# Theater 1AC

### Notes

-This was an elims Aff for TOC that we never got to break

-This would, in all likelihood, have been read in the quarterfinals

## 1AC

### Part 1: Curtain Up

#### THEY’RE DIMMING THE LIGHTS – Trump’s ushered in a culture of censorship and violence against dissent. Since resistance is key now more than ever, The Role of the Judge is to Promote Critical Education, which means they must enhance our potential to fight dominant, oppressive social biases.

**Giroux 1:** Giroux, Henry A. [Waterbury Chair Professor, Pennsylvania State University] “War Culture, Militarism, and Racist violence Under Trump.” *Truthout*, December 2016. RP

**With Donald Trump’s election as president of the United States, the scourge of authoritarianism has returned not only in the toxic language of hate, humiliation and bigotry, but also in the emergence of a culture of war and violence that** looms over society like a plague. War has been redefined in the age of global capitalism: it has expanded its boundaries and now shapes all aspects of society. As Ulrich Beck observes "the distinctions between war and peace, military and police, war and crime, internal and external security" have collapsed. As violence and politics merge to produce an accelerating and lethal mix of bloodshed, pain, suffering, grief and death, American culture has been transformed into a culture of war. War culture reaches far beyond the machineries that enable the United States to ring the world with its military bases, produce vast stockpiles of weapons, deploy thousands of troops all over the globe and retain the shameful title of "the world's preeminent exporter of arms, with more than 50 percent of the global weaponry market controlled by the United States," as reported by Denver Nicks War culture provides the educational platforms that include those cultural apparatuses, institutions, beliefs and policies with the capacity to produce the discourses, spectacles of violence, cultures of fear, military values, hypermasculine ideologies and militarized policies that give war machines their legitimacy, converting them into symbols of national identity, if not honored ideals. Under such circumstances, the national security state replaces any viable notion of social security and the common good. As a militarized culture is dragged into the center of political life, fear feeds a discourse of bigotry, insecurity and mistrust, adding more and more individuals and groups to the register of repression, disposability and social death. Violent lawlessness no longer registers ethical and moral concerns, and increasingly has become normalized. How else to explain Trump's comment, without irony or remorse, during a campaign rally in Iowa that he could "stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody" and not "lose any voters"? Ruthlessness, narcissism and bullying are the organizing principles of Trump's belief that only winning matters and that everything is permitted to further his own self-interests. These are the values that underlie his call for "law and order," which is more properly understood as a call for the lawlessness of the police state. Another register of lawlessness is evident in the presence of a ruthless market-driven corporate culture marked by an economic and political system mostly controlled by the ruling financial elite. This is a mode of corporate lawlessness that hoards wealth, income and power through the mechanisms of a national security state, mass surveillance, the arming of local police forces, a permanent war economy and an expansive militarized foreign policy. Trump's recent appointments of neoliberal elites, such as Steven Mnuchin, a long- time hedge fund manager and investment banker, to be his treasury secretary and Wilbur Ross, a billionaire investor, to head the Commerce Department make clear that he intends to allow the managers of big banks, hedge funds and other major financial institutions to run the economy. This is an upgraded version of neoliberalism which, as Cornel West points out serves to "reinforce corporate interests, big bank interest, and to keep track of those of who are cast as peoples of color, women, Jews, Arabs, Muslims, Mexicans, and so forth.... So, this is one of the most frightening moments in the history of this very fragile empire and fragile republic." Military Mania Trump's appointment of warmongering, right-wing military personnel to top government posts and his ongoing rhetoric suggesting the need for a vast expansion of the military-industrial complex signal a further intensification of America's war culture, one that inspired an article to be published in Forbes with the headline: "For The Defence Industry, Trump's Win Means Happy Days Are Here Again." William D. Hartung makes the latter point clear by citing a speech Trump gave in Philadelphia before the election in which he called for tens of thousands of additional troops, a Navy of 350 ships, a significantly larger Air Force, an anti-missile, space-based Star Wars-style program of Reaganesque proportions, and an acceleration of the Pentagon's $1 trillion "modernization" program for the nuclear arsenal.... [all of which] could add more than $900 billion to the Pentagon's budget over the next decade. Evidence for an updated and expansive war culture is also visible in Trump's willingness to consider a mob of racist neoconservatives for inclusion in his administration -- picks, such as John Bolton and James Woolsey, both of whom believe that "Islam and the Arab world are the enemy of Western civilization" and are strong advocates of a war with Iran. He has welcomed disgraced military leaders, such as David H. Petraeus, former four-star Army general and director of the Central Intelligence Agency; he has appointed as secretary of defense retired United States Marine Corps Gen. James Mattis who opposed closing Guantánamo, along with Obama's nuclear treaty with Iran. Mattis was brusquely fired by the Obama administration as the Central Command boss. Meanwhile, in a particularly worrisome appointment, Trump has chosen retired Gen. Michael Flynn to become his National Security Advisor. Flynn was fired for abusive behavior, has been accused of mishandling classified information, and is a firm supporter of Trump's pro-torture policies. The New York Times reported that Flynn, who will occupy "one of the most powerful roles in shaping military and foreign policy.... believes Islamist militancy poses an existential threat on a global scale, and the Muslim faith itself is the source of the problem ... describing it as a political ideology, not a religion." In other words, Flynn believes that 1.3 billion Muslims are the enemy of Western civilization. He has also claimed "that Sharia, or Islamic law, is spreading in the United States" (it is not). His dubious assertions are so common that when he ran the Defense Intelligence Agency, subordinates came up with a name for the phenomenon: They called them "Flynn facts." Trump's love of the military suggests that he will expand rather than cut back on America's infatuation with its wars, and will do nothing to alter a dishonorable foreign policy standard that has propelled the US into a permanent war status for the larger part of the 21st century. As Andrew Bacevich has pointed out since the latter part of 2001 this has resulted in "something like 370,000 combatants and noncombatants [being] killed in the various theaters of operations where U.S. forces have been active." This is how democracy ends. Landscapes of a War Culture As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri emphasize in their book Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire, the veneration of war in the United States has now reached a dangerous endpoint and has become the foundation of politics itself. This is especially true as Americans entered into one of the most appalling and threatening periods of the 21st century. They write: War has passed from the final element of the sequences of power -- lethal force as a last resort -- to the first and primary element, the foundation of politics itself.... In order for war to occupy this fundamental social and political role, war must be able to accomplish a constituent or regulative function: war must become both a procedural activity and an ordering, regulative activity that creates and maintains social hierarchies, a form of biopower aimed at the promotion and regulation of social life. The violence produced by a war culture has become a defining feature of American society, providing a common ground for the deployment and celebration of violence abroad and at home. At a policy level, an arms industry fuels violence abroad while domestically, a toxic gun culture contributes to the endless maiming and deaths of individuals at home. Similarly, a militaristic foreign policy has its domestic counterpart in the growth of a carceral and punishing state used to enforce a hyped- up brand of domestic terrorism, especially against Black youth and various emerging protest movements in the US.The section on "End the War on Black People" in the "Vision for Black Lives: Policy Demands for Black Power, Freedom & Justice outlines this in detail. There can be little doubt that a racist repressive state apparatus will be expanded with Trump's choice of Jeff Sessions for attorney general. Sessions was once denied a federal judgeship in the 1980s on the grounds that he was a racist. He supports capital punishment and is poised to intensify the racist expansion of the criminal justice system. As John Kiriakou makes clear, quoting the nonprofit news organization, The Marshall Project: Things will likely change quickly under Sessions. The new attorney general "helped block broader drug sentencing reform in the Senate this year despite wide bipartisan support, saying it would release 'violent felons' into the street." He will also be tasked with carrying out the new president's policies on private prisons.... Just weeks before the election, Geo Group, the second largest private prison corporation in America, hired two former Sessions aides to lobby in favor of outsourcing federal corrections to private contractors. Since the Nixon era, a hyper-punitive political culture has served to legitimate a neoliberal culture in which cruelty is viewed as virtue, and to fuel the racist system of mass incarceration. As Angela Davis argues in Freedom Is a Constant Struggle, the persistent killing of Black youth testifies to a long history of domestic terrorism representing "an unbroken stream of racist violence, both official and extralegal, from slave patrols and the Ku Klux Klan to contem porary profiling practices and present-day vigilantes." The historical backdrop to the current killing of Black youth, men and women must be coupled with the shameful truth that "11 million Americans cycle through our jails and prisons each year." Rebecca Gordon points out that the United States is home to only 4 percent of the global population and yet it holds 22 percent of the world's prisoners. Moreover, 70 percent of these prisoners are people of color. These figures testify not only to the emergence of a police state, but also to a justice system that has a long legacy of being driven by racism. Under such circumstances, important distinctions between war and civil society collapse as the police function as soldiers, cities are transformed into combat zones, shared responsibilities are replaced by shared fears and public safety is defined increasingly as a police matter. Neoliberal society has ceded any vestige of democratic ideals to a social formation saturated with fear, suspicion and violence. The line has become blurred between real acts of violence and mythical appeals to violence as cleansing and restorative, as is evident in Trump's emotional appeal to his audiences' rage and fear. Dystopian violence is now legitimated at the highest level of politics, both in its use as a spectacle and as a policy of terror initiated most specifically in the murderous rampage of drone warfare. Politics is now an extension of the culture of war, and violence is a generative force in the production of everyday life. Normalizing Violence The normalization of violence in US society is not only about how it is lived and endured, but also about how it becomes the connective tissue for holding different modes of governance, policies, ideologies and practices together. All of these come to resemble military activities. And it is precisely such activities that serve to legitimate the war on terror, the use of mass surveillance, the weaponizing of knowledge and the merging of a war culture and warfare state. As Jonathan Simon has detailed in his book, Governing through Crime, in the aftermath of the transition from the welfare state in the 1960s to the current warfare state, the appeal to fear on many political fronts became paramount in order to legitimate a carceral state that increasingly governed through what can be termed the war on crime, especially affecting marginalized citizens. Violence, however grotesque, has been relegated to the most powerful force mediating human relations and used to address pressing social problems. Violence is a habitual response by the state in almost every dilemma. Police violence is only one register of the landscape of everyday violence. The hidden structure of violence is not always on full display in the killing of Black people. It **can also be found in** a range of largely invisible sites of brutality that include debtor's prisons for children, racist juvenile courts, **schools modeled after prisons, a systemic debt-machine and municipal governments that function as extortion factories and inflict misery and penury upon** the poor. The registers of militarization produce armed knowledge through university research funded by the military-industrial-Pentagon complex. Meanwhile, a growing culture of political purity houses a discourse of "weaponized sensitivity and "armed ignorance." Empathy for others only extends as far as recognizing those who mirror the self. Politics has collapsed into the privatized orbits of a crude essentialism that disdains forms of public discourse in which boundaries collapse and the exercise of public deliberation is viewed as fundamental to a substantive democracy. This was made clear in