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#### Basing politics on the hook’s understanding of the black experience, to quote their evidence, “the traumatic pain” of segregation, usurps understanding of political economy—this legitimizes neoliberal ideology and mystifies class antagonism

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In both films the bogus happy endings are possible only because they characterize their respective regimes of racial hierarchy in the superficial terms of interpersonal transactions. In *The Help* segregationism’s evil was small-minded bigotry and lack of sensitivity; it was more like bad manners than oppression. In Tarantino’s vision, slavery’s definitive injustice was its **gratuitous** and sadistic brutalization and sexualized degradation. Malevolent, ludicrously arrogant whites owned slaves most conspicuously to degrade and torture them. Apart from serving a formal dinner in a plantation house—and Tarantino, the Chance the Gardener of American filmmakers (and Best Original Screenplay? Really?) seems to draw his images of plantation life from Birth of a Nation and Gone With the Wind, as well as old Warner Brothers cartoons—and the Mandingo fighters and comfort girls, Tarantino’s slaves do no actual work at all; they’re present only to be brutalized. In fact, the cavalier sadism with which owners and traders treat them belies the fact that slaves were, **first and foremost, capital investments.** It’s not for nothing that New Orleans has a monument to the estimated 20,000-30,000 antebellum Irish immigrants who died constructing the New Basin Canal; slave labor was **too valuable** for such lethal work.

*The Help* trivializes Jim Crow by reducing it to its most superficial features and irrational extremes. The master-servant nexus was, and is, a labor relation. And the problem of labor relations particular to the segregationist regime wasn’t employers’ bigoted lack of respect or failure to hear the voices of the domestic servants, or even benighted refusal to recognize their equal humanity. It was that the labor relation was structured within and sustained by a political and institutional order that severely impinged on, when it didn’t altogether deny, black citizens’ avenues for pursuit of grievances and standing before the law. The crucial lynchpin of that order was neither myopia nor malevolence; it was suppression of black citizens’ capacities for direct participation in civic and political life, with racial disfranchisement and the constant threat of terror intrinsic to substantive denial of equal protection and due process before the law as its principal mechanisms. And the point of the regime wasn’t racial hatred or enforced disregard; its roots lay in the **much more prosaic concern** of dominant elites to maintain their political and economic hegemony by suppressing potential opposition and in the linked ideal of maintaining access to a labor force with no options but to accept employment on whatever terms employers offered. (Those who liked *The Help* or found it moving should watch *The Long Walk Home*, a 1990 film set in Montgomery, Alabama, around the bus boycott. I suspect that’s the film you thought you were watching when you saw The Help.)

*Django Unchained* trivializes slavery by reducing it to its most barbaric and lurid excesses. Slavery also was fundamentally a labor relation. It was a form of forced labor regulated—systematized, enforced and sustained—through a political and institutional order that specified it as a civil relationship granting owners absolute control over the life, liberty, and fortunes of others defined as eligible for enslavement, including most of all control of the conditions of their labor and appropriation of its product. Historian Kenneth M. Stampp quotes a slaveholder’s succinct explanation: “‘For what purpose does the master hold the servant?’ asked an ante-bellum Southerner. ‘Is it not that by his labor, he, the master, may accumulate wealth?’”1

That absolute control permitted horrible, unthinkable brutality, to be sure, **but perpetrating such brutality was neither the point of slavery nor its essential injustice**. The master-slave relationship could, and did, exist without brutality, and certainly without sadism and sexual degradation. In Tarantino’s depiction, however, it is not clear that slavery shorn of its extremes of brutality would be objectionable. It does not diminish the historical injustice and horror of slavery to note that it was **not the product of *sui generis*, transcendent Evil but a terminus on a continuum of bound labor** that was more norm than exception in the Anglo-American world until well into the eighteenth century, if not later. As legal historian Robert Steinfeld points out, it is not so much slavery, but the emergence of the notion of free labor—as the absolute control of a worker over her person—that is the historical anomaly that needs to be explained.2 *Django Unchained* sanitizes the essential injustice of slavery by not problematizing it and by **focusing instead** on the extremes of brutality and degradation it permitted, to the extent of making some of them up, just as does *The Help* regarding Jim Crow.

