easier to grasp**. Parables are most often used to teach a spiritual or religious lesson. Sometimes **lessons**, in and of themselves, **can be difficult** to grasp. **When you hear the lesson in a story, the lesson** the story is trying to teach **can be easier to understand because you're seeing it applied in** a **real-life** application.

And education matters because it is the portable purpose of debate.

Third, Parables break down oppressive power structures, **Beck 11[[6]](#footnote-4)**

According to Herzog, the **parables have the** primary **purpose of “unmasking** the world of **oppression**” (1994, 79). This one in particular serves as a critique of (then) popular messianic expectations. It highlights the crucial role of retainers in carrying out the policies of the elite and acquiring the vast resources needed to maintain the system of power. The people looked to the elite to save them – either to popular kings or a messianic ruler. The parable “proposes” that neither can solve their problem – the rulers “too were governed by a system that required vengeance when their efforts at generosity were frustrated by the bureaucrats that surrounded them” (1994, 148). Thus the parable unmasks the world of oppression **by revealing** the **tensions in the bureaucratic system**. But although this account is much more sophisticated than either the simple allegory view or Dodd’s and reader-response theories, does it not still rely on cognitive responses that are problematic? One way out of the problem is suggested by Herzog’s talk of the parable as having the task of revealing tensions. **The parable** might work as a form of reductio ad absurdum: that is, it **starts with the assumption** that a messianic king can save the people from their oppressive situation, **and shows how that assumption leads to a contradiction**. The idea would be that it works in the way that a fiction like that in Thomas Reid’s response to John Locke’s (1975) view on personal identity works: Suppose a brave officer to have been flogged when a boy at school for robbing an orchard, to have taken a standard from the enemy in his first campaign, and to have been made a general in advanced life; suppose, also, which must be admitted to be possible, that, when he took the standard, he was conscious of his having been flogged at school, and that, when made a general, he was conscious of his taking the standard, but had absolutely lost consciousness of his flogging. These things being supposed, it follows from Mr Locke’s doctrine, that ... the general is, and at the same time is not, the same person with him who was flogged at school. (Reid 1975, 114) If you start with the assumption that personal identity is a matter of being able to remember experiences from the inside, then (in response to Reid’s story) you are obliged to say that the old general both is and is not the boy who stole the apples. That **use** of a narrative **avoids an**y **appeal to the audience’s** intuitive **responses as data** – no matter how they respond, **if they start with that assumption, they will end with a contradiction**. Is the parable of the unmerciful servant in the same position? It is worth noting that **it is a** fairly **common claim that** a number of the **parables work in** this sort of way – of **leading hearers into revising their** currently held **views** (Thiselton 1985, 85ff.] One thing that suggests it is not intended to work in this way is that that is not how Matthew presents the parable. He (or whoever wrote the gospel) presents it at as being about forgiveness and attaches a message, suggesting that the hearer’s response to the narrative will coincide (although admittedly the message is not exactly clear – see verse 35). Matthew himself may not have understood the parable, and presumably that is an implicit premise in Herzog’s interpretation. Besides this, though, there are other reasons for not seeing this model as a way of avoiding my problems. The story is nothing like as neat as that of Reid’s, and Reid’s never looked like it worked as an analogy. There are no comparisons to be made as there are in this one between the structures operating in the story and those in real agrarian societies (or the kingdom of heaven). Even on Herzog’s account, **the hearer is required to pick** out **which features she responds to** as oppressive, and so on. She must do this – and get it right - if the oppressive features are to be unmasked. And that means there is all the room that is required for my issues to raise themselves. The same argument will apply to the general view of parables as revisionary tools. There is another, more adventurous, version of how to understand Herzog although it adds some moves that are not strictly to be found in his text (an example of this version can be seen in West and Zwane (forthcoming)). It picks up on the point in the previous paragraph to the effect that it is implicit in Herzog’s account that Matthew himself does not understand the parable he relates. It also picks up on Herzog’s claim that **the point of** the **parables** (or at least many of them) **is to unmask** the world of **oppression** and on the subtitle of his book, “Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed”. This version runs along the following lines. The parable speaks only to the oppressed. Matthew, from his bourgeois point of view does not get it, but those who suffer oppression – and only they – will. **The problems raised by biases** **and our** other interfering **psychological tendencies are solved. The teller speaks to the** biases and **self-deceptions of his audience** (being Jesus will help him to get this right, presumably), **and thus they are in a position to grasp the message** despite all of that. Is this absurd as an account of how the parables are meant to work? It does place a special onus on the teller that naturalists might not like. But it has two important factors going for it. One is the one just mentioned – that it can cope with the problems from social psychology whereas the other ways of understanding them could not. The other is that it fits the Biblical “theory” of parables in a way that hardly any of the other accounts do. To see that, we now need to look at that theory.

