

Gaslighting Citizens

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[L]eaders...have argued that if their followers or subjects are not strong enough to stick to the resolution themselves, they—the leaders—ought to help them avoid contact with the misleading evidence. For this reason, they have urged or compelled people not to read certain books, writings, and the like. But many people need no compulsion. They avoid reading things, and so on.

— Saul Kripke, “On Two Paradoxes of Knowledge”

At a rally in Philadelphia, Donald Trump addressed news reports that on an official visit to the United Kingdom he had been late for a meeting with Queen Elizabeth. Against this account, the president insisted that in fact he had been early, and that he was the one who had been made to wait. A variety of news sources were quick to observe that Trump’s insistence was belied by obvious, readily accessible evidence. Given the public nature of the event, reporters could easily furnish a variety of photographs of the Queen waiting for Trump—even checking her watch. Beyond that, anyone could watch the twelve minute video of the Queen standing alone as television commentators anxiously discussed the president’s impending arrival.

Trump’s anger at the “fake, fake, disgusting news” coverage of his tardiness is a particularly vivid instance of a now well-documented phenomenon.² Faced with seemingly incontrovertible evidence, Trump has regularly doubled down on false assertions rather than revising his statements. The president’s alacrity for false assertions have been widely discussed among journalistic and academic authors, who have felt a need to describe how Trump’s practice departs from completely ordinary political truth-bending. Set against a contrast class of actors well known for prevaricating, Trump’s mendacity is remarkable. His assertions seem completely untethered from any norm of evidence sensitivity whatsoever.

Commentators have invoked the concept of “gaslighting” to describe Trump’s (and his surrogates’) rhetorical habit. Without hesitation, Trump’s supporters have thrown this charge back at their opponents. Both sides define gaslighting in the same way, so the disagreement appears to be substantive. On a standard construal, gaslighting involves manipulating another person into questioning their perceptions—including apparently obvious perceptions. However, in the political variant of gaslighting, this effect does not appear to be present. It’s commonplace to observe that the current political moment is highly polarized, and so it’s not surprising that Trump’s detractors’ beliefs are not susceptible to his influence. If there are ‘victims’ of gaslighting, it must be Trump’s own supporters. However, far from worrying that their reality might be false, or that their perceptions might be unsupported by evidence, political partisans report being especially confident

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² Allcot and Gentzkow, “Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31:2 (2017): 211-236.

of their beliefs. When Trump insisted that he had waited for the Queen, the crowd roared with approval. These are not people who have lost confidence in their perceptions. In other words, if there is a problem with gaslighting in politics, it differs from the adverse psychological consequences usually carried in tow.

And yet commentators agree that political gaslighting threatens democratic values. So what is wrong with it? One possible response is that even if partisans don't recognize the epistemically adverse conditions they inhabit, the fact remains that their beliefs are deeply disconnected from the evidence. In the political scientist's terminology, their political beliefs display a directional goal rather than an accuracy goal.³ Gaslighting is bad for politics, on this view, because it contributes to a political system in which citizens' attitudes are unmoored from the evidence about how things really are, and that is democratically dangerous. According to what we might call political evidentialism, the political beliefs of citizens ought to be apportioned according to only the epistemically relevant considerations.

Political evidentialism accords well with the common frustration that partisans sacrifice the truth on the altar of political expediency. But it also risks throwing out a great deal of civic virtue along with unwanted epistemic distortions. This is because a key ingredient in successful social movements is the belief that the movement's members can together bring about political change. When members share a common belief in their "group efficacy," they are more likely to persist and ultimately prevail in their political objectives.⁴ However, the conviction of self-efficacy is more closely connected to group identity than it is to the available evidence, and it may sometimes run contrary to the available evidence.⁵ When citizens believe in their capacity for successful political action in ways that extend beyond the available evidence, they have what we will call audacious beliefs. We will suggest that there is sometimes a democratic value to audacious beliefs.

The value of audacious beliefs stands in tension with political evidentialism. If so, then it seems that political evidentialism cannot explain what is wrong with political gaslighting. Our aim in this paper is to try to make some sense of what's wrong with gaslighting in distinctively political contexts in a way that sheds light on how evidence should constrain political beliefs. Unlike in what we might call standard gaslighting cases, political gaslighting does not appear to threaten the perspective of its victims. However, it does subvert citizens from recognizing each other as authoritative

³ For example, Bolson, T., Druckman, J.N., and Cook, F.L., "The Influence of Partisan Motivated Reasoning on Public Opinion," *Political Behavior* 36 (2014): 235-262.

⁴ Van Zomeren, "Four Core Social-Psychological Motivations to Undertake Collective Action," *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 7:6 (2013): 378-388; Van Zomeren, Leach, and Spears, "Does Group Efficacy Increase Group Identification? Resolving Their Paradoxical Relationship," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 46 (2010): 1055-1060; Emma F. Thomas and Craig A. McGarty, "The Role of Efficacy and Moral Outrage Norms in Creating the Potential for International Development Activism through Group-Based Interaction," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 48 (2009): 115-134.

⁵ Emma F. Thomas and Winnifred Louis, "Doing Democracy: The Social Psychological Mobilization and Consequences of Collective Action," *Social Issues and Policy Review* 7:1 (2013): 173-200.

Biggs and Andrews, "Protest Campaigns and Movement Success: Desegregating the U.S. South in the Early 1960s," *American Sociological Review* 80:2 (2015): 416-443.

participants in shared political deliberation. In this way, it works to threaten the standpoint shared by citizens together. We will suggest that the disposition to have audacious beliefs is a delicate virtue. The very posture that is needed for a movement to accomplish anything, audacious believing, also makes us liable to a particular kind of manipulation.

Our argument proceeds in six parts. First, we will sketch the concept of gaslighting as it has been developed in the philosophical literature. Second, we apply the concept of gaslighting to cases of manipulation by political elites. Then we consider evidentialism as a response to gaslighting. Section four explains the role that audacious believing plays in persevering in our individual and collective projects. The final two sections respond to a dilemma for citizenship as an ideal that governs our evidential policies. How can we protect ourselves from the gaslighter without rendering ourselves insusceptible to mobilizing efforts that are central to democratic politics?

1. Gaslighting

Our concept derives from the play and subsequent movie, *Gaslight*, in which Gregory intentionally attempts to cause Paula to doubt her sensory inputs. In the titular act of manipulation, Gregory changes the brightness of the gaslights in their home but insistently denies that there is any difference when Paula repeatedly notices that the lights have dimmed. This moment serves as a paradigm for Kate Abramson's account, according to which gaslighting aims "to induce in someone the sense that her reactions, perceptions, memories and/or beliefs are not just mistaken, but utterly without grounds."⁶ This process is diachronic. Gaslighting involves not merely ignoring or dismissing another person, but a hostility to even the possibility of challenge.⁷ Its most extreme success condition is the destruction of the "independent, separate, deliberative perspective from which the disagreement arises."⁸

This proposal is morally and psychologically complex. It will help to look a little more closely at its component parts. On Abramson's account, gaslighting is one form of manipulation. Manipulation is often understood as a way of influencing another person that is at least *pro tanto* wrong, but at least may be somehow distinct from coercion or deception—the paradigmatic types of interpersonal wrongdoing. Abramson suggests that the gaslighter's primary strategy is not—at least in the first instance—epistemic. Instead, she argues, the gaslighter poses as a source of normative authority. The gaslighter assumes the pretense of sincere testimony, drawing on the standing to issue demands that others "see things his way."⁹ In this kind of case, the gaslighter forgoes efforts to change how the victim sees the evidence, and tries to change her normative situation through the direct application of putative authority.

⁶ Kate Abramson, "Turning Up the Lights on Gaslighting," *Philosophical Perspectives* 28 (2014), p. 2.

⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

⁸ Abramson, *ibid.*, p. 10

⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

It follows that gaslighting is an especially pernicious form of manipulation, for two reasons.¹⁰ First, the gaslighter attempts not only to make unwarranted demands on what the recipient believes, but also tries bring it about that the other agent “not occupy a standpoint from which challenges might be issued” in the first place.¹¹ If the gaslit agent can be made to doubt the deliverances of their epistemic capacities, they can be subject to the gaslighter’s demands well beyond any given one-off case. Second, the gaslighter demonstrates a particularly objectionable form of contempt. If contempt is wrong because it treats a member of the moral community as though they were outside of that community, and gaslighting attacks precisely this standing. Membership in the moral community depends in part on having an independent standing from which to issue moral complaints, and this standing depends on the presence of various capacities for responding to reasons. If the gaslighter succeeds at undermining these capacities or an agent’s confidence in them, then he threatens the agent’s status as a member of the moral community.

To shift points of view, suppose we began with the post-treatment effects distinctive to gaslighting. What, exactly, has happened to the practical and epistemic standing of gaslit victims? For now, let’s postpone inquiry into the motives and aims of the gaslighter, and see how much progress we can make from a patient-centered perspective. The victim has been supplied evidence of their own epistemic malfunction. Their evidential relations are not what they took them to be; they have been led down the garden path to think that the wiring between their evidence and their beliefs is off.