*The Help* could not imagine a more honest and complex view of segregationist Mississippi partly because it uses the period ultimately as a prop for human interest cliché, and *Django Unchained*’s absurdly ahistorical view of plantation slavery is only backdrop for the merger of spaghetti western and blaxploitation hero movie. Neither film is really about the period in which it is set. Film critic Manohla Dargis, reflecting a decade ago on what she saw as a growing Hollywood penchant for period films, observed that such films are typically “stripped of politics and historical fact…and instead will find meaning in appealing to seemingly timeless ideals and stirring scenes of love, valor and compassion” and that “the Hollywood professionals who embrace accuracy most enthusiastically nowadays are costume designers.”3 That observation applies to both these films, although in *Django* concern with historically accurate representation of material culture applies only to the costumes and props of the 1970s film genres Tarantino wants to recall.

To make sense of how *Django Unchained* has received so much warmer a reception among black and leftoid commentators than did *The Help*, it is useful to recall Margaret Thatcher’s 1981 dictum that “economics are the method: the object is to change the soul.”4 Simply put, she and her element have won. Few observers—among opponents and boosters alike—have noted how deeply and thoroughly both films are embedded in the practical ontology of neoliberalism, the complex of unarticulated assumptions and unexamined first premises that provide its common sense, its lifeworld.

Objection to *The Help* has been largely of the shooting fish in a barrel variety: complaints about the film’s paternalistic treatment of the maids, which generally have boiled down to an objection that the master-servant relation is thematized at all, as well as the standard, predictable litany of anti-racist charges about whites speaking for blacks, the film’s inattentiveness to the fact that at that time in Mississippi black people were busily engaged in liberating themselves, etc. An illustration of this tendency that conveniently refers to several other variants of it is Akiba Solomon, “Why I’m Just Saying No to ‘The Help’ and Its Historical Whitewash” in Color Lines,August 10, 2011, available at:http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/08/why\_im\_just\_saying\_no\_to\_the\_help.html.

Defenses of *Django Unchained* pivot on claims about the social significance of the narrative of a black hero. One node of this argument emphasizes the need to validate a history of autonomous black agency and “resistance” as a politico-existential desideratum. It accommodates a view that stresses the importance of recognition of rebellious or militant individuals and revolts in black American history. Another centers on a notion that exposure to fictional black heroes can inculcate the sense of personal efficacy necessary to overcome the psychological effects of inequality and to facilitate upward mobility and may undermine some whites’ negative stereotypes about black people. In either register assignment of social or political importance to depictions of black heroes rests on presumptions about the nexus of mass cultural representation, social commentary, and racial justice that are more significant politically than the controversy about the film itself. In both versions, this argument casts political and **economic problems in psychological terms**. Injustice appears as a matter of disrespect and denial of due recognition, and the remedies proposed—which are all about images projected and the distribution of jobs associated with their projection—look a lot like self-esteem engineering. Moreover, nothing could indicate more strikingly the extent of neoliberal ideological hegemonythan the idea that the mass culture industry and its representational practices constitute a **meaningful terrain for struggle** to advance egalitarian interests. It is possible to entertain that view seriously only by ignoring the fact that the production and consumption of mass culture is thoroughly embedded in capitalist material and ideological imperatives.

That, incidentally, is why I prefer the usage “mass culture” to describe this industry and its products and processes, although I recognize that it may seem archaic to some readers. The mass culture v. popular culture debate dates at least from the 1950s and has continued with occasional crescendos ever since.5 For two decades or more, instructively in line with the retreat of possibilities for concerted left political action outside the academy, the popular culture side of that debate has been dominant, along with its view that the products of this precinct of mass consumption capitalism are somehow capable of transcending or subverting their material identity as commodities, if not avoiding that identity altogether. Despite the dogged commitment of several generations of American Studies and cultural studies graduate students who want to valorize watching television and immersion in hip-hop or other specialty market niches centered on youth recreation and the most ephemeral fads as both intellectually avant-garde and politically “resistive,” it should be time to admit that that earnest disposition is **intellectually shallow and an ersatz politics**. The idea of “popular” culture posits a spurious autonomy and organicism that actually affirm mass industrial processes by effacing them, especially in the putatively rebel, fringe, or underground market niches that **depend on the fiction of the authentic** to announce the birth of new product cycles.

