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Research Statement

The aim of my research is to de-center the dominant epistemological norms which underlie much of modern thought. Utilizing postmodern theorists such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, my work critiques modern thought's reliance on the ability of "reason" to engage an empirical world through which individuals observe and transform existing political, legal and social structures. In my publications and conference papers, I replace individual reason, and the objects of the world which reason attempts to apprehend, with highly interpretive, and aesthetic, processes. These processes construct that which is "observed." I also critique attempts by Pragmatist theorists such as Robert Talisse and Cheryl Misak to ground democracy in epistemic norms which are, presumably, universal and non-refutable.

From my critique of modern thought and politics, two intertwined paths of analysis unfold. First, I am interested in how we come to know the world and how supposed foundational truths emerge and function. On this path, I am developing and utilizing aspects of *aesthetic judgment* and *performative critique* to counter Pragmatist and Deliberative paradigms structured by claims of "inquiry" and "reason." Second, I am interested in how we come to know ourselves, and come to be known, through the complex processes of identity construction. On this path, I am developing an approach to identity politics in which past attempts to stabilize identity construct a complex structure which forms the context for ongoing political redeployments. In this research, I am engaged with feminist and queer theory, social construction and multiculturalism. The two paths are intertwined with an overall concern for the ways in which center-margin dynamics construct particular ideas and identities into seemingly unintelligible "others."

My journal article *Robert Talisse's Epistemic Democracy: A Deconstruction* utilizes a performative analysis to critique the philosophical, political, and Pragmatist bases of Talisse's structures of inquiry. My book review of Talisse's "Democracy and Moral Conflict" counterpoises the epistemic principles espoused by Talisse with the ways in which he avoids engaging his epistemological "others."

I have also been publishing a number of web articles utilizing my theoretical perspectives to examine contemporary issues such as the politics of inequality. These publications are part of my ongoing project to present theory as a "toolbox" which can provide useful analyses of specific political questions and social controversies.