The scene of the crime, on our view, is the victim’s higher-order evidence.¹² Our *evidence about our evidence* tends to have special vulnerabilities. Gaslighting works by supplying higher-order defeaters. It tries to show that the victim’s beliefs have been produced through a faulty process, inducing the victim to conclude that her attitudes were never justified in the first place.¹³ The gaslit agent thereby comes to occupy an uncommonly perverse epistemic situation. In ordinary cases, “the import of a particular bit of evidence may depend on the thinker’s background beliefs, but it does not depend on who the thinker is.”¹⁴ However, if an agent learns that her particular belief-forming process was defective, then she has an agent-relative reason to treat the evidence differently than she otherwise would. Gaslighting, then, is an agent-relative wrong. Some individuals may be more vulnerable to gaslighting than others. A single treatment to an audience with varying levels of evidence and perceptual acuteness may gaslight only a few of its members.

¹⁰ In both of the following reasons, we follow Abramson (2014). We will explain how this manipulation impinges on the epistemic and practical authority of the gaslit agent slightly differently, emphasizing gaslighting as a kind of agent relative wrong. We will agree, however, that the wrong of gaslighting can be understood in terms of an attempt to exclude its victim from the moral community.

¹¹ Abramson, *ibid.*, p. 16.

¹² Thomas Kelly, “Peer-Disagreement and Higher-Order Evidence” in Goldman and Whitcomb (eds.) *Social Epistemology: Essential Readings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Richard Feldman, “Respecting the Evidence” *Philosophical Perspectives* (2005) uses “second-order evidence,” p.: 100; David Christensen, “Higher-Order Evidence,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 18:1 (2010): 185-215.

¹³ David Christensen underscores this “retrospective” aspect, although not with respect to gaslighting in particular. In the epistemologists’ cases, agents acquire higher order evidence about how their particular justifications have a defective history, but not now their capacities themselves are faulty.

¹⁴ Christensen 2010, p. 190.

The gaslighter targets his victims' standing as epistemic authorities in a way that ultimately undermines their practical authority.

It will help to briefly clarify the idea of authority. It's common to think agents with moral status have standing to issue some moral demands to each other, and that the issuing of these demands creating correlative duties to comply. Darwall (2006) calls this standing "second-personal authority."¹⁵ Manipulation involves the attempt to issue demands that exceed one's morally authorized second personal authority. Examples might include insisting on special treatment, suggesting that you will be personally devastated if others don't do as you wish, or imposing one's own desires on a shared relationship with another person.

Like the general manipulator, the gaslighter is often interested in undermining the rationality of the manipulated agent's cognitive or non-cognitive attitudes.¹⁶ As with other cases of manipulation, the gaslighter may pursue these objectives without lies or force, but by sending subtle cues to undermine the victim's confidence in their capacities. (For example, a gaslighter might ask if you are feeling well enough, or suggesting that you need to get more rest.) The gaslighter leads another to doubt their epistemic capacities, and so to doubt whether their beliefs are tracking the truth.

If manipulation involves the abuse of practical authority, in gaslighting that abuse is janus-faced. Gaslighters abuse their authority while trying to deny this authority to another. They do this by inflating their own normative status while undermining the epistemic status of another agent. One might object that surely these strong claims must be in some way metaphorical. Certainly as matter of fact, the gaslit agent still does occupy a perspective from which moral reasons might be issued, and still is a member of the moral community. What's wrong gaslighting, after all, is precisely that it fails to treat another as having the status that she actually does have. In what sense, one might wonder, does gaslighting make it the case that a person lack moral standing, or is outside of the moral community?

Here it is important to recall how the gaslighter reacts to a speaker's assertions. The gaslighter doesn't just disagree with his interlocutor's assertions. He acts as though she could not have any reasons for what she asserted, and even tries to get her to believe that didn't mean to assert what she did. The gaslighter deliberately refuses to treat the other agent's statements as inputs into a common deliberative process, instead rejecting them out of hand. In so doing, the gaslighter violates what epistemologists describe as the "ethics of assertion."¹⁷ Because assertion is norm governed, making an assertion involves an implicit claim to being in a position to know that the assertion is true (or at least to reasonably believe that one knows). As Goldberg writes, "to ignore or dismiss an assertion on insufficient grounds, then, is to disrespect the speaker as an epistemic

¹⁵ Stephen Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

¹⁶ Barnhill, A. 2014. "What is Manipulation?" in C. Coons and M. Weber [eds.] *Manipulation: Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; see also Gorin 2014.

¹⁷ Stanford Goldberg, *Assertion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Wanderer, J. "Addressing Testimonial Injustice: Being Ignored and Being Rejected," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 62:246 (2012): 148-169.

subject by inappropriately repudiating her claim to relevant authoritativeness.”¹⁸ The gaslighter goes further, in trying to get the speaker to believe that she is not in a position to know what she asserts, to offer reasons in its defense, or to be held accountable if others act on her assertion.¹⁹ If the gaslighting works, the gaslit agent abandons her conception of herself as a participant in the practice of assertion, and instead adopts the gaslighter’s disrespectful attitude toward her own agency. In this sense, the gaslit agent “has been turned against herself.”²⁰ So while it is true that such agents still have moral standing, they have come to inhabit a role of objects rather than subjects in the practice of sharing knowledge.²¹ Gaslit agents become a purely passive recipient of assertions, and so third parties will feel pressure to stop treating them as subjects or participants. The gaslighter thereby conscripts other agents in eroding her standing within a deliberative community.

We have tried in this section to *narrow* the concept of gaslighting from a kind of epistemic manipulation in general to the case in which one agent demands in particular that another accept higher-order evidence undermining the justificatory force of the latter’s own reasoning. This species of agent-relative wrongdoing can illuminate the insidiousness of gaslighting. We will also suggest that it can help to *extend* the concept’s application to a wider array of cases, including its recent invocations in American politics.

2. Political Gaslighting

Politicians and their allies in the media routinely charge their political adversaries with gaslighting. But gaslighting, the last section argued, is an especially serious form of undermining another person’s membership in the moral community. It often involves repeated attempts at disrupting a person’s search for evidence, and further efforts to distort the ways in which they make assertions based on the evidence they’ve collected. Paradigm cases often involve close personal relationships, or at least perverse facsimiles of such relationships. One might reasonably wonder if all of these ingredients could be in place in politics. Could political figures really have the resources to gaslight ordinary citizens, and if so, what is the mechanism by which they do it?

Social scientists can shed some light on these questions. One recent study presented a random group of citizens with pictures from the inaugurations of Barack Obama in 2009 and Donald Trump in 2017.²² The contrast between the pictures obviously shows that the 2009 event had a much larger crowd. Playing on the well-known controversy surrounding the Trump administration’s insistent denial of this evidence, the researchers asked respondents to identify which of the pictured crowds was larger. Respondents were not given any information about the pictured gatherings (i.e., they were not told which inauguration was which). They were simply shown two pictures and asked

¹⁸ Gorlberg, *ibid.*, pp. 187-188

¹⁹ Tanesini, A, “‘Calm Down, Dear’: Intellectual Arrogance, Silencing and Ignorance,” *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* XC (2016): 71-92.

²⁰ Abramson, *ibid.*, p. 16.

²¹ Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 132-133.

²² Shaffner and Luks, “Misinformation or Expressive Responding?” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 81:1 (2018).

which crowd was larger. While negligible numbers of non-voters and Clinton voters reported that the Trump inaugural picture contained the larger crowd, 15 percent of Trump voters denied the apparently obvious evidence and incorrectly identified the smaller crowd as larger.²³ Politically engaged Trump supporters were more than twice as likely to choose incorrectly as unengaged Trump voters.

Just as Paula is led by Gregory's manipulation to disbelieve her own obvious perceptions of the gaslights, it seems that partisans can be led to misreport their perceptions of similarly obvious sensory data. Social scientists have known for some time that partisan identity strongly influences political attitudes.²⁴ But it's not just partisanship. In the case above, Trump's insistence against the evidence appears to influence his strongest supporters to adopt his own representation of reality, or anyway to express that as if it were their perception. This is not an isolated case. It's a long-standing observation that partisans will disagree about how the economy is doing based on which party is in power. Recent work has shown that the reason for this is that partisan citizens are simply taking on the opinions of elites. When leaders in power acknowledge that the economy is not doing well, their followers accept this view as well. When leaders deny it, their partisans follow the denial.²⁵

Can we say that partisans are being gaslit into believing as they are told? Certainly partisanship seems to correspond to directional motivation, rather than accuracy motivation.²⁶ And—as third parties—if all we need to know is what elites are saying to successfully predict what ordinary political participants will say, then it seems that those politically active citizens have at least compromised their independent point of view. They cannot fully participate in holding others responsible for what they assert about political realities. As Bisgaard and Slothuus observe, results like these paint “a grim outlook for the idea of accountability.”²⁷

However, one important aspect of gaslighting is importantly absent from these political cases. In the paradigm case of interpersonal gaslighting, the gaslit agent loses confidence in her beliefs. Recall that on Abramson's account, such agents are made to feel that their attitudes are not just false, but “utterly without grounds.” In stark contrast, strong partisans tend to be especially confident in their own experiences and perspective. Indeed, it's this very confidence that inspires them to turnout in higher numbers at the polls.²⁸ Freed from attention to the complexities of evidence, partisans have little occasion to worry that they might be wrong. Rather than coming to doubt their beliefs, those partisans whose attitudes are most susceptible to manipulation are also

²³ Shaffner and Luks, p. 140

²⁴ Bartels 2002; Flynn, D.J., Nyhan, B. and Reifler, J. “The Nature and Origins of Misperceptions: Understanding False and Unsupported Beliefs about Politics,” *Advances in Political Psychology* 38:1 (2017): 127-150.