Trump's repeated use of language in the service of violence at his pre-election rallies. Intolerable Violence in a Militarized Culture of Everyday Life Intolerable violence has become normalized. Uncritical support for a militarized culture now finds expression in a range of everyday events extending from the nightly news reports and the simulated violence of screen culture, to sports events. One often-overlooked egregious instance is evident in numerous military ceremonies that have become central to sports events, a number of which are paid for by the Pentagon. For example, Eyder Peralta, a reporter for NPR, pointed out that a recent Senate report indicates that in the past few years, "the Pentagon spent $6.8 million to pay for patriotic displays during the games of professional sports teams." Intolerable violence is also elevated to an everyday occurrence and legitimated in less evident ways through what Michael Schwalbe has called instances of "micro militarism which he defines as "pro-military practices squeezed into small cultural spaces." Such instances are low-key advertisements for militarism that, while largely unnoticed, saturate the culture with militaristic values that celebrate war as the primary organizing principle of society and a general condition of the social order. This is the small change of militarism. Think, for example, of the ATM receipts that post a "Support the Troops" message under the customer's bank balance. We encounter such messages when checkout clerks at gas stations and supermarkets ask for donations to "support our troops." Such messages function as military recruiting advertisements on the side of buses, cabs and billboards. Higher education institutions sponsor ads for graduate programs with pop-up images on their websites, such as "Advance Your Military Career with an MBA." As Schwalbe argues inherent in all of these messages is the idea that freedom and democracy are dependent upon the use of military force, state violence, and military service, the essence of which is "obedience, not courageous independence." These "small cultural spaces" -- when combined with various sites of militarism, ranging from public schools and sports events to popular cultural and policy-making institutions -- normalize war and violence. In this way, they make it more difficult for the American public to question the merging of war and politics and the pathologizing of politics by a culture of violence. One consequence is that democratic idealism is replaced by the ethos of militarism, and violence becomes the axiom by which everyday problems are both defined and mediated. Accordingly, the dominance of war-like values "expands from the margins of society to become a powerful process by which civil society ... organizes itself," and coincides with what Catherine Lutz describes as "the less visible deformation of human potentials into the hierarchies of race, class, gender, and sexuality." Trump's rhetoric in support of violence and discrimination threatens to further the transformation of the police into SWAT teams and the endless practice of arresting students for trivial behaviors in schools, subjecting Black people to fines for breaking rules that are petty and punitive and criminalizing Black people through policies of racial profiling that constitute practices of state harassment and violence. Aggressive policing is the underside of white supremacy because it is largely used in the service of whites against Blacks who have committed no crimes. And with racists, such as Jeff Sessions and Stephen Bannon holding top positions in the Trump administration, fantasies of America being transformed into a white public sphere will be at the center of politics. War culture is legitimated ideologically by collapsing public issues into private concerns. This is a powerful pedagogical tool that functions to depoliticize people by decoupling social problems from the violence inherent in the structural, affective and pedagogical dimensions of neoliberalism. Capitalism is about both winning at all costs and privileging what Zygmunt Bauman calls a "society of individual performance and a culture of sink-or-swim individualism." This mode of individualized politics functions as a weapon of fear that trades off conditions of precarity in order to amplify the personal anxieties, uncertainties and misery produced through life-draining austerity measures and the destruction of the bonds of sociality and solidarity. Abandoned to their own resources, individuals turn to what Jennifer Silva describes in her book Coming Up Short as a "mood economy" in which they "turn to emotional self-management and willful psychic transformation." At the same time, it redefines the pathologies of poverty, patriarchy, structural racism, police violence, homophobia and massive inequities in income and power as personal pathologies and shortcomings to be overcome by support groups, safe spaces and other reforms that sometimes ignore the need to fight for what Robin D. G. Kelley calls "models of social and economic justice." Toward a Comprehensive Politics Any attempt to resist and restructure the intensification of a war culture with its white supremacist, ultra-nationalist underside in the US necessitates a new language for politics. Such a discourse must be historical, relational and as comprehensive as it is radical. Historically, the call for a comprehensive view of oppression, violence and politics can be found in the connections that Martin Luther King, Jr. drew near the end of his life, particularly in his speech, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence King made it clear that the United States uses "massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted," and that such violence could not be clearly addressed if limited to an analysis of single issues, such as the Vietnam War. On the contrary, he argued that the war at home was an inextricable part of the war abroad and that matters of militarism, racism, poverty and materialism mutually informed each other and cut across a variety of sites. For instance, he understood that poverty at home could not be abstracted from the money allotted to wars abroad and a death-dealing militarism. Nor could the racism at home be removed from those "others" the United States demonized and objectified abroad, revealing in their mutual connection a racism that drove both domestic and foreign policy. For King, "giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism" had to be resisted both through a revolution of values and a broad-based nonviolent movement at home aimed at a radical restructuring of American society. One ethical referent for King's notion of a radical restructuring was his moral and political abhorrence of the killing of millions of children -- at home and abroad -- by a war culture and its ruthless machineries of militarism and violence. Michelle Alexander has also argued that one thing we can learn from King is the need to connect the dots among diverse forms of oppression. A broader view of oppression allows us to see the underlying ideological and structural forces of the new forms of domination at work in the US. For instance, Alexander raises questions about the connection between "drones abroad and the War on Drugs at home." In addition, she argues for modes of political inquiry that connect a variety of oppressive practices enacted in order to accumulate capital -- such as the workings of a corrupt financial industry and Wall Street bankers, on the one hand, and the moving of jobs overseas, the foreclosing of homes, the increase in private prisons and the caging of immigrants, on the other. Similarly, Alexander calls for "connecting the dots between the NSA spying on millions of Americans, the labeling of mosques as 'terrorist organizations,' and the spy programs of the 1960s and 70s -- specifically the FBI and COINTELPRO programs that placed civil rights advocates under constant surveillance, infiltrated civil rights organizations and assassinated racial justice leaders." More recently, we have seen the call for such connections emerge from the Black Lives Matter movement and a range of other grassroots movements whose politics go far beyond an agenda limited to single issues, such as the curbing of anti-Black violence. This type of comprehensive politics is exemplified in the policy document, "A Vision for Black Lives: Policy Demands for Black Power, Freedom & Justice," created by the Movement for Black Lives, a coalition of over 60 organizations. Angela Davis has for years been calling for progressives to build links to other struggles and has talked about how what has happened in Ferguson must be related to what is happening in Palestine. This type of connective politics might raise questions about what the US immigration policies and the racist discourses that inform them have in common with what is going on in authoritarian countries, such as Hungary. Another example is illustrated when Davis asks what happens to communities when the police who are supposed to serve and protect them are treated like soldiers who are trained to shoot and kill? How might such analyses bring various struggles for social and economic justice together across national boundaries? In her book Freedom Is a Constant Struggle, Davis argues that such connections have to "be made in the context of struggles themselves. So as you are organizing against police crimes, against police racism you always raise parallels and similarities in other parts of the world [including] structural connections." Davis embraces what she calls the larger context, and this is clearly exemplified in her commentary about prisons. She writes: We can't only think about the prison as a place of punishment for those who have committed crimes. We have to think about the larger framework. That means asking: Why is there such a disproportionate number of Black people and people of color in prison? So we have to talk about racism. Abolishing the prison is about attempting to abolish racism. Why is there so much illiteracy? Why are so many prisoners illiterate? That means we have to attend to the educational system. Why is it that the three largest psychiatric institutions in the country are jails in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: Rikers Island, Cook County Jail, and L.A. County Jail? That means we need to think about health care issues, and especially mental health care issues. We have to figure out how to abolish homelessness. We need a new political vocabulary for capturing the scope and interconnections that comprise the matrix of permanent war and violence that shape a variety of experiences and spheres in American society, all of which will expand under the Trump presidency. While the current focus on police killings, gun violence, mass shootings and acts of individual bloodshed are important to analyze, it is crucial not to treat these events as isolated categories. By doing so we lose a broader understanding of the ways in which American society is being held hostage to often invisible but formative modes of intolerable violence that are distributed across a range of sites on a daily basis. This is especially true as Americans enter into a historical moment in which the highest reaches of government will be run by a group of officials who support a president who has condoned torture, wants to increase the numbers of and power of the police, views Black neighborhoods as manifestations of a criminal culture, staffs his cabinet with racists, militarists and misogynists, and views violence as a legitimate tool for dealing with dissent. Noam Chomsky is right in calling Trump, his generals, and the Republican Party "the most dangerous organization in the world Intolerable violence is most visible when it attracts the attention of mainstream media and conforms to the production of what Brad Evans and I have discussed as the spectacle of violence, that is, violence that is put on public display in order to shock and entertain rather than inform. However, such violence is just the tip of the iceberg and is dependent upon a foundation of lawlessness that takes place through a range of experiences, representations and spaces that make up daily life across a variety of sites and public spaces. Those spaces of lawlessness are on the rise, and the ominous shadow of authoritarianism is at our doorstep. Nevertheless, such forces cannot be allowed to cancel out the future and promises of a radical democracy. Militant Hope and the Politics of Resistance The first step in any form of collective resistance is to recognize the seriousness of the political, social and economic threat that a Trump administration poses to the United States' fragile democracy. Secondly, while American society may be slipping away into the shadows of authoritarianism, it is imperative to think politics anew in order to wage more formidable struggles in the name of economic and social justice. All societies contain sites of resistance, and progressives with structural power need desperately to join with those who have been written out of the script of democracy to rethink politics, find a new beginning and develop a vision that is on the side of justice and democracy. Hope in the abstract is not enough. We need a form of militant hope and practice that engages with the forces of authoritarianism on the educational and political fronts so as to become a foundation for what might be called hope in action -- that is, a new force of collective resistance and a vehicle for anger transformed into collective struggle, a principle for making despair unconvincing and struggle possible. **Education must become central to** any **politics of resistance because it is fundamental to how subjectivities are produced, desire is constructed and behavior takes place.** Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator, was right in insisting that subjectivity is both the material of politics and the platform where the struggle over consciousness and resistance takes place. Antonio Gramsci, the great Italian Marxist, was right in arguing that at the heart of political struggle is a war of position, a struggle in which matters of education, persuasion, language and consciousness are fundamental to creating the formative culture that makes radical change possible.

