

Human Rights: A Political and Cultural Critique, the international human rights campaign is nothing but a Trojan horse: the effort of Westerners to recolonize the savages in Africa and elsewhere. Westerners portray Africans as victims and themselves as saviors.

In Mutua's book, he says that human rights can be seen as a project for the redemption of the redeemers, in which whites who are privileged as a people—who have historically visited untold suffering and savage atrocities against nonwhites—redeem themselves by “defending” and “civilizing” “lower,” “unfortunate,” and “inferior” peoples (p. 14). Thus, human rights campaigns are really a form of pathology—the pathology of self-redemption.

Simply put, any effort made by the United States to do something good in Africa is really bad because all such efforts advance the cause of capitalist free enterprise. By this logic, saving lives in sub-Saharan Africa is less important than the fact that allowing the United States to pose as Africa's savior will advance the cause of free market capitalism (thus recolonizing Africa). If debate judges are willing to buy this argument, notice how easy winning becomes for negative debaters. The negative team need only prove that an affirmative case is trying to advance human rights (or even just to save lives) in sub-Saharan Africa.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH CRITIQUES?

First, critiques circumvent the logical processes for decision that have made policy debate such a powerful tool for teaching critical thinking skills. The critique doesn't operate within any of the stock issues. It totally ignores harm, inherency, and solvency. It fails as a disadvantage argument because it offers no reason that the affirmative plan uniquely causes the critique. U.S. federal government programs promote free market capitalism regardless of whether the plan is adopted. Many policy debaters and judges have moved beyond the stock issues decision model to policymaking, hypothesis testing, or some other decision paradigm. Yet the critique attempts to operate outside of all such models. In fact, most postmodern critiques attack the very notion of linear logic as an inherently destructive Western mindset.

Second, critiques are internally contradictory—the only thing they are certain about is that there is no such thing as certainty.

Third, critique theorists become unwitting allies of ultraconservative philosophies in Western societies. Postmodernism takes a cynical view toward any efforts to help the poor or downtrodden because these efforts simply mask the deeper crimes of