²⁵ Bisgaard, M., and Slothuus, R., “Partisan Elites as Culprits? How Party Cues Shape Partisan Perceptual Gaps,” *American Journal of Political Science*, forthcoming.

²⁶ Flynn, Nyhan, and Reifler 2017; Druckman 2004; Arceneaux, K., and Vander Wielen, R.J., *Taming Intuition: How Reflection Minimizes Partisan Reasoning and Promotes Democratic Accountability*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

²⁷ Bisgaard and Slothuus, p. 12.

²⁸ Cf. Ortoleva and Snowberg 2015.

the most confident of their political knowledge.²⁹ If the crowd listening to Trump in this essay's opening vignette are being gaslit, they show little sign of it. In the aftermath of the story of Trump's late arrival to the Queen, some Trump supporters proffered justifications. ("We won a war for the right to make the queen wait.") But when Trump insisted that he was the one waiting, the crowd erupted with cheers—not a telltale sign of undermined confidence.

This might lead us to wonder who, exactly, is being gaslit? Trump's opponents don't accept his false assertions, and his supporters don't feel any loss in confidence in their beliefs. If anything, they feel more confident in their attitudes. Whose perspective does gaslighting—in the political context—threaten to undermine?

To clarify the question, it may help to distinguish between different affected parties. Consider the following exchange:

Lucy: Do you see this tree? it is a fir tree. it's called a fir tree because it gives us fur for coats. it also gives us wool in the winter time.

Linus: I never knew that before, Lucy. That's very interesting.

Charlie Brown: Now wait a minute Lucy! i don't mean to interfere, but...

Lucy: And way up there, the little stars and planets make the rain that often showers and when it's cold and winter is upon us the snow comes up! just like the flowers.

Charlie Brown: Now Lucy, I know that's wrong! Snow doesn't come up, it comes down!!

Lucy: After it comes up, the wind blows it around so it looks like it's coming down, but actually it comes up out of the ground, just like grass. it comes up, Charlie Brown, snow comes up!

Charlie Brown: Oh, good grief! (he exits, from off stage there is a hollow thumping sound.)

Linus: Why is Charlie Brown banging his head against that tree?

Lucy: To loosen the bark to make the tree grow faster! Clouds can make the wind blow, Bugs can make the grass grow so, there you go these are little known facts that now you know!³⁰

Lucy makes a series of false assertions to Linus. Like a low-information partisan with nothing else to go on, Linus is happy to update his priors accordingly. He is subject to a systematic deception that is veering towards brainwashing. Charlie Brown, on the other hand, is not taken in. He is not misled in his beliefs, although his capacities are strained by her confident imperviousness to the evidence. Brown's sense of helplessness is palpable when he objects — "*I know that's wrong.*" Lucy offers a rejoinder that accepts his proffer of evidence. Notice that she doesn't deny his first-order belief, but she suggests that Brown's perceptions are misleading him. He shouldn't trust his direct sensory inputs, for they have generated a false belief. In a single line of the song, she repeats "it comes up" in three slight variations. (The final image of Charlie Brown beating his head against a tree might be an apt metaphor for any number of contemporary political groups.)

²⁹ Druckman 2004; Anson, I.G., "Partisanship, Political Knowledge, and the Dunning-Kruger Effect," *Political Psychology*, forthcoming.

³⁰ Clark Gesner, "Little Known Facts," *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Play, 1967).

Thinking about gaslighting in terms of second-order evidence can likewise help bring political cases into focus. Partisans may not feel a loss of confidence in their beliefs--let alone thinking they are without any grounds--but they do come to rely on political elites for epistemic guidance. We do not claim that they are consciously forming the belief that their own epistemic capacities are unreliable. Perhaps some are genuinely persuaded by elite rhetoric, and others are taking cues from those who share a common partisan identity. But when these cues include instructions to discount other sources of information (the “fake news”), partisans may become more reliant on others for their views than on the deliverances of their own capacities. We suggest that we can at least make sense of the popular invocation of “gaslighting” in this way. At least implicitly, partisans may be attaching greater epistemic authority to elite signals and thereby downgrading inputs from their own reasoning or observations. Perhaps this occurs through some process observable with social scientific tools, but we don’t require this for thinking that the phenomenon carries normative interest.

Gaslighting aims to instill relationships of troubling epistemic dependence. The gaslighter often attempts to make their own testimony a kind of epistemic monopoly by ruling out all other channels of evidence gathering. In the epigraph to this paper, Kripke refers to the tendency to further favour a known claim over its negation by selectively avoiding counter-evidence. He explains that what he has in mind is a resolution to avoid “reading the wrong books (for they contain nothing but sophistry and illusion), associating with the wrong people, and so on.”³¹ Displacing other sources of evidence can be a start to gaslighting — at least for those followers who already treat the gaslighter as an epistemic authority. While not a success condition, it’s now clearer how gaslighters convince an audience to treat their testimony as the only reliable source to ground first-order beliefs in town. Here we think that our accounts sensitivity to how defeaters operate at the two-level structure has significant explanatory force.

The agent-relativity of gaslighting with higher-order defeaters also usefully illustrates how political gaslighters can have different effects on members of the same audience. Imagine, for example, a politician who insinuates that members of rural communities systematically lacked the level of educational attainment necessary for civic participation.³² If this statement were issued to a mixed group of citizens, rural listeners might uniquely experience higher-order defeaters to their political inferences. We can see how the same language that mobilizes some listeners could gaslight others.

You may also be a bystander to a lie but a victim of gaslighting. Consider cases in which a series of false-assertions is cumulatively self-canceling. Suppose you are told ten lies (each goes against a first-order belief that you hold). None of them succeeds in alerting its targeted beliefs. But by the tenth lie, your second-order beliefs start to shift. You look back and wonder if perhaps those first-order beliefs weren’t well grounded. Maybe your credence goes down, or maybe you now start suspending those the targeted beliefs. On our view, you’ve been gaslit, but have you been deceived? Suppose each of those lies had been effective, and you had revised them in real time; maybe in this

³¹ Kripke 2011, p. 49.

³² Kathy Cramer observes the reaction of rural citizens to this perceived form of disparagement. See Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

case we should say that you've been bamboozled, like Linus above. At the end, your configuration of beliefs may look identical in both cases. We might be tempted to say that you've been serially deceived, but even then, if we focus on the revision of your first-order priors, we'd be missing how this was done, and how you'd been manipulated in a fundamentally more indirect way. Being gaslit may not be morally worse than being deceived. But other things equal, it does seem that something much more disturbing, from the point of view of democratic citizenship, has been done to you. In the gaslighting, case you've been conscripted into this belief revision — you even thought “correction” — process. In the end of the day, you were the one who started discounting the beliefs that ended up being suspended. The gaslighter changed the background conditions, but this case reminds us how gaslighting recruits the agency of citizens, making them partial authors of their manipulation.

Even citizens who don't experience gaslighting have a basis for objecting to it. For this way of manipulating individuals isn't a pairwise activity. It wrongs third-parties in characteristic ways. Our account can explain the distinctive moral complaints of individuals, who are themselves not gaslit, but who experience distinctive bystander wrongs. Perhaps it's tempting to think that overhearing one party's attempt to gaslight another may be disturbing, but only in the general sense in which witnessing serious injustice of any kind — epistemic or institutional — gives us a complaint. On other occasions, third-parties may allege gaslighting even when they don't experience the phenomenon we've described. When third-parties claim to be gaslit we can explain what they mean: Gaslighting imposes collateral damage to third parties that is distinct from the serial deceiver, who works by challenging the first-order beliefs of an audience. Gaslighting can gradually induce a kind of epistemic fatigue that comes from challenging falsehoods and experiencing its futility. Charlie Brown style, they feel powerless because they assumed that the evidentially-backed charge of falsehood would be “terminal.” As responsible practitioners of assertion, they had assumed that falsehood would be a “fatal objection to assertions.”³³

Even if they are not misled, one might think that they could object to such obvious disregard for the truth. Harry Frankfurt concluded “On Bullshit” with a claim that seemed to many to overreach. The liar, he insisted, is morally better than the bullshitter, because at least the liar cares enough about the truth to understand that he asserts its contrary. We don't think that this perverse way of caring about the truth should make us feel any better about the liar, even when compared to the bullshitter. Political gaslighting can vindicate a more modest version of Frankfurt's surprising conclusion. Lying, one might think, is susceptible to exposure, and so ultimately to the prospect of correction. But politicians who jettison all responsiveness to evidence, and target the ways that citizens assess their body of evidence, can look impervious to efforts at exposing abuse of the truth. That, itself, is a cause for frustration. Such speech whittles away any common framework through which citizens can gain a shared outlook on their common political community. Gaslighting targets the higher-order evidence of citizens, but it may simultaneously wear down a common point of view and make the idea of the “common good” a kind of category error. We will return to this possibility

³³ Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness*, 68.

in the final section, once we'd gotten a better handle on how gaslighting works.