The power of the hero is a cathartic trope that connects mainly with the sensibility of adolescent boys—of whatever nominal age. Tarantino has allowed as much, responding to black critics’ complaints about the violence and copious use of “nigger” by proclaiming “Even for the film’s biggest detractors, I think their children will grow up and love this movie. I think it could become a rite of passage for young black males.”6 This response stems no doubt from Tarantino’s arrogance and opportunism, and some critics have denounced it as no better than racially presumptuous. But he is hardly alone in defending the film with an assertion that it gives black youth heroes, is generically inspirational or both. Similarly, in a January 9, 2012 interview on the Daily Show, George Lucas adduced this line to promote his even more execrable race-oriented live-action cartoon, *Red Tails*, which, incidentally, trivializes segregation in the military by reducing it to a matter of bad or outmoded attitudes. The ironic effect is significant understatement of both the obstacles the Tuskegee airmen faced and their actual accomplishments by rendering them as backdrop for a blackface, slapped-together remake of *Top Gun*. (Norman Jewison’s 1984 film, *A Soldier’s Story*, adapted from Charles Fuller’s *A Soldier’s Play*, is a much more sensitive and thought-provoking rumination on the complexities of race and racism in the Jim Crow U.S. Army—an army mobilized, as my father, a veteran of the Normandy invasion, never tired of remarking sardonically, to fight the racist Nazis.) Lucas characterized his film as “patriotic, even jingoistic” and was explicit that he wanted to create a film that would feature “real heroes” and would be “inspirational for teenage boys.” Much as *Django Unchained*’s defenders compare it on those terms favorably to *Lincoln*, Lucas hyped *Red Tails* as being a genuine hero story unlike “*Glory*, where you have a lot of white officers running those guys into cannon fodder.”

Of course, the film industry is sharply tilted toward the youth market, as Lucas and Tarantino are acutely aware. But Lucas, unlike Tarantino, was not being defensive in asserting his desire to inspire the young; he offered it more as a boast. As he has said often, he’d wanted for years to make a film about the Tuskegee airmen, and he reports that he always intended telling their story as a feel-good, crossover inspirational tale. Telling it that way also fits in principle (though in this instance not in practice, as *Red Tails* bombed at the box office) with the commercial imperatives of increasingly degraded mass entertainment. Dargis observed that the ahistoricism of the recent period films is influenced by market imperatives in a global film industry. The more a film is tied to historically specific contexts, the more difficult it is to sell elsewhere. That logic selects for special effects-driven products as well as standardized, decontextualized and simplistic—“universal”—story lines, preferably set in fantasy worlds of the filmmakers’ design. As Dargis notes, these films find their meaning in shopworn clichés puffed up as timeless verities, including uplifting and inspirational messages for youth. But something else underlies the stress on inspiration in the black-interest films, which shows up in critical discussion of them as well.

All these films—*The Help, Red Tails, Django Unchained*, even *Lincoln* and *Glory*—make a claim to public attention based partly on their social significance beyond entertainment or art, and they do so because they engage with significant moments in the history of the nexus of race and politics in the United States. There would not be so much discussion and debate and no Golden Globe, NAACP Image, or Academy Award nominations for *The Help*, *Red Tails*, or *Django Unchained* if those films weren’t defined partly by thematizing that nexus of race and politics in some way.

The pretensions to social significance that fit these films into their particular market niche don’t conflict with the mass-market film industry’s imperative of infantilization because those pretensions are only part of the show; they are little more than empty bromides, product differentiation in the patter of “seemingly timeless ideals” which the mass entertainment industry constantly recycles. (Andrew O’Hehir observes as much about *Django Unchained*, which he describes as “a three-hour trailer for a movie that never happens.”7) That comes through in the defense of these films, in the face of evidence of their failings, that, after all, they are “just entertainment.” Their substantive content is ideological; it is their contribution to the naturalization of neoliberalism’s ontology as they propagandize its universalization across spatial, temporal, and social contexts.