Abstract philosophy does the opposite. In fact, Traditional ethics have been employed to mask and mystify the realities of white supremacy and anti-blackness. **Curry 13[[7]](#footnote-5)**

Traditionally **we have taken ethics to be**, as Henry Sedgwick claims, "**a**ny rational **procedure by which we determine what** individual human beings **'ought'**—or what is right for them—or to seek to realize by voluntary action” (1981:1).  **This** rational procedure **is** however **at odds with** the empirical **reality** the ethical deliberation must concern itself with. **To argue**, as is often done, that the government, its citizens, or white people should act justly, **assumes** that the possibility of **how they could act defines their** moral **disposition.  If a white person could** possibly **not be racist, it does not mean that** the **possibility** of not being racist, **can** be taken to **mean that they are not racist. In** ethical deliberations **dealing with** the problem of **racism, it is common** practice **to attribute to** historically racist **institutions**, and individuals universal moral qualities that have yet to be demonstrated.  **This abstraction** from reality **is what frames our** ethical **norms and allows us to maintain**, despite history or evidence, **that** racist **entities will act justly given the choice**.  Under such complexities, the only ethical deliberation concerning racism must be anti-ethical, or a judgment refusing to write morality onto immoral entities.

#### This matters; judges should reward the debater whose performance and discourse does not perpetuate the oppression of people. We must question what our discourse in round justifies. **Vincent 13**[[8]](#footnote-6)