3. An Evidentialist Solution

Contemporary American politics unfolds with accusations and counter-accusations of gaslighting. Although it is easy to find cases of false assertions, few instances appear to exhibit gaslighting's central conceptual feature: the erosion of another agent's confidence in her own beliefs. If this is right, then the central problem associated with political gaslighting is its tendency to mislead the politically active. In other words, the problem with gaslighting is that produces false beliefs.

This diagnosis squares with a longstanding concern among social scientists. Many observers of politics have worried that the lack of knowledge among citizens poses risks to democratic self-governance. Long before current fears of political gaslighting, Delli Carpini and Keeter emphasized:

Factual knowledge about politics is a critical component of citizenship, one that is essential if citizens are to discern their real interests and take effective advantage of the civic opportunities afforded them. Knowledge is a keystone to other civic requisites. In the absence of adequate information neither passion nor reason is likely to lead to decisions that reflect the real interests of the public.³⁴

Delli Carpini and Keeter's metaphor gives pride of place to political knowledge among civic virtues. Even if citizens are reasoning in sound way, they still need good inputs in order to realize their shared ends through political activity. On their account, knowledge needs to be in some sense prior to other participatory and civic virtues.

If knowledge is what citizens need, a natural solution is to think that citizens ought to form beliefs in ways that are responsive to all and only the evidence. Citizens should reason with an "accuracy motivation," rather than with other directional goals. Typically, social scientists are pessimistic about the idea that citizens' beliefs are influenced more by their groups rather than the evidence. "From a normative point of view," John Bullock writes, "this claim is dour."³⁵ Even without anyone pushing a certain view on them, citizens often reason in apparently faulty ways. A recent study allowed participants to make choices about which information sources they would utilize, but found that even when given discretion, people hardened their views around evidence encountered earlier rather than later.³⁶ Once they had formed beliefs, they were resistant to revising them in response to new facts. Again, this looks like a normatively serious deficiency. The authors explain their concern:

³⁴ Delli Carpin, M.X., and Keeter, S, *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters* (New Haven. Yale University Press, 1996): pp. 35, ctd. In Hochschild and Einstein 2014, p. 586.

³⁵ Bullock, 2011, p. 496.

³⁶ Druckman, Fein, and Leeper, "A Source of Bias in Public Opinion Stability," *American Political Science Review* 106:2 (2012): 430-454.

Normatively our findings paint a fairly unflattering portrait...[O]ther respondents, once they had formed their initial opinions, clung to those opinions, became certain of them, sought out consistent information, and rejected what otherwise looked like reasonable counter-argument. Although such stable opinion facilitates responsiveness, it also raises the specter of inflexible dogmatism, stemming from biased information search, which could be problematic for many conceptions of good citizenship.³⁷

This passage underscores the difference between what citizens believe, and what they would believe if they were to apportion their beliefs to the evidence. The worry is that about excessive stability: citizens refuse to update their beliefs rationally.

Hochschild and Einstein distinguish two different species of rational failure. The first failure echoes the complaint that citizens don't respond to new evidence. This failure—"people's unwillingness or inability to use relevant facts in their political choices"—the authors regard as merely "frustrating."³⁸ Much worse is that people are willing to use "mistaken factual claims" in their civic participation. This, the authors believe, is actually "dangerous." They label "using incorrect knowledge" as partly explaining a variety of destructive political outcomes.³⁹

These converge around a normative claim about beliefs: one's beliefs should be responsive to the evidence, and not responsive to other kinds of considerations. Philosophers refer to this view as evidentialism. If the evidentialist is right, it's easy to see what's wrong with citizens whose beliefs are dogmatic or otherwise directionally motivated: they are not responsive to the evidence in the right way. While the social scientists quoted in this section seem to favor some version of evidentialism, their view is distinctive in a few notable ways. First, the view described above appears not only normative, but also moralizing. Insensitivity to political evidence is a moral failing. Second, some evidentialist philosophers regard evidentialism as a conceptual truth that imposes a rational requirement on all agents.⁴⁰ However, we need not adopt such a strong view. One might think that there is something about the practice of political deliberation in particular that imposes the epistemic norm. The problem described in the previous section need not demand that evidentialism be correct more generally.

To fully address the problem of political gaslighting as it has been understood so far, we offer one further amendment. Evidentialism constrains how a person ought to form beliefs, but gaslighting centrally aims to bring about that the beliefs of others don't comply with the evidentialist norm. So a political evidentialism might hold both:

³⁷ Druckman, et al, *ibid.*, p. 447.

³⁸ Hochschild, J.L., and Einstein, K.L. "Do Facts Matter? Information and Misinformation in Politics," *Political Science Quarterly* 130:4 (2015): 585-624, p. 587.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 587-598.

⁴⁰ For example, Shah, "A New Argument for Evidentialism," *The Philosophical Quarterly* (2006).

- (a) You ought to form political beliefs only if adequately supported by evidence, and not for other reasons.
- (b) You ought not try to bring about that other people form beliefs not adequately supported by the evidence.

Political evidentialism protects against manipulations that rely on creating daylight between your beliefs and their underwriting evidence. It expresses an ideal shared by epistemic democrats and public opinion scholars — that citizens' knowledge of politics matters to the health of democracy.

Gaslit individuals have a characteristic mental structure. They come to hold beliefs that are at odds with what they take to be evidence, or at least with the evidence that they possessed when the manipulation began. In extreme cases, this evidence lies in plain sight. It is available through the most basic sensory inputs. They underreport their local temperature when primed to think about climate change. They misdescribe the direction of economic change based on which party is in power. They may regard the same personal habits as offensive or patriotic depending on who occupies the White House.

In response, it's tempting to see evidentialism as a pink medicine solution. Gaslit citizens merely need to correct their epistemic wiring, ensuring that each of their beliefs that bear on politics are responsive to the evidence, and to root out the wrong kind of reasons underwriting their beliefs. This idea is tempting both to public opinion scholars, as well as to epistemic democrats--whose focus on publicly accessible reasoning might appear to take observable facts as a starting point for deliberation.⁴¹

4. Audacious Believing

Suppose you commit to climb Mount Everest, or to run a marathon. Each day of training, let's presume that you believe that you will complete this project. But you are also aware of the considerable evidence that suggests that you will fail to make it to the summit, or the finish line. Perhaps you've seen the hard numbers on the success rates of people with your similar training and background. If your belief that you will succeed persists, it does so in spite of the relevant evidence. Your hope that you will complete these difficult projects rest on the expectation that your training will pay off.⁴² Indeed, in some cases holding audacious beliefs about one's success in completing long-term goals may even be psychologically necessary for their completion. We can't bootstrap our way on confidence alone — believing against the grain hardly ensure success. But lacking such a belief may undermine our ability to persist in the project.

⁴¹ See, for example, Hadfield and Macedo "Rational Reasonableness: Toward a Positive Theory of Public Reason."

⁴² Cf. Duckworth 2016.

A. Individual Audacity

Let's call the belief that you will complete a difficult project, where there is evidence that you won't, *audacious*. Now consider three ways agents can demonstrate epistemic resilience, from radical to conservative.

Believing Against the Evidence: Perhaps you can rationally believe, despite the evidence, that you will follow through on your commitment. So long as the fate of the project that you've committed to is in your hands — something that you have the capacity to succeed or to fail in, this kind of persistence is permissible; it may even be a rational requirement in underwriting projects of great moral or prudential importance.⁴³

To get to this conclusion, we draw out its major premise about commitment-making: you can't sincerely commit to a goal unless you hold the belief that you will succeed. But, when committing to difficult projects, this belief about your efficacy may swim against the current. Suppose you possess statistical evidence that you will fail at a difficult project. Or your track record points strongly in this direction:

- I thought you'd quit playing poker?
- I have; I've quit more'n a thousand times, every time the game breaks up. Shucks, boy, it's dead easy to quit playing poker."⁴⁴

This view doesn't urge you to suppress or ignore the relevant evidence. In many cases, disregarding considerations of the difficulty of a candidate project is highly relevant to whether it makes sense to take on. And even after we've committed to a project, it can be valuable to keep some kind of running tab of the demands ahead. But there are clear exceptions to this evidential rule. If the evidence suggests you have very little time left to life, it may be permissible for you to believe that you have years, not weeks left. For a case where the evidence point overwhelmingly to failure, consider this exchange:

C-3PO: "Sir, the possibility of successfully navigating an asteroid field is approximately three thousand seven hundred and twenty to one."

Han Solo: "Never tell me the odds."⁴⁵

Here C-3PO is inviting Solo to take up a predictive stance — perhaps as a result of his mechanical make-up, he may not be capable of taking up a Strawsonian participant stance (we can bracket

⁴³ For two recent defenders of views in this neighborhood, see Miriam Schleifer McCormick, *Believing Against the Evidence: Agency and the Ethics of Beliefs* (Routledge, 2015) and Evidence and Agency Norms of Belief for Promising and Resolving Berislav Marušić, *Evidence and Agency: Norms of Belief for Promising and Resolving* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁴⁴ Harris Dickson, *Duke of Devil-May-Care* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1905), p. 14.