Purportedly in the interest of popular education cum entertainment, *Django Unchained* and *The Help*, and *Red Tails* for that matter, read the sensibilities of the present into the past by divesting the latter of its specific historicity. They reinforce the sense of the past as generic old-timey times distinguishable from the present by superficial inadequacies—outmoded fashion, technology, commodities and ideas—since overcome. In *The Help* Hilly’s obsession with her pet project marks segregation’s petty apartheid as irrational in part because of the expense rigorously enforcing it would require; the breadwinning husbands express their frustration with it as financially impractical. Hilly is a mean-spirited, narrow-minded person whose rigid and tone-deaf commitment to segregationist consistency not only reflects her limitations of character but also is economically unsound, a fact that further defines her, and the cartoon version of Jim Crow she represents, as irrational.

The deeper message of these films, insofar as they deny the integrity of the past, is that there is **no thinkable alternative to the ideological order under which we live**. This message is reproduced throughout the mass entertainment industry; it shapes the normative reality even of the fantasy worlds that masquerade as escapism. Even among those who laud the supposedly cathartic effects of Django’s insurgent violence as reflecting a greater truth of abolition than passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, few commentators notice that he and Broomhilda attained their freedom through a market transaction.8 This reflects an ideological hegemony in which students all too commonly wonder why planters would deny slaves or sharecroppers education because education would have made them more productive as workers. And, tellingly, in a glowing rumination in the Daily Kos, Ryan Brooke inadvertently thrusts mass culture’s destruction of historicity into bold relief by declaiming on “the segregated society presented” in *Django Unchained* and babbling on—with the absurdly ill-informed and pontifical self-righteousness that the blogosphere enables—about our need to take “responsibility for preserving racial divides” if we are “to put segregation in the past and fully fulfill Dr. King’s dream.”9 It’s all an indistinguishable mush of bad stuff about racial injustice in the old-timey days. Decoupled from its moorings in a historically specific political economy, slavery becomes at bottom a problem of race relations, and, as historian Michael R. West argues forcefully, “race relations” emerged as and has remained a discourse that substitutes etiquette for equality.10

This is the context in which we should take account of what “inspiring the young” means as a justification for those films. In part, the claim to inspire is a simple platitude, more filler than substance. It is, as I’ve already noted, both an excuse for films that are cartoons made for an infantilized, generic market and an assertion of a claim to a particular niche within that market. More insidiously, though, the ease with which “inspiration of youth” rolls out in this context resonates with three related and disturbing themes: 1) underclass ideology’s narratives—now all Americans’ common sense—that link poverty and inequality most crucially to (racialized) cultural inadequacy and psychological damage; 2) the belief that racial inequality stems from prejudice, bad ideas and ignorance, and 3) the cognate of both: the neoliberal rendering of social justice as equality of opportunity, with an aspiration of creating “competitive individual minority agents who might stand **a better fighting chance in the neoliberal rat race rather than a positive alternative vision of a society that eliminates the need to fight constantly against disruptive market whims** in the first place.”11

This politics seeps through in the chatter about *Django Unchained* in particular. Erin Aubry Kaplan, in the Los Angeles Times article in which Tarantino asserts his appeal to youth, remarks that the “most disturbing detail [about slavery] is the emotional violence and degradation directed at blacks that effectively keeps them at the bottom of the social order, a place they still occupy today.” Writing on the Institute of the Black World blog, one Dr. Kwa David Whitaker, a 1960s-style cultural nationalist, declaims on Django’s testament to the sources of degradation and “unending servitude [that] has rendered [black Americans] almost incapable of making sound evaluations of our current situations or the kind of steps we must take to improve our condition.”12 In its blindness to political economy, this notion of black cultural or psychological damage as either a legacy of slavery or of more indirect recent origin—e.g., urban migration, crack epidemic, matriarchy, babies making babies—comports well with the reduction of slavery and Jim Crow to interpersonal dynamics and bad attitudes. It **substitutes a “politics of recognition”** and a patter of racial uplift for politics and underwrites a conflation of political action and therapy.