Charles Mills argues that “the moral concerns of African Americans have centered on the assertion of their personhood, a personhood that could generally be taken for granted by whites, so that blacks have had to see these theories from a location outside their purview.” For example, I witnessed a round at a tournament this season where a debater ran a utilitarianism disadvantage. His opponent argued that this discourse was racist because it ignores the way in which a utilitarian calculus has distorted communities of color by ignoring the wars and violence already occurring in those communities.  In the next speech, the debater stood up, conceded it was racist, and argued that it was the reason he was not going for it and moved on, and still won the debate.  This is problematic because it demonstrates exactly what Mill’s argument is. For the black debater this argument is a question of his or her personhood within the debate space and the white debater was not held accountable for the words that are said.  Again for debaters of color, their performance is always attached to their body which is why it is important that the performance be viewed in relation to the speech act. **Whites** are allowed to **take for granted the impact** their **words have** on the bodies in the space. They take for granted this notion of personhood and ignore the concerns of those who do not matter divorced from the flow. It is never a question of “should we make arguments divorced from our ideologies,” it is a question of is it even possible. It is my argument that our performances, regardless of what justification we provide, are always a reflection of the ideologies we hold. Why should a black debater have to use a utilitarian calculus just to win a round, when that same discourse justifies violence in the community they go back home to? **Our performances** and our decisions in the round, **reflect the beliefs** that **we hold** when we go back to our communities.  **As a community we must re-conceptualize** this distinction the **performance by the body** and of the body **by re-evaluating the** role of the speech and the **speech act**. It is no longer enough for judges to vote off of the flow anymore. **Students of color are** being he**ld to a higher threshold to** better **articulate why racism is bad**, which is the problem in a space that we deem to be educational. It is here where I shift my focus to a solution.  **Debaters must be held accountable for the words they say** in the round. We should no longer evaluate the speech. Instead we must begin to evaluate the speech act itself. Debaters must be held accountable for more than winning the debate. They must be held accountable for the implications of that speech. As educators and adjudicators in the debate space we also have an ethical obligation to foster an atmosphere of education. It is not enough for judges to offer predispositions suggesting that they do not endorse racist, sexist, homophobic discourse, or justify why they do not hold that belief, and still offer a rational reason why they voted for it.  Judges have become complacent in voting on the discourse, if the other debater does not provide a clear enough role of the ballot framing, or does not articulate well enough why the racist discourse should be rejected. **Judges must be willing to** foster a learning atmosphere by **hold**ing **debaters accountable for what they say** in the round. They must be willing to vote against a debater if they endorse racist discourse. They must be willing to disrupt the process of the flow for the purpose of embracing that teachable moment. The speech must be connected to the speech act. We must view the entire debate as a performance of the body, instead of the argument solely on the flow. Likewise, judges must be held accountable for what they vote for in the debate space. If a judge is comfortable enough to vote for discourse that is racist, sexist, or homophobic, they must also be prepared to defend their actions. We as a community do not live in a vacuum and do not live isolated from the larger society. That means that judges must defend their actions to the debaters, their coaches, and to the other judges in the room if it is a panel. Students of color should not have the burden of articulating why racist discourse must be rejected, but should have the assurance that the educator with the ballot will protect them in those moments. Until we re-conceptualize the speech and the speech act, and until judges are comfortable enough to vote down debaters for a performance that perpetuates violence in the debate space, debaters and coaches alike will remain complacent in their privilege. As educators we must begin to shift the paradigm and be comfortable doing this. **As a community we should stop looking at ourselves** as isolated **in a vacuum and recognize that the discourse** and knowledge **we produce** in debate **has** real **implications for how we think when we leave this space**. Our performances must be viewed as of the body instead of just by it. **As long as we** continue to **operate in a world where** our **performances are** merely **by bodies, we will** continue to foster a climate of hostility and violence towards students of color, and in turn **destroy the** transformative **potential this community could have**.

Fourth, Policy making, one of the goals of debate is to train us to be real world citizens, policymakers who enable meaningful change for their constituents- **Joyner 99** [[9]](#footnote-7)

The **debate** exercises **carry[s]** several specific educational **objectives**. First, **students** on each team must work together to refine a[n] cogent argument that compellingly asserts their legal position on a foreign policy issue confronting the [US] United States. In this way, they **gain** greater **insight into the** real-**world** legal dilemmas faced by policy makers. Second, as they work with other members of their team, **they realize the complexities of** applying and **implementing** international **law**, and the difficulty of bridging the gaps between [US] United States policy and international legal principles, either by reworking the former or creatively reinterpreting the latter. Finally, **research for** the **debates forces students to become familiarized with contemporary issues** on the [US] United States foreign policy agenda and the role that international law plays in formulating and executing these policies. [8](http://www.lexis.com/research/retrieve?_m=dd50ebcf6f333fa9dc2056c41910f431&docnum=10&_fmtstr=FULL&_startdoc=1&wchp=dGLbVzb-zSkAz&_md5=b6ab1cd124d0bcf25758b0c7002a2045&focBudTerms=%22the%20debate%20exercises%22&focBudSel=all" \l "n8" \t "_self) The **debate** thus becomes **a**n excellent **vehicle for pushing students** beyond stale arguments over principles **into** the real world of **policy analysis**, political critique, and legal defense.