⁴⁵ Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan, *The Empire Strikes Back* (Original Screenplay).

that). Solo is seeking to avoid evidence here, preventing him from acquiring a belief. On one interpretation, Solo has already committed to fly through the field, and has no other choices, so learning the odds would have no value. But perhaps Solo appreciates the threat this testimony poses. A second take suggests that he resists the evidence because it may lead him to abandon his project. Does Solo really need to believe that he will make through the asteroid field? It may be enough for him to avoid holding C-3PO's probabilistic report. If he came to believe that the odds were vanishingly small, he couldn't sincerely retain his commitment to the mission.

This brings us to an essential caveat for an individual who attempts to believe in this audacious way. This policy assumes that the agent can be successful; there aren't metaphysical facts that will make her effort, if she puts it in, futile. So long as a project is "up to us" — and that will need further massaging — our belief that we will succeed can look altogether Herculean. At least at the level of first-order beliefs, it is impervious to defeaters.

Even if you accept a policy of believing against the evidence, it doesn't follow that counter evidence should be necessarily ignored, or suppressed. The appeal of this policy is that it doesn't give the evidence a veto over our commitments. But to refuse to accept the predictions of the best social science doesn't commit you to ignoring your likelihood of success — assuming that information can be useful in how you choose to stick to your project in spite of the evidence.

There's a remaining objection to this policy. It's not clear that the organizing premise is right. What, precisely, are the background beliefs that make possible persistence in risky and demanding projects? Maybe we don't need to believe that we will succeed. This need can be cashed out psychologically or philosophically. To stick with the latter, you may think that you intend to succeed — in full sincerity — without actually believing that you will succeed. Perhaps you can intend to be faithful to your spouse without believing that you will be faithful.⁴⁶

This clears the way for a weaker policy of audacious believing:

Committing Against of the Evidence: You can be rational in sticking with a project you are committed to even when you face counterevidence. This strategy isn't without risks: it gives you reason not to reconsider your commitment, and to avoid searching for evidence that may undermine that commitment.

This view is weaker in that it doesn't require you to believe in your success, but it does license you to avoid forming beliefs about your failure. This kind of recalcitrance may be critical for you to sustain your commitment to climbing the mountain, or running the marathon. It allows you to avoid rationally considering your commitment to these difficult projects. Your future self can "inherit" the rational credentials that grounded the original commitment (Bratman, 1987, p. 80). Without this

⁴⁶ For extensive discussion of beliefs of this kind, see promising Berislav Marusic's, *Evidence and Agency: Norms of Belief for Promising and Resolving*, which insists that efficacy beliefs are necessary for sincere agents to hold stable intentions over time — to be, in short, faithful and respectful to their future selves.

ability to pass the baton to your future self, you may find yourself fishing for more evidence to ground your commitment. On this weaker view, Han Solo's attempt to suppress evidence also seems appropriate. Solo hopes to ignore evidence that he will fail, even if he may not need to believe in his success.

This view doesn't allow us to avoid all evidence that bears upon our chances of success. Its permission is narrower. we shouldn't look for further evidence with the aim of reconsidering our commitment; and we can have reason to look away from evidence that challenges that commitment. Without these protections, our ability to carry out difficult projects that stretch over time would be impossible.

There's a third way an agent can exhibit the recalcitrance, a watermark of audacious believing:

Acting Ahead of the Evidence: Once you commit to a project, you are rationally permitted to raise the evidential threshold for what it would take for you to abandon your belief of success – or at least your non-belief in failure. This view shifts from the appropriate beliefs of a persevering agent to the evidential policies they are permitted to hold. In so doing, it concedes a key tenet to evidentialism: Your beliefs should be proportioned according to the evidence, but there's an epistemic remainder. The evidence typically underdetermines what we have reason to believe about our prospects for success — along with many other predictive claims about agents.

If this posture is right, several beliefs may be permissible for the evidentialist to hold, and we can rely on non-evidential considerations to choose among the beliefs that bear on our confidence in succeeding in our project. This slack — between the evidence an agent takes herself to have and what it's reasonable to believe, given the evidence — may be considerable, and it makes possible this third view. Jennifer Morton and Sarah Paul defend this epistemic policy as exhibiting a kind of "grit":

Because this evidence is usually inconclusive, and because grit is generally an aid to achieving one's goals (in resource-moderate contexts, at least), we are rationally permitted to have the disposition to raise the evidential threshold we need in order to give up the belief that success is reasonably likely, relative to the threshold we would use to answer the same question before adopting the goal.⁴⁷

At some point your epistemic reasons run out, but a range of permissible beliefs about your chances typically remain. This creates space for you to protect your beliefs about success from evidence that's forward-looking or look back at your own track record. You can then turn to ethical considerations to help you decide among epistemically permissible policies.

⁴⁷ Jennifer Morton and Sarah Paul, "Grit," forthcoming in *Ethics*

In adopting this evidential policy, Solo may have told C-3PO: “Feel free to tell me the odds, but my evidential threshold for considerations against my success is extremely high.” Solo’s insistence that he will be the exception to the rule – to his droid’s modeling — can be defended as a necessarily resilience. There is something audacious about this kind of policy — no one will accuse Solo of modesty. But it needn’t be irrational either.

Like the other views, this approach doesn’t allow an agent to set the evidential threshold so high that it supports a policy of pigheaded self-confidence. It’s not a blanket policy of suppressing or refusing to consider the evidence, but something more subtle. Agents who raise their evidential threshold cannot come to hold beliefs out of thin air – without any evidence. But they can protect themselves from negative evidence that would make their risking projects impossible.

Each of these three policies are attempts to find defensible ways of sticking to commitments that are difficult and long-form in character. A fuller defense of these policies would combine psychological and philosophical work. The former would draw upon the considerable work on self-efficacy, from Albert Bandura beliefs of efficacy to Claude Steele’s stereotype threats, which demoralize individuals by making them doubt their own chances of success. Philosophical motivation for policies that sustain our confidence in difficult projects are, by design, transcendental. All three policies derives force from a transcendental argument of a “modest” kind in defense of a kind of immodesty.⁴⁸ The evidential policies, as we’ve run them, are better seen as making room for permissions, than obligations. We retain the permission to give up on goals that are supersized. But *if* we want to carry out projects of this ambition, if we want to be lift heavy loads over time, we have strong reason to see ourselves as agents, not the material of social science.⁴⁹

B. Collective Audacity

Social movements are prone to self-doubt. Marked by loose connections, small numbers, and powerful opponents, their members regularly encounter evidence that they might fail. Their shared aims, after all, are difficult, long-form and risky — what James Baldwin called the “dangerous road.” No less than marathons and mountain-climbing, the joint commitment to bring about transformational change seems to require audacious believing of some kind. In his classic work on the 1880s Farmers’ Alliance, Lawrence Goodwyn picks out “collective self-confidence” as a central building block of mass democratic politics.⁵⁰

To see collective confidence — even over-confidence — at work, consider the logistical backend of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted 381 days. The night Rosa Parks was arrested, on

⁴⁸ Barry Stroud, “The goal of transcendental arguments,” in R. Stern (ed.), *Transcendental arguments: problems and prospects*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴⁹ Berislav Marusic. *Evidence and Agency: Norms of Belief for Promising and Resolving* (p. 211).

⁵⁰ The formation of “collective self-confidence, on Goodwyns’ view, “permits people to conceive of the idea of acting in self-generated democratic ways — as distinct from passively participating in various hierarchical modes bequeathed by the received culture.. all significant mass democratic movements in human history have generated this autonomous capacity,” Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*, Oxford University Press, p. 19

December 1, 1955, Jo Ann Robinson mimeographed 52,000 leaflets. Within a day, these were distributed to sixty-eight black social organizations across Montgomery. The boycott was planned to last one day, on Monday, December 5. It was far from clear that the boycott could succeed as a one-off protest. To sustain it through December 20, 1956 required a vast carpool network, “325 private cars transported passengers from 43 dispatch stations and 42 pickup stations from five in the morning to ten at night.”⁵¹

Can audacious belief, seen as a first-personal attitude, scale to collective projects? If so, what role can shared beliefs play in the persistence of joint efforts in the face of evidence about their diminishing chances of success? At the group level, the policies of resilience from the last section are complicated in two ways. First, members of movements needn’t only hold beliefs about themselves, but in each other. So we have to make sense of what this other-directed attitude — believing in our co-citizens — could look like. How should you respond to a fellow members of a reforming movement who tell you they are committed to projects riskier than climbing a mountain or running a marathon? You could, of course, take on the chilly stance of the evidentialist. But if you felt the force of the strategies of resilience from above, you may adopt a corresponding position in handling evidence than runs against the plans of your friends or your comrades.⁵²

Consider Martin Luther King Jr.’s confidence in the arc of the moral universe’s direction. This metaphor has the potential to mislead, *if* we take King to be have announced a belief that he has simply read off from the world. His confidence wasn’t merely a function of proportioning his (cosmic) beliefs about humanity’s future to the evidence. It took considerable effort, an epistemic resilience. In response to the Black Power movement’s rejection of nonviolence, King conceded that this approach was was a function of “despair and disappointment.” The evidential basis for this despairing was as clear to King as his opponents. It was, in Brandon Terry’s words, “a response to several ugly facts, including the frequency with which white brutality continued to go unpunished (even after Selma).” King was alive to the the sense in which members of the Black Power movement were proportioning their beliefs to the cruel evidence in front of them. If they dug down in their response to that evidence, King insisted that alternative to nonviolence would backfire, furthering the sense of powerfulness and raising the temptation of sour grapes-style reasoning.