With respect to the nexus of race and inequality, this discourse supports victim-blaming programs of personal rehabilitation and self-esteem engineering—inspiration—as easily as it does multiculturalist respect for difference, which, by the way, also feeds back to self-esteem engineering and inspiration as nodes within a larger political economy of race relations**.** Either way, this is a discourse that **displaces a politics** **challenging social structures that reproduce inequality** with concern for the feelings and characteristics of individuals and of categories of population statistics reified as singular groups that are equivalent to individuals. This discourse has made it possible (again, but more sanctimoniously this time) to characterize destruction of low-income housing as an uplift strategy for poor people; curtailment of access to public education as “choice”; being cut adrift from essential social wage protections as “empowerment”; and individual material success as socially important role modeling**.**

Neoliberalism’s triumph is affirmed with unselfconscious clarity in the ostensibly leftist defenses of *Django Unchained* that center on the theme of slaves’ having liberated themselves. Trotskyists, would-be anarchists, and psychobabbling identitarians have their respective sectarian garnishes: Trotskyists see everywhere the bugbear of “bureaucratism” and mystify “self-activity;” anarchists similarly fetishize direct action and voluntarism and oppose large-scale public institutions on principle, and identitarians romanticize essentialist notions of organic, folkish authenticity under constant threat from institutions. However, **all are indistinguishable from the nominally libertarian right in their disdain for government and institutionally based political action, which their common reflex is to disparage as inauthentic or corrupt.**

#### Class is better starting point—intersecting inequality is real, but Marxism is key to historicize it and address collective imperatives—for instance, in the context of debate, large parts of “norms of decorum” in debate are premised on producing economic subjects for post fordist office settings—this historical frame is key

**Taylor 11** [Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, on the editorial board of the International Socialist Review and a doctoral student in African American Studies at Northwestern University; “Race, class and Marxism,” SocialistWorker.org, http://socialistworker.org/2011/01/04/race-class-and-marxism]