#### The Role of the Ballot is to Endorse the Better Method for Critically Empowering Students. Critical empowerment exists when we have the skills to question and attack the status quo. This is key to ALL alternatives.

**Giroux 2:** Giroux, Henry A. [Waterbury Chair Professor, Pennsylvania State University] “Radical Politics in the Age of American Authoritarianism: Connecting the Dots.” *Truthout*,April 2016. RP

At the root of this notion of developing a comprehensive view of politics is the need for educating ourselves by developing a critical formative culture along with corresponding institutions that promote a form of permanent criticism against all elements of oppression and unaccountable power.**One important task of emancipation is to fight the dominant culture industry by developing alternative public spheres and educational institutions capable of nourishing critical thought and** action. The time has come for educators, artists, workers, young people and others to push forward **a** new **form of politics** in which public values, trust and compassion trump neoliberalism's celebration of self- interest, the ruthless accumulation of capital, the survival-of-the-fittest ethos and the financialization and market-driven corruption of the political system. Political responsibility is more than a challenge -- it is the projection of a possibility in which new modes of identification and agents must be enabled that can sustain new political organizations and transnational anti-capitalist movements. Democracy must be written back into the script of everyday life, and doing so demands overcoming the current crisis of memory, agency and politics by collectively struggling for a new form of politics in which matters of justice, equity and inclusion define what is possible. Such struggles demand an increasingly broad-based commitment to a new kind of activism. As Robin D. G. Kelley has recently noted there is a need for more pedagogical, cultural and social spaces that allow us to think and act together, to take risks and **to get to** the roots of the conditions that are submerging the United States into a new form of **authoritarianism wrapped in the flag, the dollar sign and the cross.** Kelley is right in calling for a politics that places justice at its core, one that takes seriously what it means to be an individual and social agent while engaging in collective struggles. We don't need tepid calls for repairing the system; instead, we need to invent a new system from the ashes of one that is terminally broken. We don't need calls for moral uplift or personal responsibility. We need calls for economic, political, gender and racial justice. Such a politics must be rooted in particular demands, be open to direct action and take seriously strategies designed to both educate a wider public and mobilize them to seize power. The left needs a new political conversation that encompasses memories of freedom and resistance. Such a dialogue would build on the militancy of the labor strikes of the 1930s, the civil rights movements of the 1950s and the struggle for participatory democracy by the New Left in the 1960s. At the same time, there is a need to reclaim the radical imagination and to infuse it with a spirited battle for an independent politics that regards a radical democracy as part of a never-ending struggle. **None of this can happen unless progressives understand education as a political and moral practice crucial to creating new forms of agency, mobilizing a desire for change and providing a language** that underwrites the capacity to think, speak and act so as to challenge the sexist, racist, economic and political grammars of suffering produced by the new authoritarianism. The left needs a language of critique that enables people to ask questions that appear unspeakable within the existing vocabularies of oppression. We also need a language of hope that is firmly aware of the ideological and structural obstacles that are undermining democracy. We need a language that reframes our activist politics as a creative act that responds to the promises and possibilities of a radical democracy. Movements require time to mature and come into fruition. They necessitate educated agents able to connect structural conditions of oppression to the oppressive cultural apparatuses that legitimate, persuade, and shape individual and collective attitudes in the service of oppressive ideas and values. Under such conditions, radical ideas can be connected to action once diverse groups recognize the need to take control of the political, economic and cultural conditions that shape their worldviews, exploit their labor, control their communities, appropriate their resources, and undermine their dignity and lives. Raising consciousness alone will not change authoritarian societies, but it does provide the foundation for making oppression visible and for developing from below what Étienne Balibar calls "practices of resistance and solidarity." We need not only a radical critique of capitalism, racism and other forms of oppression, but also **a critical formative culture and cultural politics that inspire, energize and provide elements of a** **transformative radical education in the service of a broad-based democratic liberation movement.**

