

1

NO. 7: Let's vote now. Who knows, maybe we can all go home.

NO. 10: Yeah. Let's see who's where.

NO. 3: Right. Let's vote now.

5 FOREMAN: Anybody doesn't want to vote? (He looks around the table. There is no answer.) Okay, all those voting guilty raise your hands.

(Seven or eight hands go up immediately. Several others go up more slowly. Everyone looks around the table. There are two hands not raised, NO. 9's and NO. 8's. NO. 9's hand goes up slowly now as the foreman¹ counts.)

10 FOREMAN: Njine... ten ... eleven... That's eleven for guilty. Okay. Not guilty? (NO. 8's hand is raised.) One. Right. Okay. Eleven to one, guilty. Now we know where we are.

NO. 3: (sarcastically) Somebody's in left field. (To NO. 8) You think he's not guilty?

20 NO. 8: (quietly). I don't know.

NO. 3: I never saw a guiltier man in my life. You sat right in court and heard the same thing I did. The man's a dangerous killer. You could see it.

25 NO. 8: He's nineteen years old.

NO. 3: That's old enough. He knifed his own father, four inches into the chest. An innocent little nineteen-year old kid. They proved it a dozen different ways. Do you want me to list them?

NO. 8: No.

NO. 10: (to NO. 8). Well, do you believe his story?

35 NO. 8: I don't know-whether I believe it or not. Maybe I don't.

NO. 7: So what'd you vote not guilty for?

NO. 8: There were eleven votes for guilty. It's not so easy for me to raise my hand and send a boy off to die without talking about it first.

NO. 7: Who says it's easy for me?

NO. 8: No one.

45 NO. 7: What, just because I voted fast? I think the guy's guilty. You couldn't change my mind if you talked for a hundred years.

45 NO. 8: I don't want to change your mind. I just want to talk for a while. Look, this boy's been kicked around all his life. You know, living in a slum², his mother dead since he was nine. That's not a very good head start. He's a tough, angry kid. You know why slum kids get that way? Because we knock 'em on the head once a day, every day. I think maybe we owe him a few words. That's all.

[He looks around the table. Some of them look back coldly. Some cannot look at him. Only NO. 9 nods slowly. NO. 12 doodles³ steadily. NO. 4 begins to comb his hair.]

NO. 10: I don't mind telling you this, mister. We don't owe him a thing. He got a fair trial, didn't he? You know what that trial cost? He's lucky he got it. Look, we're all grownups here. You're not going to tell us that we're supposed to believe him, knowing what he is. I've lived among'em all my life. You can't believe a word they say. You know that.

NO. 9: (to NO. 10 very slowly). I don't know that. What a terrible thing for a man to believe! Since when is dishonesty a group characteristic? You have no monopoly on the truth.

NO. 3: (interrupting) All right. It's not Sunday. We don't need a sermon.

NO. 9: What this man says is very dangerous.

75 [NO. 8 puts his hand on NO. 9's arm and stops him. Somehow his touch and his gentle expression calm the old man. He draws a deep breath and relaxes.]

NO.4: I don't see any need for arguing like this. I think we ought to be able to behave like gentlemen.

NO.7: Right!

NO. 4: If we're going to discuss this case, let's discuss the facts.

85 FOREMAN: I think that's a good point. We have a job to do. Let's do it.

12 Angry Men, film by Sidney Lumet, 1957 ■

1. foreman: member of the jury chosen by the others to be the spokesman

2. slum: poor neighbourhood - 3. doodle: scribble

2

Anyone who regularly expresses ideas on the Internet – especially women who express ideas critical of men – has encountered that bane¹ of online discourse, the man who appears seemingly out of nowhere to insist on a debate. He disagrees with the sentiment expressed and is certain he can overpower the author with his superior logic and knowledge. So he takes out his metaphorical white glove and offers a slap, showing up in Twitter mentions and issuing an invitation to his YouTube channel or podcast. If you refuse, the “‘debate me’ dude,” as the journalist Miles Klee memorably dubbed him, spends the next week tweeting about how terrified you are of his massive intellect.

A classic example came a few weeks ago after Barstool Sports founder and president Dave Portnoy threatened, on Twitter, to fire his workers if they tried to unionize². After Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) joined the chorus of critics suggesting that such threats violated labor law, Portnoy fired back: “Hey @aoc welcome to thunder³ dome. Debate me.” She ignored the “request,” and in a follow-up tweet he – naturally – suggested that she had run. [...]

A call to debate may seem intellectual, even civilized. In theory, well-structured and respectful debates are an ideal opportunity to reach an audience that isn't fixed in its views. In reality, however, most “debate me” types seem to view them mainly as a chance to attack their opponent's credibility. Their model is not Lincoln and Douglas, but rather Socrates: By needling their interlocutors with rapid-fire questions, they aim to reveal, as they see it, their opponents' ignorance and stupidity, and their own superior intelligence and logic. [...]

After all, a debate isn't a conversation – an exercise in which people generously try to understand each other's point of view. A real conversation doesn't have a “winner.” Debates are about scoring points and subjugating your opponent. Which means that, no matter what their opponents say, debaters have every reason to spin⁴ a confrontation as a victory. If I got angry or flustered in a debate, then I would lose by virtue of being emotional and irrational. If I used jokes or sarcasm, I'd lose by virtue of seeming unserious and smug⁵. If I did take the debate seriously and even briefly entertained the points made by my opponent, I would seem conciliatory and weak. And no matter what, my opponent will have gotten my attention and sucked up my time. The only winning move is not to play. [...]