King’s worry about the self-defeat of such tactics wasn’t volitional, but epistemic: by a process of elimination, nonviolence was the only stance compatible with preserving the confidence of movement members about their victory. Put into practice, King thought that alternatives to

⁵¹ Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* (Yale University Press, p. 64) Tufekci dwells on the logistical backbone of the boycott: ““Despite enormous obstacles, the Montgomery bus boycott persevered for the year long battle—and triumphed, winning much more than its original demand for a bit more decency in the segregated bus system.”

⁵² In “Believing in Others,” Sarah Paul and Jennifer Morton defend the permissibility, and sometimes requirement, to believe our friends’ capacity to stick to their projects, even the when evidence points in the other direction. Their defense of this way of believing in others closely parallels their defense of raising our evidential threshold to protect our beliefs about our success; they think we can raise that threshold for evidence that bears on the success of intimates. Our question is whether this stance can extend to political relationships. *Philosophical Topics*, forthcoming.

nonviolence would lead members to believe that there was no hope. King's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech helps explain, if not fully defend, his justified optimism: "With an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind," King employs language compatible with William James's pragmatism, "I refuse to accept the idea that the 'isness' of man's present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal 'oughtness' that forever confronts him." The acknowledgement of its audacity is probative evidence that this kind of believing isn't textbook evidentialism. King adopted an evidential policy that permitted him to act — in this case through speech acts — in the absence of, or against the grain of compelling evidence.

King faced pressure to account for the basis of his optimism. Robert Williams, in his extended debate with King over nonviolent means, asked: "Can a program of nonviolence... realistically expect to deal with such an enormous, entrenched evil?"⁵³ If audacious believing has rational credentials that wishful or other kinds of motivated reasoning lack, King has resources to defend his epistemic resilience from this challenge. In individual and collective cases of audacious believing, moral and political considerations play a legitimate role in how we handle evidence. They serve to protect beliefs from demoralizing evidence, raising the evidential threshold for considerations that suggests that ought doesn't, in the end, imply can.

For us to form audacious beliefs that are shared about our cause, it not enough to believe in any given co-member of our moment — in a pairwise way. For it seems that you need to hold commitments whose direct objects are first-personal plural.⁵⁴ The object of confidence, then, is doubly collective: not only must I believe that "we" will succeed in our project. It may be important for us to share this attitude.⁵⁵ So you will need a belief that about my confidence in *our project*, and vice versa.⁵⁶

Efficacy-directed slogans like "yes we can" shouldn't be passed over as mere cheap talk or overblown rhetoric. The confidence, even overconfidence, of members of social and democratic movements makes possible signals of their strength that are outsized. This is considerable

⁵³ Martin Luther King, *Trumpet of Conscience*, cited by Brandon Terry,

⁵⁴ A belief in group efficacy is one of the "core motivations" for collective action (van Zomeren 2013). Group efficacy beliefs must shared, with the strongest being those in which "individuals are more focussed on achieving group goals through the joint effort of collective action" (van Zomeren, Leach, and Spears 2010, p. 1056).

⁵⁵ In some cases group efficacy beliefs are produced by reasoning together. When group members discuss plans together, they become more confident in the success of joint projects. Such attitudes are fundamentally shared. See Thomas and Louis (2013).

⁵⁶ James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, vol. II (New York: The Commonwealth Publishing Company, [1888] 1908), 78– 79, cited by Daniel Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy* (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics) Cambridge University Press, p. 35.. In *The American Commonwealth*, James Bryce was envious of the combination of grip and organizational capacity that he saw emerging in the American party system: "The greatest discovery ever made in the art of war was when men began to perceive that organization and discipline count for more than numbers. This gave the Spartan infantry a long career of victory in Greece. The Americans made a similar discovery in politics some fifty or sixty years ago. It was perceived that the victories of the ballot box, no less than of the sword, must be won by the cohesion and disciplined docility of the troops, and that these merits can only be secured by skillful organization and long-continued training."

instrumental value in the protester's portfolio: rallies, occupations, speechifying marches. All of that talking and gathering is a proof of concept of the depth and breadth of the front-line.

We can leave it open whether this requires an all-out shared belief, or an elaborate recursive structure in which each of us has a series of beliefs *about our project* and other members beliefs about our projects, but stops short of us holding a co-belief about our chances of success. What is clear is the value of holding beliefs or, at minimum, evidential policies that underwrite our joint commitments, and these will include beliefs about our efficacy, or mere disbelief about our collective failure.

5. Gaslighting vs. Mobilizing

The mobilizer and gaslighter share a common incision point: the higher-order evidence of those individuals they operate on. So far we've taken the point of view of the patient. Both treatments produce distance between professed beliefs and the evidence we take ourselves to have. This gap was key to explaining the success of the citizen at the front lines of a movement. When faced with evidence that their political aims may fail, citizens who persevere demonstrate a kind of epistemic resilience. They come to hold beliefs that are less than tightly connected to the evidence. Or at the very least, they hold evidential policies that are informed, in part, by moral considerations that sustain their ability to keep their commitments. To secure steadfastness, mobilizers attempt to ensure that evidence at this second-order level will not impact their followers' first-order beliefs about success.

It was exactly the distance between beliefs and evidence that was symptomatic of gaslit citizens. To hive off followers from beliefs that may undercut their authority, gaslighters tell their audiences that core sensory inputs of the citizen — the news media — is nothing more than a counterfeiter of evidence. Any beliefs that citizens have acquired through this testimonial mechanism should be, by extension, abandoned. Gaslighters will protect their followers' higher-order evidence from certain classes of counter-evidence about their evidence. Or they will present defeaters designed to challenge their target's higher-order evidence.

This section shifts from post-treatment effects to the agents that bring them about. How, can we distinguish the democratic mobilizer from the gaslighter? We could, of course, let the substantive merits of their respective aims do all the work. But we think this would overlook the way that the mobilizer manages to respect the epistemic agency of "persuadables" — at least when all goes well in their messaging. So, too, this approach would neglect the diversity of ways gaslighters abuse their authority and the epistemic standing of their victims.

We will proceed inductively, stepping through a series of "treatments" administered on citizens. The order of our cases is guided by a version of the Anna Karenina Principle about happy and unhappy families. Democratically-empowering movements aren't all alike. But they do share substantial territory in how they get followers to take up commitments and jointly act. In contrast, the pathways to gaslight citizens are heterogeneous. So we will begin with examples of mobilization

that we take to be consistent with, even essential for, democratic values. We will then add manipulations that appear to target the higher-order evidence of citizens. For a modest spoiler (and do avoid this evidence if knowing the result will undermine your resilience to slog on): we find that the variety of ways gaslighters rewire our evidential relations are not particularly unified.

We start with persuasive techniques that seems permissible, even obligatory. Democratic leaders don't reflect their constituents' preferences, but form joint commitments with citizens and mobilize around them.⁵⁷ On this view of joint commitment formation, both parties play an active role. Leaders typically provide testimony through which citizens can gain knowledge "secondhand."⁵⁸ Exchanges in which a speaker asserts *p* to a listener are normative transactions. When a leader tells their audience that *p*, the leader assumes a kind of responsibility for the assertion that would not accrue by merely declaring that *p*.⁵⁹

While directed assertions are morally freighted, it still seems permissible for leaders to assert some propositions for which they don't have evidence prior to the asserting. Consider a simple case: leader with a bullhorn tells us she is confident that we will succeed in all driving on the right side of the road, and her very announcement of that belief (nearly) guarantees the belief's truth. In this case, both her confidence in the belief, and the responsible asserting of the belief, appear justified.

We are now in the position to see how audacious beliefs, in this collective setting, are not the sorts of attitudes that we can typically come to hold on our own. And there are there are inherent risks in engaging in intentionally biased inquiry. Derek Parfit draws out the danger:

[W]e might cause ourselves to have some beneficial belief by finding evidence or arguments that gave us strong enough epistemic reasons to have this belief. This method is risky, since we might find evidence or arguments that gave us strong reasons not to have this belief. But we might reduce this risk by trying to avoid becoming aware of such reasons.

We can mitigate this risk by interpersonal persuasion, where a third-party can protect us from false negatives of this kind. Acquiring beliefs through others isn't a passive activity. We can play a strong agential role in coming to believe in a resilient way, and we can take actions that sustain beliefs through policies of epistemic resilience, but typically we need others to help us maintain that overconfidence over time.

⁵⁷ Eric Beerbohm, "Is Democratic Leadership Possible?" *American Political Science Review* 109:4 (2015): 39-652.

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Fricker, "Second-Hand Knowledge," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (Nov., 2006), pp. 592-618

⁵⁹ In *Testimony, Trust, and Authority*, Benjamin McMyler notes this distinction and the responsibility shifting it can entail: "Insofar as we think that there is an important distinction between telling a listener that *p* and merely declaring one's belief that *p* it seems like this is explained in the way that telling someone that *p* involves openly offering to take responsibility for the resultant belief, where merely declaring one's belief does not." McMyler, p. 68-9. See also Tanesini 2016.