**Thus, whoever better promotes critical empowerment wins.**

#### And cultural engagement is the MOST important form of empowerment.

**Balkin:** Balkin, Jack M. [Knight Professor of Constitutional Law and the First Amendment, Yale Law School] “Cultural Democracy and the First Amendment.” *Northwestern University Law Review*,Volume 110, 2016. CH

The central question of democracy is how people can have power in their own lives and over their own lives. A responsive state accountable to the public is one way to achieve this end, but it is not the only way. There are other forms of power that exist beneath, above, and outside the state. One can also organize or critique private institutions—religions, workplaces, firms, and families—in terms of democratic principles, although the way that democracy operates in each case may differ depending on the nature of the practice.26 **In particular, culture and public opinion—often embedded in influential private institutions—are among the most important forms of power. They influence everyone on Earth, no matter what nation-state they belong to. By participating in culture, we mutually influence each other and shape each other through the circulation of beliefs and opinions and works of art.** The state draws attention to its power over individuals in countless ways, but the power of culture is so great that it may not even be noticeable when it is most effective.27 One reason to protect freedom of expression is to make the power of the state accountable to the people who live within it. But another reason is to give people a say over the development of the forms of cultural power that both undergird and transcend the state. In a free society, even in one that is not perfectly democratic in its politics—or even democratic at all— people should have the right to participate in the forms of meaning-making that shape who they are and that help constitute them as individuals. This activity of meaning-making through cultural participation, artistic expression, and comment, as well as the phenomenon of mutual influence through the circulation of opinions, long predated the rise of modern democracies. And it continues even in countries that are still not democratic. Moreover, in the digital age, cultural participation is not confined to national boundaries and it does not respect national boundaries. Although cultural participation may be necessary to legitimate power within nation-states, it has importance and value that goes well beyond this task. Freedom of speech rests on multiple constitutional values, not a single value. Freedom of speech supports democratic self-government—in more than one way, as we will see in a moment. But freedom of speech also protects the freedom to participate in culture. And by protecting the right to participate in culture, freedom of speech also promotes the growth and spread of mores, opinions, values, art, and knowledge. Liberty-oriented theories of freedom of speech tend to emphasize individual self-expression, maintaining that speech is crucial to individual autonomy.28 By contrast, I want to emphasize the potent effects of mutual influence on individuals and the importance of cultural power over individuals.29 The individual’s autonomy over his or her conscience, belief, and expression is the flip side of the individual’s heteronomy with respect to cultural power.30 The individual as individual is both the product of multiple cultures and a contributor to these cultures. What we call **autonomy, or thinking for one’s self, is a**n unpredictable mixture of **reaction to, assimilation of, and reconceptualization of the cultural forces and meanings that surround us and constitute us. Cultures of belief and opinion—for they are always plural and variegated—have** the most serious and pervasive power **over us.** People influence and reshape each other over time by living and participating in cultures of belief and opinion, and by operating within networks of cultural power and organized knowledge. **Moreover, cultures feature powerful institutions and practices—like families, educational organizations, science, and religion—that produce, alter, and reproduce beliefs and opinions. People come to know themselves through their assimilation, alteration, and rejection of the cultures they inhabit and that inevitably inhabit them. Freedom of speech is about power—cultural power. People have a right to participate in the forms of cultural power that reshape and alter them, because what is literally at stake is their own selves.**

### Part 2: Stick to the Script

#### College theater is under attack, and controversial shows are censored.

**Hellman:** Hellman, Ron. [Contributor, *Times Ledger*] “Censorship is Alive and Well on American School Stages.” *Times Ledger*, January 26, 2015. BE

Freedom of speech is very much in the news these days, so an article in American Theatre with the headline “Who Cares about Censorship on School Stages?” particularly caught my attention. According to the writer, Howard Sherman, **there seems to be more censorship of** high school (and some **college) theater than** ever **before.** Such shows as **“Rent,” “Spamalot” and “Joe Turner’s Come and Gone” have received a thumbs down from the powers that be.** Suppression of theater can occur locally, too, often self-imposed. As some of you know, I have a theater company, The Outrageous Fortune Company, which produced 50 contemporary plays during a span of 17 years at the then-named Queens Theatre in the Park. (The “in the Park” has now vanished.) If you haven’t heard of my troupe, that’s because it’s been out of action since 2010, still searching for a new venue. Many, if not most, of the plays that I produced have not been performed by other local groups, even though they were well-reviewed in Manhattan, due in part, I suspect, to their content – provocative themes, rough language including profanity, and sexual situations. In other words, all the things you can find on cable (and even broadcast) television, on video games, and in the movies. Ironically, the graphic violence so often depicted on the big screen, enhanced by computer technology, seldom raises any protest or concern. Most theaters in Queens are found in houses of worship, and that often creates an atmosphere not conducive to the work of contemporary playwrights. Some years ago a local group wanted to produce the play “Other People’s Money” (also made into a movie) at a church in Jackson Heights. However, it was deemed unacceptable at that venue, even though, I can assure you, the material would get no more than a PG rating. “Joe Turner” was deemed objectionable because of the use of the “n-word.” Never mind that the play was authored by the late black playwright August Wilson, one of the most acclaimed of modern American writers. Or that the racist pejorative can be heard in “12 Years a Slave,” Best Picture Oscar winner in 2013, in the current “Selma,” among others, and in literature, including Mark Twain’s masterpiece “Huckleberry Finn.” “**Rent,” one of the longest running Broadway musicals, rubbed some the wrong way due to gay and drug-use themes**. Now I don’t say that anything goes — even free speech has its limits — but context is crucial. Censorship is never a good thing, and political correctness must yield to freedom of expression. **Good art** can and **should be controversial and challenging**.

#### But many schools disagree – countless empirics prove.

**Bonilla et al 1:** Bonilla, Peter [Vice President of Programs, Foundation for Individual Rights in Education]; Svetlana Mintcheva [Ph.D. Director of Programs, National Coalition Against Censorship]; Ralph Sevush, Esq. [Executive Director, Dramatists Guild]. “FIRE, NCAC, DLDF Letter to CSU Long Beach.” FIRE, September 23, 2016. BE

**N\*W\*C\* was created and is performed by members of the Speak Theater Arts company. First staged in 2004, the satirical play is performed by three actors—an Asian-American, a Hispanic American, and an African-American—and mocks racial stereotypes while deliberately forcing audiences to confront the cultural weight and history behind the racial and ethnic slurs comprising its title.** For more than a decade, Speak Theater Arts has performed N\*W\*C\* at dozens of colleges and universities throughout the country. The company completed a brief residency at CSULB and performed the play there in September 2015. The residency’s success led Michele Roberge, Executive Director of the Richard & Karen Carpenter Center for the Performing Arts, to schedule the play for another performance at the Carpenter Center on September 29 of this year. Administratively housed within CSULB’s College of the Arts (COTA), the Carpenter Center showcases performances by professional artists and serves as the home of residential production companies. While the Carpenter Center’s programming is not subject to preapproval by COTA or the university, COTA offers input on coordinating the Center’s proposed programming with academic departments or units where certain works may be of special interest. According to Roberge, the performance was initially scheduled in March 2016. Roberge alleges that she first encountered pressure from CSULB to cancel the performance in May, due to objections from CSULB community members to the play’s perceived content as well as its title. Roberge initially offered to reschedule the performance for early 2017 so that CSULB could add additional programming to help contextualize the issues confronted in N\*W\*C\*, but was finally informed by email on August 22 that **CSU**LB wa**s** cancelling the performance. Roberge, who had served at the Carpenter Center for fourteen years, resigned in protest, effective September 8. Subsequent statements by CSULB confirm that the **decision to cancel the performance was motivated by opposition to the content of N\*W\*C\*.** For example, the OC Weekly carried this statement from CSULB spokesperson Michael Uhlenkamp in an article dated September 7: “Members of the campus community [this year] voiced concerns that the performance wasn’t achieving the goal of constructing a dialogue about racial relations,” he said. “Not to disparage the performers, but there were questions of the educational value of the performance, so the president asked the Carpenter team to withdraw the performance.”2 **If** **students were not convinced of the play’s educational value when it was performed at CSULB last year, and have little interest in attending the play this year, that is of course their decision to make. Students are free not to attend N\*W\*C\*,** whether because they believe the play to be offensive or for any other reason. Likewise, faculty are free to coordinate academic programming with the Carpenter Center if they think it may enhance their students’ academic experiences, and they are free to decline to do so. But **instead of recognizing the freedom community members enjoy to reach their** own **determinations about the play—a freedom protected by the First Amendment—CSULB’s cancellation** has **unilaterally foreclosed any further engagement**. CSULB has also attempted to justify the cancellation as an academic decision limited only to withdrawing CSULB’s academic involvement with the performance. CSULB has further claimed that the Carpenter Center was free to stage the performance of N\*W\*C\* and that the center alone was responsible for cancelling the performance outright. But these contentions cannot be reconciled with public statements that CSULB directed that the performance itself be canceled. For example, per the Gazettes newspapers, Uhlenkamp stated that “President Conoley asked the Carpenter Center team to withdraw the performance from the 2016-17 schedule.”3 The unmistakable impression is that in response to criticism about the show’s content, CSULB determined that N\*W\*C\* should not and would not be performed at the Carpenter Center.