It's perfectly fine to critique men like Portnoy (who is now under investigation by the National Labor Relations Board for his tweets) without acceding to their presumptuous demands. Your critique can stand on its own, and you aren't obligated to repeat it at length in a more formal setting to give such men a chance to insult you and pepper you with bad-faith arguments in real time. I believe there is little point in engaging with these people – and I'm not open to debating that topic further.

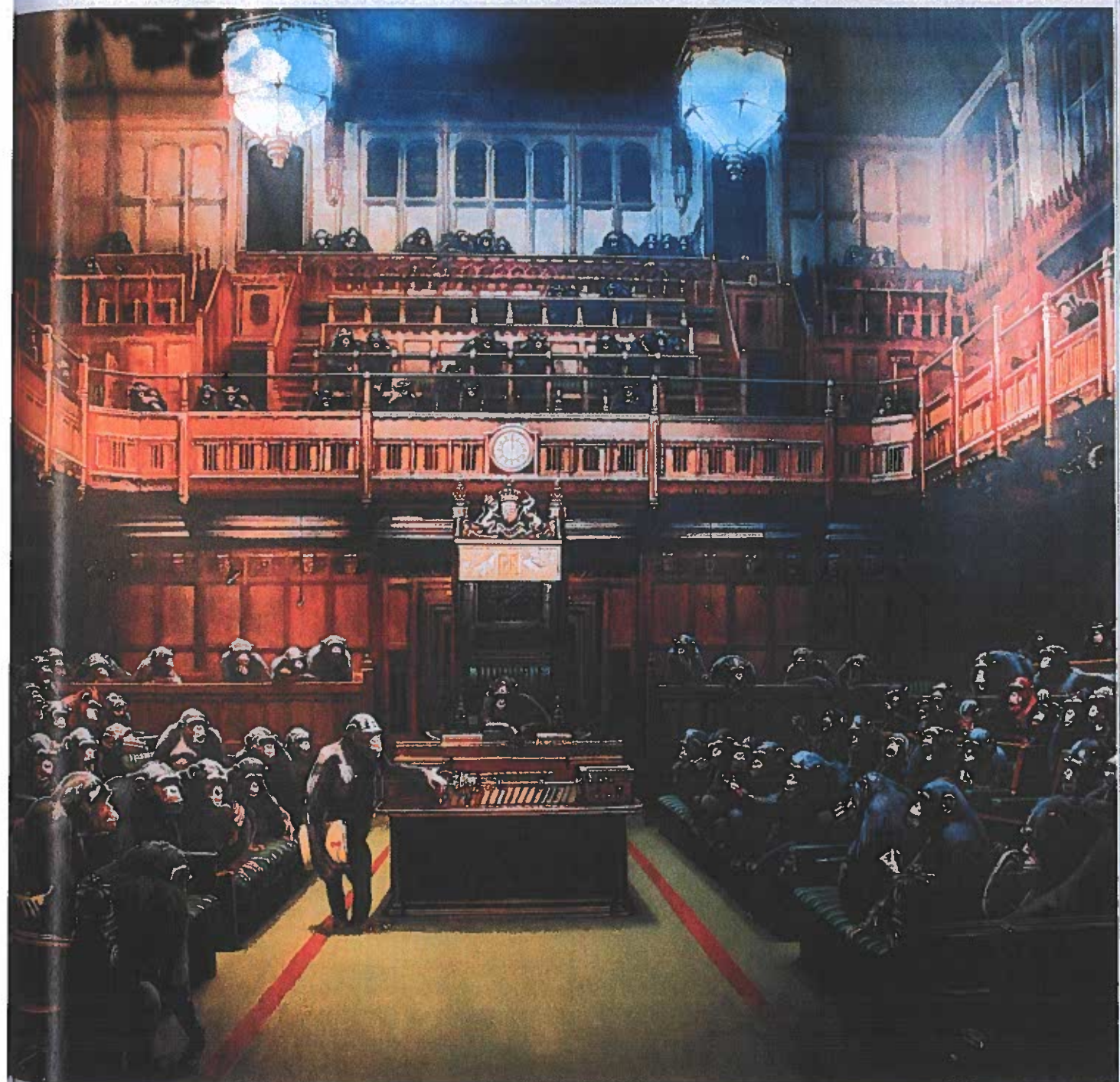
“The problems with online ‘debate me’ culture,” Donna Zuckerberg, *The Washington Post*, Aug. 29, 2019 ■

3



Devolved Parliament, Banksy, 2009

1. bane: cause of trouble – 2. unionize: form a labour union
3. thunder dome: fighting steel-case – 4. spin: (ici) present
5. smug: self-satisfied



TRANSLATION

- 1 Translate the following passage into French: document 2 from "A call to debate" to "Intelligence and logic" (l. 19-27).

SYNTHESIS

- 2 Write a commentary on the three documents. Use the following guidelines and take into account the specificities of the documents (500 words).
 - a. Define the notion of "debate" based on the three documents.
 - b. Would you say debating is what defines democracy?
 - c. According to you, should public debates be open to everyone?