While the status quo of debate assumes that real world policymaking requires cut and dry cost-benefits, rigid comparison of empirical or statistical warrants, the real benefit occur as soon as you acknowledge that policymakers must look at stories as not just an equally valid form of warrant, but a comparatively more valid and vital form of warrant. The stories we tell are central components of politics and life – the best training for becoming policymakers and legislators is embracing our human heritage of storytelling as a way to understand and debate about events. **Mcdonough 06[[10]](#footnote-8)**

Why is narrative so central to policy making? Because it is central to life. **We live our lives crafting**, telling, **and receiving stories**. We tell our loved ones stories from our day. We catch up with old friends by sharing tales from our lives. We receive, from all forms of the media, stories to help make sense of our world. In constructing our stories, we are necessarily selecting in choosing and editing details to drive home a lesson; to engage our audience; or to meet time, space, and other constraints. This is true for the hardest sciences. “So much of science proceeds by telling stories,” writes Harvard naturalist Stephen Jay Gould in *Bully for Brontosaurus: Reflections in Natural History.* He sees us as “vulnerable to the constraints of this medium” because we are unaware of our tale telling in observing the natural world. “We think that we are reading nature by applying rules of logic and laws of matter to our observations,” he says, “but we are often telling stories.” **Policymakers**, like scientists, **are as human as the rest of us. Part of our** uniquely human **heritage involves telling stories to find meaning from** the events, data, and stimuli in **our lives**. Most **policymakers**, and especially legislators, **have not had training in research** methods **and thus share the layperson’s suspicion of** statistical **analysis**. The adage “Lies, damn lies, and statistics” makes more sense to most of them than does the value of the r-square.

#### And narratives lead to change, even congressional action- **Rowland 05**[[11]](#footnote-9)

Consequently, great literature often fails as rhetoric because the theme is too complex for the mass audience. On the other hand, great rhetorical narratives often are inferior literature. Harriet Beecher **Stowe's novel about the horrors of slavery, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin****,* is generally not considered to be great literature. The characters are based on simple stereotypes and show little subtlety. But there is no question that Stowe's novel **had an immense rhetorical impact on** popular **attitudes about slavery** in the North in the years **leading up to the Civil War. Similarly**, Upton **Sinclair's attack on** the **meat packing** industry, ***The Jungle****,* may not be thought of as one of the greatest American novels, but the very lack of subtlety that a literary critic might decry, **helped** it **influence Congress to regulate the industry**

Also modern elections are won more often by good storytellers with a comprehensive understanding of universal and intuitive morals learned and understood through things like parables, then the greatest utilitarian or deontologist; nobody can campaign successfully by just reading numbers and doing calculations. This means that parables are most useful for being elected in the first place. Also this comes first because being elected is a pre-requisite to policymaking success.

Fifth, Parables are important in the normative philosophy layer too, following the parable is by far the most likely to generate a moral outcome. First, the parable outweighs on specificity it grants a moral prescription when directly applied to the resolution, whereas their principles speak to general theories and then apply them. Specificity matters because giving someone drugs is okay if it’s a doctor giving them to a suffering person, and not okay if it’s a junkie giving them to a five year old. Second, parables cohere best with our intuitions, as they are written so that the reader can intuitively identify with the decisions of the characters. And intuitions control the internal link to other philosophies because if something is unintuitive then nobody would take the action, for example you could never convince someone to kill a family member to save two strangers. Third, even if their principle might be true, the author of the parable already considered their reasoning, when they were writing it because they consult various ideas of morality to devise their parable. This functions as a reason to prefer, because your theory precludes the truth of others whereas my parable takes into account the benefits of your theory as well as others. Fourth, parables were everyone’s first experience, with ethics and were though as the foundation for almost every child's conception of morality, therefore they are understood to have the correct baseline, also any author has the parables that they heard in their youth implicit in their writing because they subconsciously draw from them. Fifth, parables have shaped modern philosophy in their presence in the bible, African, and Eastern culture they are necessarily ingrained in every moral philosophy and have obviously seeped through to all sources of the modern conception of morality.