#### And it doesn’t end there: OSU canceled a progressive student play for being too “one-sided” on transgender issues[[1]](#footnote-1), and Washington State FUNDED a mob to disrupt a black student’s show.

**Lukianoff:** Lukianoff, Greg. [President, Foundation for Individual Rights in Education] “Unlearning Liberty: Campus Censorship and the End of American Debate.” FIRE, 160-163, 2012. BE

**Theater might not seem like a student activity that is likely to generate death threats and mob censorship;** indeed, the most serious challenge that most stu- dent playwrights face is getting people to show up to performances. In 2005, **Chris Lee, a student at Washington State** University, inspired by a project in his sociology class**,** **set out to make** a comedy **musical that, in the tradition of South Park** and Howard Stern**, offended as broad a spectrum of people as possible.** Unfortunately for him, he succeeded. **A mob of** forty **angry students showed up to disrupt his comedy** musical **by standing up in the middle of the performance and yelling,** “I’m offended,” **an act that** soon **escalated to slurs**, threats of violence, **and** even **death threats.** Chris was afraid for his safety and the safety of his actors. The angry crowd succeeded in stopping the play several times and threatened to turn a theater performance into a full-scale riot. Chris knew that t**he university promised to protect** students, especially **African American students like him, from** threats of **violence, but** the campus police did little to stop the mob. A er all, why would the university help him when (as he would later learn) his own school **had** trained, funded, and encouraged the mob **to** protest his play in the first place? Chris Lee’s comedy musical e Passion of the Musical was a loose parody of e Passion of the Christ, which had been one of the top grossing movies the previous year. The goal of the play, of which Chris was both author and director, “was to show people we’re not that different, we all have issues that can be made fun of” by poking fun at identity politics. (As Harvey Silverglate and I have frequently observed, parody and satire can be risky hobbies on campus.) I have seen the play and have discussed it several times with Chris, a mischievous and likable fellow who used to make a living in part through professional poker. e Passion of the Musical is not serious social satire, but an intentionally silly comedy intended to produce belly laughs for being so thoroughly politically incorrect. Instead, it provoked a wild response from the campus community and beyond. According to media coverage and interviews with Chris, dozens of groups were poised to protest the play, including the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; the Catholic Student Association; the Christian Crusad- ers; the Gay Straight Alliance; the Women’s and Ethnic Studies departments; the Latino and African American centers; the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Association; the Department of Psychology; the WSU Office of Campus Involvement; and even the local Pullman Police Department. Most of these protests came in the usual form of angry letters, op-eds, and picket- ers outside the show, but one of Chris’s parody songs pushed the norms of campus political correctness too far, and the protest was racheted up. at song was Meatloaf’s “I’d Do Anything for Love (But I Won’t Do at),” which Chris had changed to “I Would Do Anything for Love (But I Won’t Act Black).” Keep in mind, the musical was written by an African American student and featured a number of black performers, including Chris himself. And, the entire stated point of the play was to be an equal- opportunity offender and make fun of every identity group in the United States. Chris could not have been clearer about this fact, warning students ahead of time that the play was “offensive or inflammatory to all audiences.” ese warnings were in ads, on the tickets, and on the doors leading to the theater. Chris even added a warning before the show that students who were easily offended should leave. All this made the mob’s cries of “I’m offended” particularly ironic. at was the whole point. For his comedy musical, Chris earned the campus nickname “Black Hitler” from critics with an embarrass- ingly myopic view of history. Unfortunately, rather than allowing the play to go on, campus administrators at Washington State University organized students who were angry. The administration held a brief training session showing students how to **disrupt the play and** even **purchased their tickets**. If you send angry students to dis- rupt a play, don’t be surprised if they do so with gusto. When the bought-and- paid-for mob got out of hand, the campus p**olice told Chris that they** would **let the students rush the stage unless he changed the words to the parodied Meat- loaf song**. e university further dishonored itself the day a er the disruption, when the school’s president applauded the students for the “very responsible” exercise of their free speech rights. Yes, you read that right: WSU’s president, V. Lane Rawlins, was quoted in the campus paper as saying that the students in the angry, disruptive, potentially violent, university-organized mob, who shouted physical threats and were poised to rush the stage, “exercised their rights of free speech in a very responsible manner by letting the writer and players know exactly how they felt.” **In a truly Orwellian turn, university-sponsored mob censorship had become free speech.**

#### Indeed, such acts create an artistic chilling effect on students EVEN IF the censorship later gets overturned.

**Goldsmith:** Goldsmith, Brandon Chase. [University of Memphis] “A New Form of Political Theater: The United Churchof America.” Arizona State University, May 2009. BE

Origins: Artistic Activism. **Two main roots combined to form the fundamentals and foundation for the UCA, my artistic sensibilities and the experience I gained from a confrontation with institutional censorship.** In the spring of 2005 I built an installation piece, Crow's New Office, as an artistic response to two controversial instances involving religion and censorship **at Arizona State** University (ASU). According to the Associated Press (AP), on orders from the President of the University, Michael Crow, the Student Affairs President threatened to withdraw monetary support from the student newspaper, the State Press, if they ran a picture of a pierced breast as part of an article reporting on students and piercing (DeFalco, 2004). Allegedly, ASU's biggest individual donor and Arizona's largest home builder, Ira Fulton had personally placed a phone call to President Crow, complaining about the upcoming article. Research revealed that Crow had a plan to increase ASU's student population to 90,000 by the year 2020 (Butler, 2004). "Fulton, who belongs to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said he would like to see the campus be a more appealing place for the Mormons in his community" (Wanke, 2005). A major component of Crow's vision involved an idea pushed by Fulton, making ASU Mormon friendly, in order to entice the local Mormon population away from sending their children to Brigham Young University in Utah. "Fulton also acknowledged that his decision was made easier by a visit Crow made in February to Salt Lake City to meet with leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Hart, 2003). Crow and Fulton had put together a plan and it seems Fulton rewarded Crow's efforts with a multi-million dollar donation. A student newspaper article, which included a picture of a pierced breast, however, did not fit into their mission. The solution to this problem was an attempt at censorship, but the student paper stood their ground, ran the article and was named the winner of the 2005 Payne Awards for Ethics in Journalism ("State Press wins", 2005). The second controversy involved **a doctoral candidate’s performance, which was about his experience as a gay Mormon missionary. The ASU Mormon community pressured the university to ban the performance,** one week before it was scheduled to go up. "**Members of the Mormon church, expressed concerns they had with the play, although both admit they had never seen or read the play**...the day after Ellsworth sent Crow his request for cancellation of the show, ASU provost Milton Glick requested an October 7 meeting with Goodall [director of the school of communication] regarding the play" (Watson, 2004). **The show was stopped, but after review was allowed to be produced six months later. The damage**, however, **had** already **been done; an artistic chilling effect had been established.**

#### Worse, such shut-downs set a *precedent* of censorship over speech.

**Bonilla et al 2:** Bonilla, Peter [Vice President of Programs, Foundation for Individual Rights in Education]; Svetlana Mintcheva [Ph.D. Director of Programs, National Coalition Against Censorship]; Ralph Sevush, Esq. [Executive Director, Dramatists Guild]. “FIRE, NCAC, DLDF Letter to CSU Long Beach.” FIRE, September 23, 2016. BE

**Critical engagement with uncomfortable issues is part of the educational process.** Such dialogue is especially important at a university, the quintessential marketplace of ideas. **A public university’s role is to challenge students**, **to** help them **confront cultural realities critically**, and to make them think**.** A public univers**it**y **fails** in **its educational mission when it eliminates programming because some** members of its community **consider it offensive** or objectionable**.** CSULB’s decision is particularly disappointing in light of the strong stand you took last year in the face of local opposition to N\*W\*C\*. Your previous defense both of the Carpenter Center’s right to stage the performance and of art’s potential to serve as a vehicle for discussion and enlightenment was true to CSULB’s stated intention to imbue in students “a love of ideas; an appreciation of artistic expression, science, and technology; and an understanding of varied cultures.” This year’s unfortunate and unnecessary **cancellation ultimately raises concerns** not only **for** the Carpenter Center’s **future** programming, but for **student and faculty programming** as well. We fear that these are not theoretical concerns. CSULB’s handling of **this** episode **represents** a missed opportunity for the CSULB community, and **a failure to embody the ideals of free expression central to CSULB’s place as a public university.**

#### Plan: Public colleges and universities in the United States ought not restrict any constitutionally protected speech in student-devised theater productions on campus. This means schools can’t restrict the content of any student-written theater.

