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Rebecca Solnit: How to Comment on Social Media

“The entire measure of someone’s commitment is how much they post about their commitment”, writes Rebecca Solnit

1) Do not read the whole original post or what it links to, which will dilute the purity of your response and reduce your chances of rebuking the poster for not mentioning anything they might’ve mentioned/written a book on/devoted their life to. Listening/reading delays your reaction time, and as with other sports, speed is of the essence.

2) All of the O.P.’s feelings, experiences, interpretations, and values should be in the first sentence anyway. Only fascists hide those things in militarized outposts throughout the terrain of the piece. Which are basically ambushes. Which is violent and elitist.

3) If O.P. points out that your critique is baseless/ wrong/ high on its own fumes, whataboutism is your friend here. Just levy another charge, however unrelated. After all, any statement can be condemned for not including all other statements, aka O.P.’s concern about saving the whales is only a sign of his/her/their indifference about some other issue or cetacean or mammal or cause. There is always something.

4) That is, anything not declared in the post is something O.P. does not care about/is complicit with. Every expression of concern is in fact an expression of unconcern about something else; each of them merits a rebuke and you have been appointed (by yourself, but nevermind) to deliver it. Everyone but you is indifferent to the plight of the greater sage grouse and needs to be reminded of it.

5) Also always good to rope in some group you have no contact with to say you stand with as in “I stand with penguins in condemning the ice in your drink.”

6) And here is your chance to school the O.P. on some subject they know more about than you! Getting it wrong is a great way to engage them more deeply.

"Anyone who doesn't like some aspect of life on earth they haven't completely disassociated with is begging for your gotcha moment"

7) If you're a man and that O.P. is a woman, her facts are feelings and your feelings are facts, and those forty-seven increasingly lengthy responses you fired off were clearly a rational reaction. If she reacted negatively to them, do not forget to rebuke her for being emotional.

8) Remember, the word privilege can be used randomly. People who are breathing are unfairly privileged over people who died in the year 1816, who you also speak for. How dare they love geese, who are privileged above poor wingless platypuses!

9) Which is why the person who said, or rather typed, offhandedly "people should bike more" really means all people need to bike everywhere under all circumstances and is callously indifferent to people who: live in Siberia and can't bike through -40 blizzards; are physically unable to cycle; can't afford bikes; and let us not forget those who have bicycle-related trauma. Which is why anyone who could say "people should bike more" is a fascist who needs crushing.

10) Also you have the right to check their papers, as in to demand they prove to you their commitments and beliefs, and their unwillingness to do so on demand is a sign of culpability too. Have they properly condemned the recent something or other? It is not your job to find proof; it is this complete stranger's obligation to offer it up, and there is no reason they would not if they were not guilty as charged. Condemn them for insufficient condemnation issuance.

11) Hypocrisy: this one is a biggie. I have it on good authority that Greta Thunberg is against carbon dioxide emissions and yet emits carbon dioxide with every exhale. People who don't like tech corporations are good targets for this too; they should build their movements through communicating by coneiform tablet on clay harvested from local mudbanks; public transit advocates should have never traveled by car. Anyone who doesn't like some aspect of life on earth they haven't completely disassociated with is begging for your gotcha moment. And it

will never have occurred to Greta that she breathes or to the transit advocate that their mom drove them places.

12) Another important demand is that they offer proof of any facts in their utterances—that Calvin Coolidge was a president, that koala bears are marsupials, that Kool and the Gang sang “Celebration.” This is particularly spicy with complete strangers.

P.S. You do not have to accept the proof. See above.

13) Finally if the post is about something O.P. cares about, remember that you’ve cared about it longer, deeper, harder than they have, and that even someone’s care can be a basis for your triumph, along with condemning them for all those other things they evidently do not care about.

14) Nothing exists but social media. No one does anything offline. So the entire measure of someone’s commitment is how much they post about their commitment. Never mind if the noble cause is their day job, the thing they donate to extensively, the volunteer work they do; only the racket made online matters. Let the beginning and the end of thy commitment be the noise you make about that commitment (and others’ lack of commitment), and make it loud.

15) While we’re at it, everyone ever born should hold the values of this very minute, and anyone who did not because, say, they were late Victorians or early medieval peasants should die, except in their case they already did, but still.

P.S. Anyone who quotes William Shakespeare supports everything that was happening in 1594.

16) Joy is callous. All evidence of it is a reminder that someone somewhere is suffering, which many someones always are, so joy should be withdrawn, and anyway it’s neoliberal. There can be no good things until there are no bad things at all, which is why good things are bad.

17) Words are elitist, so I’ll stop here.

Dedicated to the indefatigable souls who instruct me in these principles every day.

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The article was originally published at Lithub and you can read it: [Here](#) – image by Banksy

Rebecca Solnit is a writer, historian, and activist. [She is the author](#) of twenty-five books on feminism, environmental and urban history, popular power, social change and insurrection, wandering and walking, hope and catastrophe.