Sixth, we cannot wait till we have the right ethical method; otherwise we could not even be confident that studying ethics is ethical. Instead we must recognize authority of things that demonstrate, and educate in a higher moral understanding. **Gadmer 60**[[12]](#footnote-10):

The Enlightenment's distinction between faith in authority and using one's own reason is, in itself, legitimate. If the prestige of authority displaces one's own judgment, then authority is in fact a source of prejudices. But this does not preclude its being a source of truth, and that is what the Enlightenment failed to see when it denigrated all authority. To be convinced of this, we need only consider one of the greatest forerunners of the European Enlightenment, namely Descartes. Despite the radicalness of his methodological thinking, we know that Descartes excluded morality from the total reconstruction of all truths by reason. This was what he meant by his provisional morality. It seems to me symptomatic that he did not in fact elaborate his definitive morality and that its principles, as far as we can judge from his letters to Elizabeth, contain hardly anything new. **It is** obviously **unthinkable to defer morality until** modern **science has progressed** enough **to provide a** new **basis for it**. In fact **the denigration of authority** is not the only prejudice established by the Enlightenment. It also **distorted the** very **concept of authority. Based on the** Enlightenment **conception of** reason and **freedom**, the concept of **authority could be** viewed as diametrically **opposed to reason** and freedom: to be, in fact, blind obedience. This is the meaning that we find in the language critical of modern dictatorships. But **this is not the essence of authority**. Admittedly, it is primarily persons that have authority; but **the authority of persons is** ultimately **based** not **on** the subjection and abdication of reason but on **an act of acknowledgment** and knowledge—the knowledge, namely, **that the other is superior** to oneself in judgment and insight and that for this reason his **judgment takes precedence**—i.e., it has priority over one's own. This is connected with the fact that **authority cannot** actually **be bestowed but is earned**, and must be earned if someone is to lay claim to it. It rests on acknowledgment and hence on an act of reason itself which, aware of its own limitations, trusts to the better insight of others. Authority in this sense, properly understood, has nothing to do with blind obedience to commands. Indeed, authority has to do not with obedience but rather with knowledge. It is true that authority implies the capacity to command and be obeyed. But this proceeds only from the authority that a person has. Even the anonymous and impersonal authority of a superior which derives from his office is not ultimately based on this hierarchy, but is what makes it possible. Here also its true basis is an act of freedom and **reason** that **grants** the **authority** of a superior fundamentally **because** he **[it] has a wider view** of things or is better informed—i.e., once again, because he knows more.22 Thus, **acknowledging authority** is always connected with the idea that what the authority says is not irrational and arbitrary but **can**, in principle, **be discovered to be true**. This is the essence of the authority claimed by the teacher, the superior, the expert. The prejudices that they implant are legitimized by the person who presents them. But in this way they become prejudices not just in favor of a person but a content, since they effect the same disposition to believe something that can be brought about in other ways—e.g., by good reasons. Thus the essence of authority belongs in the context of a theory of prejudices free from the extremism of the Enlightenment. Here we can find support in the romantic criticism of the Enlightenment; for there is one form of authority particularly defended by romanticism, namely tradition. That which has been sanctioned by tradition and custom has an authority that is nameless, and our finite historical being is marked by the fact that the authority of what has been handed down to us—and not just what is clearly grounded—always has power over our attitudes and behavior. **All education depends on this**, and even though, in the case of education, **the educator loses** his **function when his charge** comes of age and **sets his own insight and decisions in the place of the** authority of the **educator**, becoming mature does not mean that a person becomes his own master in the sense that he is freed from all tradition. The real force of morals, for example, is based on tradition. They are freely taken over but by no means created by a free insight or grounded on reasons. This is precisely what we call tradition: the ground of their validity. And in fact it is to romanticism that we owe this correction of the Enlightenment: that tradition has a justification that lies beyond rational grounding and in large measure determines our institutions and attitudes. **What makes classical ethics superior** to modern moral philosophy **is that it grounds** the transition from **ethics** to "politics," the art of right legislation, **on** the indispensability of **tradition**.

This means parables, they have the strongest appeal to moral authority, and they demonstrate, a higher level of epistemic truth. **Beck 11**[[13]](#footnote-11)

Their **[A parables] aim is not as simple as teaching** a moral lesson, **they** attempt to **reveal** some **truth** that is **independent of** what we mean by **our words. In that way, they require** our **responses to have some** sort of **epistemic authority**

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