**Sherman**: Sherman, Howard [Director, Arts Integrity Initiative at the New School for Drama] “Dancing Towards Censorship in Oklahoma State University’s Theatre.” Howardsherman.com, March 2, 2016. CH

**When** a **student-devised piece of theatre** begins as The Politics of Dancing, an examination of relationships springing from Ibsen’s A Doll’s House, and **is ultimately produced as This Title Has Been Censored, something is amiss**. When a student production scheduled for multiple performances in a college theatre department’s mainstage season ends up as a single workshop performance with rudimentary tech given during a final exam period, something is strange. When an original work of theatre begins to address gender roles and is immediately downsized, something is troubling. **When these actions were prompted because a**n inchoate **project** wa**s judged by departmental leadership based solely on a few** preliminary **scenes** reviewed four months before the work was to be finished, **something seems wrong. He adds:** My first thought is to say that if indeed you are not already well-versed, Dr. Kimbrough, you should become familiar with the process of devised theatre as an evolutionary process that cannot necessarily be given a label more than half a year in advance and be expected to stick to exactly the original premise. **That said, devised theatre must have a place in the OSU theatre department with the full resources of the department, because devised theatre is important both academically and creatively; it is essential that theatre students of today learn about and experience devised,** collaborative **works to prepare them for professional careers.** Please reconsider your statements and overall perspective, Dr. Kimbrough, about the audience being the most important arbiter of what students perform at OSU. Your assertion in The O’Colly, “When you’re running a business, this is the No. 1 rule,” seems profoundly misplaced within an academic theatre program. **Students should not be educated according to the perceived preferences of the local consumer marketplace, but rather taught in order to develop their talent, their skills, and their knowledge so that they themselves are competitive in the marketplace of theatre**. Indeed, if your position on why we make theatre were voiced by the artistic director of most of America’s not-for-profit theatres, that individual would be questioned by many in the field for abdicating the role of an artistic leader and **kowtowing to lowest common denominator sentiments.** Yes, there are financial demands on all theatres, and theatre cannot survive without an audience, but those concerns need to operate in balance with the creative impulse. To visit those concerns on students who have paid for a complete theatrical education**, with audience satisfaction superseding the education imperative, seems a corruption of the role of academics.**

### Part 3: Take a Bow

#### Controversial theater is key to exposing oppression on campus – Santa Clara proves.

**Fawcett:** Fawcett, Madeleine. [Writer, *The Santa Clara Newspaper*] “Despite Controversy, ‘Welcome to Claradise’ Illuminates Student Voices.” *The Santa Clara Newspaper*,March 2017. RP

**The** new on-**campus play Welcome to Claradise** has been pretty controversial, as many people involved in the Santa Clara community are aware.  The play [**focuses**](http://thesantaclara.org/welcome-to-claradise-highlights-past-and-present-campus-discrimination/)**on the campus’ reaction to hateful** vandalism that occurred in Casa Italiana Residence hall last quarter. **In** October, **2016,** two **students drew a swastika in blood in a residence hall** elevator **and wrote anti-LGBTQ slurs** on a poster in the fourth floor hallway**.** The play also touches upon the vandalism of the 43 Students Memorial at the beginning of fall quarter.  **The show** illuminates the reality of life at Santa Clara—much of the script **is built around** interviews that the production team conducted with members of the campus community. These interviews tell the **stories of discrimination on campus, describing rape culture at Santa Clara and the casual use of racist, sexist language between students. However, [M]any students have criticized the play**’s approach. The cast lacks diversity and the production team failed to interview important campus leaders from groups like the MCC, Unity 4 and the Ethnic Studies program, among others.  When I first heard about the opposition to the play, I was torn. I wanted to hear the stories Welcome to Claradise promised to tell. I wanted to learn how the swastika drawn in blood and the vandalism of the 43 Students Memorial impacted people besides my immediate friends and myself. I wanted to support the cast and the crew, who I knew were committed to their mission and to the stories they had collected.  **But** I also wanted to support the students whose voices had been left out of the play. If I went, would it mean I didn’t understand or care about the significant objections these students had raised?  I know the internal conflict and confusion I experienced was not unique. I have friends who also debated whether or not to go, and some who ended up choosing not to. Ultimately, however, I did decide to go and I’m glad I did.  **From** i**nterviews acted out by the cast, I heard how the blood swastika affected different members of the Santa Clara community,** including people living in Casa Italiana and several Jewish students. I learned how the homophobic slurs impacted a closeted student leader. I heard about how prejudice and racism presided over a black female student’s first week of freshman year. I saw (**and** related to) **how sexism and violence against women impact the daily lives of other female s**tudents **on campus** While I believe the criticism of this play is important, I think those who choose not to see the Welcome to Claradise are missing out on **an important opportunity to hear student voices.** I agree that the cast’s lack of diversity and the production team’s failure to interview several important campus leaders is problematic. However, the stories told in this play are about real members of our community: their experiences, struggles and concerns. Every interview contained a unique message about individual student experiences at Santa Clara. And if I hadn’t seen Welcome to Claradise, I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to hear and learn from these student stories at all.  The play debuted on Friday, March 10. It will run from Wednesday, March 15 to Saturday, March 18 in the Louis B. Mayer Theatre—performances are at 8 p.m. each night. You can purchase tickets for showings of Welcome to Claradise [here](https://red.vendini.com/ticket-software.html?t=tix&e=1e0f86c9070f423dc81b58647d62503f).  The March 15 performance is a free arts appreciation event, so use the code ARTSAPPRECIATION to obtain free tickets for the show.

#### And controversial COLLEGE theater often has a spillover effect, stimulating social change – empirics prove.

**Lavrinienko:** Lavrinienko, Daria. [University of Barcelona] “Theatre as a Tool in Education and in Social and Political Activism: David Greig’s *Dr. Korczak’s Example* (2001) and Caryl Churchill’s *Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza* (2009).” University of Barcelona,2015. MZ