Marxists believe that the potential for that kind of unity is dependant on battles and struggles against racism today. Without a commitment by revolutionary organizations in the here and now to the fight against racism, working-class unity will never be achieved and the revolutionary potential of the working class will never be realized. Yet despite all the evidence of this commitment to fighting racism over many decades, Marxism has been maligned as, at best, "blind" to combating racism and, at worst, "incapable" of it. For example, in an article published last summer, popular commentator and self-described "anti-racist" Tim Wise summarized the critique of "left activists" that he later defines as Marxists. He writes: [L]eft activists often marginalize people of color by operating from a framework of extreme class reductionism, which holds that the "real" issue is class, not race, that "the only color that matters is green," and that issues like racism are mere "identity politics," which should take a backseat to promoting class-based universalism and programs to help working people. This reductionism, by ignoring the way that even middle class and affluent people of color face racism and color-based discrimination (and by presuming that low-income folks of color and low-income whites are equally oppressed, despite a wealth of evidence to the contrary) reinforces white denial, privileges white perspectivism and dismisses the lived reality of people of color. Even more, as we'll see, it ignores perhaps the most important political lesson regarding the interplay of race and class: namely, that the biggest reason why there is so little working-class consciousness and unity in the Untied States (and thus, why class-based programs to uplift all in need are so much weaker here than in the rest of the industrialized world), is precisely because of racism and the way that white racism has been deliberately inculcated among white working folks. Only by confronting that directly (rather than sidestepping it as class reductionists seek to do) can we ever hope to build cross-racial, class based coalitions. In other words, for the policies favored by the class reductionist to work--be they social democrats or Marxists--or even to come into being, racism and white supremacy must be challenged directly. Here, Wise accuses Marxism of: "extreme class reductionism," meaning that Marxists allegedly think that class is more important than race; reducing struggles against racism to "mere identity politics"; and requiring that struggles against racism should "take a back seat" to struggles over economic issues. Wise also accuses so-called "left activists" of reinforcing "white denial" and "dismiss[ing] the lived reality of people of color"--which, of course, presumes Left activists and Marxists to all be white. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - What do Marxists actually say? Marxists argue that capitalism is a system that is based on the exploitation of the many by the few. Because it is a system based on gross inequality, it requires various **tools to divide the majority**--racism and **all oppressions** under capitalism serve this purpose. Moreover, oppression is used to justify and "explain" unequal relationships in society that enrich the minority that live off the majority's labor. Thus, racism developed initially to explain and justify the enslavement of Africans--because they were less than human and undeserving of liberty and freedom. Everyone accepts the idea that the oppression of slaves was rooted in the class relations of exploitation under that system. Fewer recognize that **under capitalism, wage slavery is the pivot around which all other inequalities and oppressions turn**. Capitalism used racism to justify plunder, conquest and slavery, but as Karl Marx pointed out, it also used racism to divide and rule--to pit one section of the working class against another and thereby blunt class consciousness. **To claim**, as Marxists do, **that racism is a product of capitalism is not to deny** or diminish **its importance** or impact in American society. It is simply to explain its origins and the reasons for its perpetuation. Many on the left today talk about class as if it is one of many oppressions, often describing it as "classism." What people are really referring to as "classism" is elitism or snobbery, and not the fundamental organization of society under capitalism. Moreover, it is popular today to talk about various oppressions, including class, as intersecting. While it is true that oppressions can reinforce and compound each other, they are born out of the material relations shaped by capitalism and the economic exploitation that is at the heart of capitalist society. In other words, it is the material and economic structure of society that gave rise to a range of ideas and ideologies to justify, explain and help perpetuate that order. In the United States, racism is the most important of those ideologies. Despite the widespread beliefs to the contrary of his critics, Karl Marx himself was well aware of the centrality of race under capitalism. While Marx did not write extensively on the question of slavery and its racial impact in societies specifically, he did write about the way in which European capitalism emerged because of its pilfering, rape and destruction, famously writing: The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of Black skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. He also recognized the extent to which slavery was central to the world economy. He wrote: Direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that has given the colonies their value; it is the colonies that have created world trade, and it is world trade that is the pre-condition of large-scale industry. Thus slavery is an economic category of the greatest importance. Without slavery North America, the most progressive of countries, would be transformed into a patriarchal country. Wipe out North America from the map of the world, and you will have anarchy--the complete decay of modern commerce and civilization. Cause slavery to disappear and you will have wiped America off the map of nations. Thus slavery, because it is an economic category, has always existed among the institutions of the peoples. Modern nations have been able only to disguise slavery in their own countries, but they have imposed it without disguise upon the New World. Thus, there is a fundamental understanding of the centrality of slave labor in the national and international economy. But what about race? Despite the dearth of Marx's own writing on race in particular, one might look at Marx's correspondence and deliberations on the American Civil War to draw conclusions as to whether Marx was as dogmatically focused on purely economic issues as his critics make him out be. One must raise the question: If Marx was reductionist, how is his unabashed support and involvement in abolitionist struggles in England explained? If Marx was truly an economic reductionist, he might have surmised that slavery and capitalism were incompatible, and simply waited for slavery to whither away. W.E.B. Du Bois in his Marxist tome Black Reconstruction, quotes at length a letter penned by Marx as the head of the International Workingmen's Association, written to Abraham Lincoln in 1864 in the midst of the Civil War: The contest for the territories which opened the epoch, was it not to decide whether the virgin soil of immense tracts should be wedded to the labor of the immigrant or be prostituted by the tramp of the slaver driver? When an oligarchy of 300,000 slave holders dared to inscribe for the first time in the annals of the world "Slavery" on the banner of armed revolt, when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great Democratic Republic had first sprung up, whence the first declaration of the rights of man was issued...when on the very spots counter-revolution...maintained "slavery to be a beneficial institution"...and cynically proclaimed property in man 'the cornerstone of the new edifice'...then the working classes of Europe understood at once...that the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy war of property against labor... They consider it an earnest sign of the epoch to come that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded son of the working class, to lead his country through the matchless struggles for the rescue of the enchained race and the Reconstruction of a social order. Not only was Marx personally opposed to slavery and actively organized against it, but he theorized that slavery and the resultant race discrimination that flowed from it were **not just problems for the slaves** themselves, but for white workers who were constantly under the threat of losing work to slave labor. This did not mean white workers were necessarily sympathetic to the cause of the slaves--most of them were not. But Marx was not addressing the issue of consciousness, but objective factors when he wrote in Capital, "In the United States of America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed as long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the Black it is branded." Moreover, Marx understood the dynamics of racism in a modern sense as well--as a means by which workers who had common, objective interests with each other could also become mortal enemies because of subjective, but nevertheless real, racist and nationalist ideas. Looking at the tensions between Irish and English workers, with a nod toward the American situation between Black and white workers, Marx wrote: Every industrial and commercial center in England possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the USA. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and stupid tool of the English rule in Ireland. This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it. Out of this quote, one can see a Marxist theory of how racism operated in contemporary society, after slavery was ended. Marx was highlighting three things: first, that capitalism promotes economic competition between workers; second, that the ruling class uses racist ideology to divide workers against each other; and finally, that when one group of workers suffer oppression, it negatively impacts the entire class.