Now imagine a knife-edge case that lies at the interstices of mobilization and gaslighting. A leader tries to motivate collective confidence in some belief which she does not affirm, or which she might even presently doubt. There does seem to be something manipulative about encouraging others to have a belief one does not share, particularly if doing so is in one's interest (or, more in the interest of oneself than in other members of the group). To push them to see the evidence differently than you see it might strike us as disrespectful, in a way that is similar to the disrespect sometimes involved in taking the diagnostic stance on them: we are operating on them, even as we are persuaded by appeal to rational considerations.⁶⁰

We can separate two concerns. On the supply-side, the speaker's insincerity may be worrisome whether it manages to alter the first- or second-order evidence of the audience. Is it hypocritical to bolster confidence that one in fact lacks? Or we may look to the demand-side. If the audience's receptivity to the speaker is dependent on them believing that the speaker's is self-reporting on their own audacious beliefs, and not merely trying to induce them in other parties, we may bristle that this off-stage assumption is doing the work. If, however, listeners understand and share the manipulative aim, such assertions are also often acceptable. Paul and Morton offer an analogous case:

When the coach cheers her trainee on from the sidelines, the swimmer need not be outright deceived about what the coach is up to (though he might well refrain from reflecting explicitly on her motives). And if he believes that being confident is going to help him succeed, he might reasonably expect his coach to spin the evidence positively to encourage him.⁶¹

When listeners and speakers share an end that is advanced by a given assertion, and there is a kind of implicit agreement that speech will be used in this way, then it seems morally innocuous. Members of a movement may recognize that they have certain epistemic needs that can only be attended to by an external party.⁶² Or they may not be aware of this, they are objects of a gentle form of epistemic paternalism. In such a case, a listener's knowing that an assertion is aiming to be confidence-bolstering could undermine its intended practical effect.

Compare this with the outsider, say a sociologist of mass movements, who arrives at a rally and grabs the closest microphone: "You really need to raise your evidential policies when you face defeaters that would undermine your belief in your cause. All successful mass movements have held efficacy beliefs that were overblown. Good luck!" To see why this is supplying the wrong kind of reason — not to mention its rhetorical limits — we can distinguish between the first- and third-personal reasons for belief. The social scientist is viewing her beliefs as just another kind of

⁶⁰ For example, Anne Barnhill's "What Is Manipulation?" in *Manipulation: Theory and Practice*, edited by Christian Coons and Michael Weber, (2014) argues that a conceptual feature of manipulation is that it is contrary, or generally contrary, to the interests of the manipulated party.

⁶¹ Paul and Morton, "Believing in Others."

⁶² Hinchman, Edward. (2003). "Trust and Diachronic Agency." *Noûs* 37, 25–51.

attitude that may be desirable to hold, or suspend, depending on the agent's ends. But first-personally, we don't see our beliefs as items that can be arranged in this way.

If overt awareness of your treatment would likely undermine your capacity to be mobilized, has the would-mobilizer crossed a bright line? The general worry is that you are now being treated more like a patient than an agent. You are being led to hold attitudes, in this case epistemic policies about how you weigh and act upon evidence, behind your back. So the fact that your awareness would cancel the effects raises the concern that your agency has been bypassed.

But there is a wrinkle in this argument. The very capacity to hold audacious beliefs can be an essential element of our ability to accomplish difficult projects over time. The chronic worry that "I'm in over my head" can be self-defeating, ensuring that we abandon projects of value. The value at stake here is agential: our concern for our ability to have integrity over time, trusting our future self to follow through with our long-term commitments. So before us we have two ways of valuing our agency — one synchronic and one diachronic. They appear to stand in some tension. Transparency is undermined when we are moved to hold an audacious belief without any awareness. Yet without this epistemic need attended to, typically by another agent, our integrity over time isn't sustainable.

Our final case also serves to warn us against any simple distinction between these two ways of getting people to view their available evidence. Any simple line-drawing attempt will struggle to explain how a single set of words can gaslight in a group-relative way: it can simultaneously aiming to mobilize one group *and* demobilize another, secondary audience. In 1948, South Carolina governor Strom Thurmond accepted the nomination for President from the States' Rights Democratic Party:

I want to tell you, ladies and gentlemen that there's not enough troops in the army to force the Southern people to break down segregation and admit the n**** race into our theaters, into our swimming pools, into our homes, into our churches.⁶³

These are easily the most-cited words Thurmond ever spoke. His speech is an attempt to perform two functions simultaneously. To his official audience, he is mobilizing segregationist allies. To his secondary audience, no less important as a manipulative objective, he is demobilizing blacks. In the same speech, he ends with a claim about unity:

Political propagandists would have you believe that the South is divided. I tell you our people aren't divided. I tell you our people are *not* divided. Here and then you will find some politician who is hobbling along, trying to stay in sight of this great movement that has pass him...here and there is a politician who doesn't know; here and there is a politician who

⁶³ Strom Thurmond Archives, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/index.9.html>

thinks more of his committee assignments in Washington than he does to his people home; but these are the exception — not the rule. The people are not divided.⁶⁴

Thurmond's speech, to be sure, contains multitudes of tensions. Its closing claim about the unity of the South is transparently at conflict with his opening threat. He has bookended his speech with claims about the world that stand in striking tension: opening by conceding intense division, only to close with the insistence that any counter-evidence to unity in the South is the product of propaganda artists, benighted politicians, or out-of-touch politicians trapped in D.C. politics.

This textbook demagoguery horrifies us, with its mix of threats and drawing out of racial animus. Thurmond refuses to treat his audiences as subjects of rational address. If our account is right, however, the demagogue's toolkit needn't rely upon gaslighting. In Robert Penn Warren's novel, *All the King's Men*, a Southern demagogue loosely based on Huey Long comes to accept this advice from his advisor, and ends up executing it expertly:

Just stir 'em up, it doesn't matter how or why, and they'll love you and come back for more. Pinch 'em in the soft place. They aren't alive, most of 'em, and haven't been alive for 20 years. Hell, their wives have lost their teeth and their shape, and likker won't set on their stomachs, and they don't believe in God, so it's up to you to give 'em something to stir 'em up and make 'em feel alive again. Just for half an hour. That's what they come for. Tell 'em anything. But for Sweet Jesus' sake, don't try to improve their minds.

This reads like an open invitation to manipulate audiences, bypassing their rationality through any means necessary. But the aim is so cartoonish — to wake an audience that has given up living — makes the stump look like a fully suspended context. Starke takes this advice as literally as possible, beginning his speech by swinging a meat cleaver in front of his audience while savaging sitting congressmen. On the stage, Willie Starke doesn't even try to traffic in propositional content. His demagoguery is alarming, but it doesn't seem an interesting instance of gaslighting. And this, we think, is a welcome result. The disrespect that Starke shows for his audience is laced with contempt, and on the earlier account of gaslighting, it may well be seen as another form of gaslighting. But Starke's electioneering manages to bypass their first- and second-order beliefs altogether. He puts on a show, maligns others, but doesn't attempt to tamper with the higher-order evidence of his audiences. His avoidance of their relational faculties, whether through on-stage or off-stage manipulation, is complete.

6. A Dilemma for Citizenship

Two epistemic policies central to our ideal of citizenship stand in tension. Seen together, they present us with something that looks like a dilemma. The first horn is set by the evidentialist constraint. In forming our beliefs in response exclusively to the evidence, we protect ourselves from the gaslighter. This protection closes the door to audacious beliefs, seriously constricting our ability

⁶⁴ Ibid.

to engage in difficult and risky projects of political reform. Without the ability pursue long-term projects with others, we can feel hopeless — without a sense of co-agency. The other horn would have us reject evidentialism and become continually vulnerable to gaslighting. This threatens our membership in the community of self-reflective, reasoning agents. If evidentialism is a threat to shared agency, then gaslighting is a threat to one's agency altogether.⁶⁵

Can citizens find policies to negotiate the space in between the horns of his dilemma? You could make ample space for audacious belief, granting that this can veer into wishful thinking. While perhaps not an existential threat to one's agency, the moral costs of politically wishful thinking can still be high. When you believe self-serving falsehoods about your political opponents, you risk wronging them with your beliefs.⁶⁶ Failing to see evidence on the side of other groups — even the inability to “code” their assertions as evidentially relevant — puts you in a position to inflict testimonial injustice on them.⁶⁷

To guard against these risks, citizens can put in place further safeguards. When responding to defeaters to their higher-order evidence, they could have a policy of responding asymmetrically to two different kinds of evidence. Evidence that tends to “downgrade” the status of their beliefs about their chances of success and the good will of others face the highest evidential bar. This would tend to preserve their optimism about projects of reform, while guarding their charity toward the good will of others. This class of defeaters would face the strictest level of scrutiny of all forms of evidence that they encounter. In contrast, second-order evidence that tends to “upgrade” their confidence in executing their plans, or their charity in understanding the aims of opponents, would have to clear a lower evidential bar. This policy of adjusting the bar for what passes muster based on substantive moral claims isn't obviously right. In morally high stakes circumstances, it is plausible that we can adopt policies of double-checking and extra care. But allowing moral considerations to “encroach” on our beliefs is a more radical move that stands in need of greater defense.⁶⁸

Or you can tack closer to the evidentialist, making space for sometimes acting ahead of, if not against, the evidence. There are risks to splitting the difference on this side, as well. Given the primacy of group efficacy beliefs in motivating collective action — especially measured against the

⁶⁵ The general form of this tension isn't new. William James mused that Clifford's strict ethics of belief were based on the latter's “preponderant horror of becoming a dupe.” While James shared that horror, he countered that “worse things than being duped may happen to a man in this world.”