However, as Annie Sloman notices, conventional theatre also can “potentially encourage change” (2011: 44). Both conventional and participatory **theatre can stimulate action by “engag[ing] people to identify issues of concern, analyse and then together think about how change can happen, and particularly how relationships of power and oppression can be transformed”** (Sloman 2011: 44). Greig, whose work includes both conventional and participatory plays, such as plays written for children, believes, that “political theatre has at its very heart the possibility of change” (Nichols 2013: 48). 14 Not all academics or playwrights agree, though, that theatre has the potential to contribute to social change in general. For instance, and as noted by Joe Kelleher, Peter Handke, Austrian playwright and political activist, argues that “theatre‟s instrumentalism, its use as a means of guiding our actions and changing the world, does not work – never did, never will” (2009: 57). The political and social functions of theatre depend a great deal on the circumstances in which it is produced, as well as on the audience it targets – a specific production might „work‟ with one group of people, and not work with another. Joe Kelleher argues that this characteristic of political theatre actually constitutes its value, which hinges precisely on its “instability and unpredictability” (2009: 24). Unpredictability is also central to Jacques Rancière‟s understanding of both spectatorial activity and of the ethico-political effects of aesthetic work in general. For Rancière, the ethico-political potential of any artistic practice depends on its ability to “interrupt the distribution of the sensible” or “reconfigure the sensible delimitation of what is common to the community, the forms of its visibility and its organization” (2004: 18), but the actual realization of such potential is ultimately the unpredictable outcome of the intersection between (emancipated) spectators‟ active engagement and the complexity of countless contextual factors.2 As mentioned previously, applied theatre projects vary within a shared orientation towards promoting social change. Two **examples of such projects include** the research based play I am Still Here (2004) authored by doctors Gail J. Mitchell and Christine Jonas-Simpson and playwright Vrenia Ivonoffski (Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program n.d), depicting people diagnosed with dementia so as to encourage tolerance and humaneness towards this disease (Mitchell, Dupuis, and Jonas-Simpson 2011: 22), and the dance theatre project **Speak Out. Act Up. Move Forward, devised by Urbano and involving “immigrant students** or children of immigrants, many of **who**m **grapple with questions of identity, assimilation, and communication” (Kotin et al. 2013: 191).** I am Still Here premiered in 2004 in the Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program (MAREP) at the University of Waterloo (Canada), and over the following three years it toured Canada and the US, playing more than hundred times in an attempt to spread understanding of the disorder. As a result, “many professionals spoke of being more patient and understanding with people and more willing to learn about their likes and wishes, instead of just giving care without considering the person. They were able to link these new understandings and actions to specific scenes in the play” (Mitchell, Dupuis, and Jonas-Simpson 2011: 25). Ultimately, Mitchell, Dupuis and Jonas-Simpson report, “audience members constructed new ways of seeing through the drama, they felt – felt it deeply – the ethical call – and they responded with passionate expressions to act” (2011: 26). This project, focused on social transformation, illustrates how theatre can „activate‟ spectators and inspire change. The second example of applied theatre concerns the politically inspired dance theatre show Speak Out. Act Up. Move Forward. conducted by the Urbano Project partly in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology‟s Department of Arts, Culture, and Technology. Urbano “seek[s] parallels between the processes of studio experimentation and political engagement” (Kotin et al. 2013: 191). In the case of Speak Out. Act Up. Move Forward., “Urbano‟s staff and instructors wondered how young people could use art as a tool to enter public conversations about authority, social control, and personal freedom” (2013: 191) by exploring “historic and contemporary acts of civil disobedience from Occupy Boston to the Tiananmen Square protests” 16 (Urbano n.d). The idea developed into this project for young people, which encouraged them to “speak up‟ about “struggles to stand up for their beliefs, express themselves, and defy social and family expectations in the face of bullying and peer pressure” (Kotin et al. 2013: 192). **The project resulted in a dance performance “that invited audience members to propose their own interpretations and see themselves as actors in the struggles Urbano dancers portrayed”** (2013: 199). While I am Still Here might be described as a „conventional‟ play, as it does not have audience participation as its main purpose, Speak Out. Act Up. Move Forward. explicitly invited audience participation. **In both cases, however, the audience participated as active, emancipated spectators, responding to the ethical calls for tolerance by – demonstrably in the first case, most probably in the second – taking further social and political action**

#### In fact, race-based student theater CHANGES THE GAME, building empathy that can end oppression.

**Thompson:** Thompson, James. [Professor of Applied and Social Theatre, Manchester University] “Performance Affects Applied Theatre and the End of Effect.” Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. BE

About Face has moved from a specific argument about the ethical call of the face to a claim that certain **performance events** – whether they are applied theatre projects or street theatre – **can be interventions in a** frequently **violent or oppressive organisation** of the sensible**.** The concept of the face has been used to suggest that **intimate meetings** **between people, the** primary ground **of** much **performance** practice**, can create an** ethical demand **on a person** that is both specific and general. Although the classic conception of the face insists that this is a call that cannot be ignored, I have suggested that, **through** sensory or **aesthetic encounter with others**, we can become more aware of the demand that it makes. Once this is felt, **we are drawn beyond ourselves[.]** in such a way that our autonomy **is limited** – and, although we may be overwhelmed by the enormity of **this**, it **can be an** energising source **of** our commitment to **social change.** Where the infinite call to act, protect or struggle for rights does overpower, projects involving the beautiful can offer a screen, res- pite or protection – from the conditions of difficult lives or the poten- tially paralysing affect of these monumental political challenges. In order for **performance projects** to **encourage** **individuals to see** the face of the other, I have argued that a prejudice towards physiognomy needs to be countered. We do not see the face in order to be infected by the trauma it transmits or edified by the story of suffering it reveals. The face should make an ethical demand for our **responsibility** to that person, and, therefore, **to all people** in a similar situation. This might be **through the story they tell, their smile on stage,** their playing of a game About Face: Disturbing the Fabric of the Sensible 177 or through shared perruque-like acts of resistance. Performance practice following this logic becomes a sensitising process which might include the withdrawal of the face, the right to turn it away, as much as a held gaze between two people. These processes are, then, understood as part of a wider political project – that does not denigrate performance as preparation for the real work of political change, but values it as a pur- poseful part of an intervention into our sensible world. **Applied theatre in this argument is** one intervention in the fabric of the sensible amongst many – but one **particularly adept at working in sites where the distribution is** most **inequitable**. While the argument suggests that the politics of the street is wrongly valued above the ‘ethics of the work- shop’, the case here is that both are political (and both will fail if they are not ethical). **Although applied theatre, and all forms of participatory performance, might appear small and insignificant, without a place in which sensitivity to the face of the other can be nurtured, politics will be drained of its passion and continue to lack its capacity for care. Without the intimacy of meeting others, the universal programmes – for the rights of street children, for the demands of the homeless or for the needs of refugees – will extract the human from the heart of their action, and in so doing forget that social change, while perhaps motivated by a sense of anger at suffering and inequity, is also vitally about the compassion we feel.**

#### Indeed, school theater challenges dominant narratives by letting minorities tell their OWN stories.

**Yap writes:** Yap, Audrey Cleo. [Contributor, *The Atlantic*] “Can Theater Save Minority History in U.S. Classrooms?” *The Atlantic*,June 2016. RP