#### Refuse their ethical criteria—it insulates protest from accountability and trades off with collective struggle.

Chandler 7 – Researcher @ Centre for the Study of Democracy, Chandler. 2007. Centre for the Study of Democracy, Westminster, Area, Vol. 39, No. 1, p. 118-119

This disjunction between the human/ethical/global causes of post-territorial political activism and the capacity to 'make a difference' is what makes these individuated claims immediately abstract and metaphysical – there is no specific demand or programme or attempt to build a collective project. This is the politics of symbolism. The rise of symbolic activism is highlighted in the increasingly popular framework of 'raising awareness'– here there is no longer even a formal connection between ethical activity and intended outcomes (Pupavac 2006). Raising awareness about issues has replaced even the pretense of taking responsibility for engaging with the world – the act is ethical in-itself. Probably the most high profile example of awareness raising is the shift from Live Aid, which at least attempted to measure its consequences in fund-raising terms, to Live 8 whose goal was solely that of raising an 'awareness of poverty'. The struggle for 'awareness' makes it clear that the focus of symbolic politics is the individual and their desire to elaborate upon their identity – to make us aware of their 'awareness', rather than to engage us in an instrumental project of changing or engaging with the outside world. It would appear that in freeing politics from the constraints of territorial political community there is a danger that political activity is freed from any constraints of social mediation(see further, Chandler 2004a). Without being forced to test and hone our arguments, or even to clearly articulate them, we can rest on the radical 'incommunicability' of our personal identities and claims – you are 'either with us or against us'; engaging with those who disagree is no longer possible or even desirable. It is this lack of desire to engage which most distinguishes the unmediated activism of post-territorial political actors from the old politics of territorial communities, founded on struggles of collective interests (Chandler 2004b). The clearest example is old representational politics – this forced engagement in order to win the votes of people necessary for political parties to assume political power. Individuals with a belief in a collective programme knocked on strangers' doors and were willing to engage with them, not on the basis of personal feelings but on what they understood were their potential shared interests. Few people would engage in this type of campaigning today; engaging with people who do not share our views, in an attempt to change their minds, is increasingly anathema and most people would rather share their individual vulnerabilities or express their identities in protest than attempt to argue with a peer. This paper is not intended to be a nostalgic paean to the old world of collective subjects and national interests or a call for a revival of territorial state-based politics or even to reject global aspirations: quite the reverse. Today, politics has been 'freed' from the constraints of territorial political community – governments without coherent policy programmes do not face the constraints of failure or the constraints of the electorate in any meaningful way; activists, without any collective opposition to relate to, are free to choose their causes and ethical identities; protest, from Al Qaeda, to anti-war demonstrations, to the riots in France, is inchoate and atomized. When attempts are made to formally organize opposition, the ephemeral and incoherent character of protest is immediately apparent.

#### Claiming “debate space” as a site for organic, *horizontalist* politics sells out radical change to the private sphere of individual performance.

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There is a much-recycled and certainly apocryphal tale told of an ethnographer traveling in India. Journeying up and down the Ganges Delta, he encounters a fisherman who claims to know the source of all truth. “The world,” the fisherman explains, “rests upon the back of an elephant.”