⁶⁶ Mark Schroeder, “When Beliefs Wrong,” *Philosophical Topics* 46:1 (2018).

⁶⁷ Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, *ibid.*

⁶⁸ For early attempts at defending “moral encroachment,” see Sarah Moss, “Moral Encroachment,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Volume 118, Issue 2, 1 July 2018; Rima Basu & Mark Schroeder, “Doxastic Wronging”

In Brian Kim & Matthew McGrath (eds.), *Pragmatic Encroachment in Epistemology*. Routledge (forthcoming). Both papers focus on cases where we recognize that acting on a moral belief (sincerely, but mistaken) would lead to outcomes that were “disastrous,” to use Moss's terminology. Here we are shifting up a level, where our evidence about our evidence for these first-order moral beliefs is challenged.

relative paucity of evidence supporting this efficacy — it would not take much impersonal attention to the evidence before you could grow politically disillusioned.

These two strategies both simplify to a fault. They do this by reducing the conceptual space between the evidentialist citizen and the activist citizen to a single dimension. For example, you might hold audacious beliefs with respect to the efficacy of your own group, but without discounting the standing of other groups. Perhaps you could maintain confidence in my group by simply ignoring opposing groups. You might even say that they have just as much standing to offer testimonial evidence as members of your group — just with the expectation that both groups will ignore each other. This strategy seeks a separate peace of sorts with political opponents, granting them a reciprocal status — but not one that undermines confidence in one's own political projects.

Citizens might also opt for a division-of-labor strategy. Some members of a political group could serve as hard-nosed evidentialists, while others are visionary believers. On this proposal, what we need is not a single “correct” norm to follow, but a variety of citizens with different epistemic and practical virtues. We saw King's self-reports about his epistemic confidence, which included the disclaimer that they were indeed audacious. But King didn't expect that the activists' epistemic policy came in one size. There was room for non-theists buy-in so long as they continued to believe that “something in the universe unfolds for justice.”⁶⁹ This belief is surely weaker than King's own “infinite hope.” It's even less rosy than its variant, the arc of the moral universe standard of patient optimism. For King, the Civil Rights Movement can hold up even with, or perhaps benefit from, a division of evidential policies among its members.

A troubling feature of the separate peace and division of labor strategies is that they both back away from an ideal of genuinely shared deliberation — although in rather different ways. In the former case, citizens don't deliberate with their opponents at all, though they do respect them (in a sense). In the latter case, citizens reason together, but even with only the barest of outlines in place for this strategy, it seems likely that they have trouble finding ways of reaching agreement. If the evidential norms they follow diverge, then they may permanently differ on what considerations count as reasons, and on how to combine those considerations.

This allows us to revisit the worry that gaslighting posed a threat to the agent's own perspective. Despite the common term, political gaslighting appeared not to carry that distinctive risk, since gaslit parties tend toward overconfidence in their own self-reported beliefs. But this disanalogy may have been drawn prematurely. For when leaders gaslight, they undermine the status of their follower's beliefs, *or* the professed beliefs of political opponents. You come to believe that “they” are not people who can be reasoned with. There is a genuine perspective that is lost — the perspective of what is good for us as a group. Gaslighting threatens the existence of a “we” who occupy a point of view from which “deciding together” is possible.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ King, “The Power of Nonviolence,” <http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/power-nonviolence>

⁷⁰ Andrea Westlund, “Deciding Together,” *Philosopher's Imprint* (2009).

We don't need to suggest a stronger view about collective agency: that fellow citizens are engaged in something like shared action.⁷¹ If we assume there's another agent in the room, "the people," then an argument revealing a collective victim of gaslighting will come relatively easily. But we think that there is a more ecumenical premise that will allow the argument to go through. The idea of joint deliberation is a comparatively weaker notion. To say that you and I are deliberating together, all we need is for my reasons for acting depend *in part* on circumstances constituted by our foreseeable plans for action. Without an archimedean point like joint deliberation, the very concept of a "common good" looks like a category mistake.⁷²

If this premise about joint deliberation is plausible, then political gaslighting does, after all, threaten a morally valuable point of view. And like the original view of gaslighting, losing this perspective travels in tandem with holding systematically false beliefs. When people reason only with those who share a common partisan outlook, they are more likely to show directional rather than accuracy motivation.⁷³ Beyond this, rejecting one's political opponents also exposes a kind of limitation in one's own individual point of view. People who ascribe negative traits to opposing partisans are relatively likely to be less reflective—less willing to take their own political beliefs as the objects of their own attention. Citizens who are more reflective are more able to see the virtues of those they disagree with.⁷⁴ Gaslighting might be one obstacle to a reflective electorate. "In a polarized polity...political debate among elites has the potential to engender animosity among partisan groups."⁷⁵ If we follow the old Kantian idea that part of being an agent is being able to exercise a capacity to reflect on one's own attitudes, then gaslighting incendiary views toward opponents might compromise individuals' own agency, after all.

This last approach tries to marry resistance to gaslighting together with active citizenship by way of an ideal of shared deliberation. Thinking with others resists gaslighting and improves political activity. Of course, this is the most familiar of philosophical proposals for democratic citizenship. The reality may be that there is no clear way to navigate between the evidentialist and activist horns. Like the joke about offering directions by suggesting, "I wouldn't start from here," there may be times when our prior beliefs create epistemically adverse conditions. It can happen that there's some doxastic response that your epistemic position makes appropriate, but that there's no epistemically good dynamic route from your current attitudes to that response. Why? Because you may also have (unjustified) beliefs in U that get in the way of having a doxastically justified belief in Q. And it might not be permissible for you to refrain from believing Q, either, since after all believing Q is what your evidence does support.

⁷¹ Anna Stilz, for instance, holds that citizens engage in shared activity, organizing themselves around the project of the state. On her view, "a shared project to which they are committed... they see themselves as partners in a joint enterprise, acting together to shape the character of their political environment. Nor are they wrong to take this view," "The Value of Self-Determination," *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy* 2 (2016), 2, 98-127.

⁷² Eric Beerbohm and Ryan Davis, "The Common Good: A Buck-Passing Account," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 25:4 (2017): e60-79.

⁷³ Klar, Samara, "Partisanship in a Social Setting," *American Journal of Political Science* 58:3 (2014): 687-704.

⁷⁴ Arceneaux and Vander Wielen 2017, ch. 6.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

To put the point in a more empirical way, no amount of reflection is a panacea. To offer one more case: Democratic voters high on racial resentment and reflectiveness moved away from Clinton to Trump. They were able to resolve a tension in their beliefs and identity. Unreflective Democratic voters high on racial resentment stayed with Clinton.⁷⁶ In a sense they were less coherent, but coherent reasoning in a way that consolidates racial animosity does not sound like a story about *resisting* gaslighting.

Conclusion: Citizenship's Duck-Rabbit Illusion

No friend of democracy, James Fitzjames Stephen held that in democratic politics, “the ruling men will be the wire-pullers and their friends.”⁷⁷ It’s tempting for citizens to see themselves as either victims of manipulation *or* one of its agents, among the fellow wire-pullers. In this paper we’ve switched back and forth, like the rabbit-duck illusion, from these two points of view. Each supplies us with a way of “seeing as” a citizen: victim or agent.⁷⁸ Gaslighting and mobilizing both target the lower-level code of citizens: to change how we handle evidence, whether disquieting or hopeful in character. Gaslit citizens have been manipulated in a morally distinctive way, one that targets a particular epistemic mechanism, our evidence about our evidence. Such manipulation poses a real threat to our agency — perversely by making us complicit in this process.

Yet insisting on exercising our own epistemic capacities, and fortifying against gaslighting, threatens our ability to sustain meaningful political action with others. What’s at stake is the felt need of citizenship — to see our own agency in our home institutions.⁷⁹ In ordinary life, we experience our agency most dramatically when we manage to stick to commitments over time, allowing us to complete difficult and risky projects. That need is no less significant in democratic politics, where confidence that we will be jointly efficacious is part of the price of admission. Mobilizers, when successful, manage to change the way their audience handles evidence. They get them to hold beliefs, or evidential policies, that protect them from a sense of futility and hopelessness. The tension motivating this essay lies between these two expressions of agency. Our susceptibility to defeat by higher-order evidence is essential to the co-agency of citizenships, and among the greatest menaces to it.

⁷⁶ Arceneaux and Vander Wielen, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ James Stephen, *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1874), 239.

⁷⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein uses the rabbit-duck illusion to distinguish between “seeing as” and “seeing that.” Here we’ve attempted to take seriously the former, first-personal perspective on our reasons and the evidence behind them. See *Philosophical Investigations*,

⁷⁹ This need for a decision-procedure that allows us to reasonably see our agency in our political institutions is explored by Jeremy Waldron in *Law and Disagreement* (Oxford University Press, 1999), especially pp. 101–18. It forms an ongoing thread in Richard Tuck’s *The Sleeping Sovereign: The Invention of Modern Democracy* (The Seeley Lectures) Cambridge University Press.