**Whose version of history makes it into textbooks—and, ultimately, classrooms—can have negative consequences, especially on minority students[.],** as one [graduate-level study](http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1214&context=education_ETD_masters) about textbooks used in suburban high-schools in New York suggested. When minorities are inaccurately or stereotypically portrayed, minority students themselves question the validity of the source material and, at times, the teachers themselves. The study cites research conducted with Japanese American and Mexican American students, among others, in other parts of the U.S.: “The main conclusion which the authors were able to draw was that when minority students become aware they are not being presented with accurate and unbiased information, they will begin to resent the topic, the text, and the teacher.” **Theater, then, has become one avenue through which** non-profit groups in California—a state with a [62 percent minority population](http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article25940218.html) and one of the most diverse make-ups in the country—ensure **students learn about minorities in U.S. history, both past and present. The ramification of pushing a white-dominant historical narrative, argues EWP’s Tokuda, is erasure of minority voices: “The consequences are that no one will care, and we become invisible** again.” Similar initiatives have emerged around the country, like [Red Eagle Soaring Native Youth Theatre](http://redeaglesoaring.org/) in Seattle, which, following [the murder of a Native American woodcarver](http://www.kplu.org/post/woodcarver-fatal-shooting-not-justified-says-seattle-police-board) by a police officer, produced a play in 2011 about the violence Native Americans have historically faced at the hands of law enforcement. [Silk Road Rising](http://www.silkroadrising.org/), a theater group in Chicago that focuses on Asian American and Middle Eastern stories, organizes a [16-week writing program](http://www.silkroadrising.org/pages/epic) for area schools that emphasizes cultural sensitivity, at the end of which students produce an original 10-minute play. But whether these lessons stick is debatable. Many programs, like EWP’s, parachute into schools once a year, making stories about marginalized groups an event rather than endemic to students’ educations. Administrators of the three programs I examined for this story could only cite anecdotal evidence and surveys—self-reported by teachers and students—about the efficacy of their programs. It’s unclear what lasting effect, if any, the programs have had on white students. **Brent Blair, an associate professor of theatre practice at the University of Southern California,** sees the potential shortcomings of these initiatives. He **specializes in** [**Theatre of the Oppressed**](http://theforumproject.org/whatisto/)**, a set of techniques developed by the Brazilian director Augusto Boal that emphasize audience-performer interaction to promote messages of** social change. He likens the programs to students reading a play about someone who is bullied for being gay, the proposed lessons of which can be limited, even entirely ineffective, depending on how students interact with the material. “There’s no indication that reading that inclusive story in the classroom is going to shift anybody’s perspective except possibly make the class, en masse, collectively grateful that they themselves are not gay,” said Blair. **Per the pedagogy of Theatre of the Oppressed, the theater experience, he says, has to be more participatory for the audience in order to generate a lasting sense of empathy for the “oppressed”[.] party, e.g., gay cast members act out a scene then invite audience members to imitate the cast members’ roles onstage and attempt to fight against the bully.** “Then the audience members, students in the classrooms, [put] themselves in the shoes of the person and fail against a strong antagonist. The hearts have to be changed in attempting actions before the mind has a strong shift in perspective.” Blair points to several case studies where Theatre of the Oppressed techniques were used, including a community theater project engaging at-risk youth in [South Africa](https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/114957/06-Chinyowa.pdf) and another one with homeless women in [New Haven, Connecticut](http://www.musicandartsinaction.net/index.php/maia/article/view/theatreopressedhomeless). But he acknowledges that measuring the efficacy of Theatre of the Oppressed techniques is difficult. The case studies, for example, do not show how these productions impacted the community around them and whether they had influenced lasting change. **Homero Rosas, 20, is one actor who is directly connected to the experience he portrays on-stage. The San Francisco-based student is a cast member of** [**In and Out of the Shadows**](http://www.sfyouththeatre.org/InandOutofShadows.html)**, a musical about the Bay Area’s undocumented youth,** sometimes known as “[DREAMers](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/who-and-where-dreamers-are).” Written by the Chicano poet and novelist Gary Soto and based on hundreds of first-person interviews, the production is the brainchild of the San Francisco Youth Theatre director and composer Emily Klion. A third of the cast is made up of undocumented actors from an array of backgrounds, including Mexican, Filipino, and Guatemalan. The show is performed at middle schools, high schools, and colleges. “When you’re not a DREAMer, you don’t realize the challenges you’re not facing,” Klion said. Klion first took notice of those issues—including not being able to travel, attend school, or retain work permits—when she tried hiring several students as interns, only to learn that they did not have social-security numbers. Rosas was one of them. “I definitely didn’t know what I couldn’t do because I wasn’t born here, but I knew I wasn’t born here,” said Rosas, who came to the U.S. at age 6. He says his undocumented status has made him fearful of traveling outside of California; in the past 14 years, he says he has only gone as far as Oregon. Growing up, he was astutely aware of his family’s status. “It was more cautionary tales like, ‘Watch out for immigration,’ or ‘[Don’t get in trouble] ‘cause if you get in trouble, they’ll send you back to Mexico and you can’t come back.’ It was very direct.” In the production, Rosas plays “Juan #2,” a light-hearted high-school senior who loves to skateboard. While initially hesitant to share his own story with Soto and Klion, he ultimately **found the experience cathartic and hopes to humanize the plight of undocumented young people like himself**. “People sometimes forget that we are normal human beings that are not documented. That’s the only difference between me and my neighbors, between me and my classmates.” Rosas sees the play as a launching point for discussing the legal purgatory DREAMers find themselves in; Soto does, too. “I would ask our government to answer the question of undocumented youth. What is their legal status? How are we going to weave them into our country?,” said Soto, the playwright. “They’re not going anywhere. They’re here. So how are we going to possibly welcome them in a legal manner? That would be the highest goal [of this production].” California’s immigrant history was also central to L.A. Opera’s in-school residency [program](http://www.laopera.org/Community/Education-and-Community-Engagement/Classroom-Integration/) this year. Adapting the music from Giacomo Puccini’s Turandot, The Legend of Cannery Row is an original operetta set in Monterey, California, and depicts the story of Chinese immigrants as they built up the area’s fishing industry in the 1850s. Stacy Brightman, the senior director of education and community outreach at L.A. Opera, says she saw parallels in Turandot—about a prince who travels to China and falls in love with a princess—with the Chinese American experience of discrimination and rejection. “The unknown prince is a stranger in a strange land. He comes into the kingdom and falls in love with the princess who disdains him. It’s sort of like all the stories of immigrants and all the different ways they heard, ‘I might want your money, I might want your labor, but I don’t want you,’” Brightman said. Opera professionals teach the 10-week program to select L.A. county elementary schools, with students concluding the program by performing the play as chorus singers. Brightman says she deliberately picks works that can resonate with the history of minorities in California to not only reflect the student body of Los Angeles Unified School District—the second largest school district in the country, [almost 90 percent](http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/Enrollment/EthnicEnr.aspx?cChoice=DistEnrEth&cYear=2011-12&cSelect=1932276--CEA+LOS+ANGELES+CO&TheCounty=&cLevel=District&cTopic=Enrollment&myTimeFrame=S&cType=ALL&cGender=B) of whom are minority students—but also to change the stereotype that opera is an art form exclusively accessible to the old, rich, and white. Next year’s play will be The White Bird of Poston” about the Poston War Relocation Center, a Japanese internment camp housed on the Colorado River Indian Reservation between 1942 and 1945. **The stage, then, has become one place where minority history is not only acted out but also remembered as part of a larger U.S. historical narrative**, something history textbook scribes may want to consider since students of color [account for more than half](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/08/20/01demographics.h34.html) of today’s public-school population—and that minority-majority shift is expected to take place for the entire U.S. population within the next few decades. It also highlights the ways history sometimes repeats itself: Bhagat Singh Thind fought for the right to wear his turban during his military service in 1918. A Sikh U.S. Army captain was engaged in—and won—[a similar fight](http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/04/us/sikh-army-captain-simratpal-singh-beard-turban/) in April. After the showing of the The United States vs. Bhagat Singh Thind at Palms Middle ended, the students peppered the actors, playwright, and director with questions about how they learned their lines, whether they could “feel” what the characters were feeling. They ask about whether the rap battle actually took place. The answer? It didn’t—at least according to the history books.

#### Theater is uniquely key to Black liberation.

**Barrios:** Barrios, Olga. [Professor, Department of English Studies, Universidad de Salamanca] “The Black Theatre Movement in the United States and in South Africa.” Universidad de Valencia,2008. MZ

Carl G. Jung showed his disinterest for material progress and wisely realized the sickness of the Occident, criticizing Westerner’s insatiability as part of his own patrimony. This insatiability, in Jung’s words, is unilateral and “such a diet for the soul will drive [the Westerner] to a severe imbalance. This is which produces the Occidental man’s sickness, who on top of it does not rest until he has contaminated the whole world with his voracity and restlessness.”4 **Africans and African Americans have been victims of the Occidental sickness pointed out by Jung. Conscious of Western political and intellectual imperialism upon their culture[.] Black South Africans and African Americans opted for an artistic birth that would reject the political and artistic patterns of the Western world as the only valid ones. The Black Theatre Movement** operated an enormous impact both in the Western world as well as within the African and African American communities. The Movement **demonstrated the existence of heterogeneity of cultures against the Western false claim for a**n only **and** h**omogeneous one. The Black Theatre** Movement in the United States **opened the door to and encouraged many other communities** who shared specific and genuine characteristics **to voice their equally genuine values.** Furthermore, the Movement helped the development and growth of other movements—i.e., women and gay movements. In the creation of the **Black Theatre** Movement, reciprocity with the African continent was established. The liberation and independence of new African countries by the end of the fifties had equally encouraged African Americans in their own struggle for liberation, and **helped them assert the values that were part of their African American culture**. Similarly, Black South Africans were aware of both African Americans’ and other African countries’ struggle for liberation. The Black Power Movements that originated in the United States during the sixties were a significant inspiration for Black South Africans and their Black Consciousness Movement; and Frantz Fanon’s theories nourished both the political and artistic movements of African Americans and Black South Africans. The artists of the Black Theatre Movement in the United States and in South Africa shared the same social-political goals and aesthetic patterns. They were committed theatre artists who believed their community to be at the center of their art. Consequently, these artists continued the African traditional principle of art and life being intertwined as well as art and the artist performing a social function and responsibility within their community. Black theatre **comprised a clear social function, suggesting new avenues to be pursued in Blacks’ struggle for freedom both in the United States and in South Africa. As Maponya had asserted regarding his theatre, Black theatre was not dogmatic but didactic, for [I]t attempted to reach a Black community and raise awareness among their people of the evils of oppression and alienation under which they are forced to live.**

**Since affirming promotes this type of empowerment, I affirm.**

1. Sherman, Howard [Director, Arts Integrity Initiative at the New School for Drama] “Dancing Towards Censorship in Oklahoma State University’s Theatre.” Howardsherman.com, March 2, 2016. BE [↑](#footnote-ref-1)