“But what does the elephant stand on?” the ethnographer asks.

“A turtle.”

“And the turtle?”

“Another turtle.”

“And it?”

“Ah, friend,” smiles the fisherman, “it is turtles all the way down.”

As with most well-circulated apocrypha, it is a parable that lacks a clear provenance, but has a clear moral: that despite our ever-dialectical minds, we will never get to the bottom of things; that, in fact, ***there is nothing*** at the bottom of things. What we define as society is nothing more than a set of locally constructed practices and norms, and what we define as history is nothing more than the passage of one set to the next. Although we might “find the picture of our universe as an infinite tower of tortoises rather ridiculous,” as one reteller admitted, it only raises the question, “Why do we think we know better?”

Since the early 1970s we have wondered—with increasing anxiety—why and if we know better. Social scientists, literary critics, philosophers, and jurists have all begun to turn from their particular disciplines to the more general question of interpretation. There has been an **increasing uneasiness with universal categories of thought**; a whispered suspicion and then a commonly held belief that the sum—societies, histories, identities—never amounts to more than its parts. New analytical frameworks have begun to emerge, sensitive to both the pluralities and localities of life. “What we need,” as Clifford Geertz argued, “are not enormous ideas” but “ways of thinking that are responsive to particularities, to individualities, oddities, discontinuities, contrasts, and singularities.”

This growing anxiety over the precision of our interpretive powers has translated into a variety of political as well as epistemological concerns. Many have become uneasy with universal concepts of justice and equality. Simultaneous to—and in part because of—the ascendance of human rights, freedom has increasingly become understood as an individual entitlement instead of a collective possibility. The once prevalent conviction that a handful of centripetal values could bind society together has transformed into a deeply skeptical attitude toward general statements of value. If it is, indeed, turtles all the way down, then decisions can take place only on a local scale and on a horizontal plane. There is no overarching platform from which to legislate; only a “local knowledge.” As Michael Walzer argued in a 1985 lecture on social criticism, “We have to start from where we are,” we can only ask, “what is the right thing ***for us*** to do?”

This shift in scale has had a significant impact on the Left over the past twenty to thirty years. Socialism, once the “name of our desire,” has all but disappeared; new desires have emerged in its place: situationism, autonomism, localism, communitarianism, environmentalism, anti-globalism. Often spatial in metaphor, they have been more concerned with where and how politics happen rather than at what pace and to what end. Often local in theory and in practice, they have come to represent a shift in scale: from the large to the small, from the vertical to the horizontal, and from—what Geertz has called—the “thin” to the “thick.”

Class, race, and gender—those classic left themes—are, to be sure, still potent categories. But they have often been imagined as spectrums rather than binaries, varying shades rather than static lines of solidarity. Instead of society, there is now talk of communities and actor networks; instead of radical schemes to rework economic and political institutions, there is an emphasis on localized campaigns and everyday practices. The critique of capitalism—once heavily informed by intricate historical and social theories—has narrowed. The “ruthless criticism of all,” as Karl Marx once put it, has turned away from exploitative world systems to the pathologies of an over-regulated life. As post-Marxists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe declared in 1985,

Left-wing thought today stands at a crossroads. The “evident truths” of the past—the classical forms of analysis and political calculation, the nature of the forces in conflict, the very meaning of the Left’s struggles and objectives—have been seriously challenged….From Budapest to Prague and the Polish coup d’état, from Kabul to the sequels of Communist victory in Vietnam and Cambodia, a question-mark has fallen more and more heavily over the whole way of conceiving both socialism and the roads that should lead to it.

In many ways, the Left has just been keeping up with the times. Over the last quarter-century, there has been a general fracturing of our social and economic relations, a “multiplication of,” what one sociologist has called, “partial societies—grouped by age, sex, ethnicity, and proximity.” This has not necessarily been a bad thing. Even as the old Left—the ***vertical*** Left—frequently bemoaned the growing differentiation and individuation, these new categories did, in fact, open the door for marginalized voices and communities. They created a space for more diversity, tolerance, and inclusion. They signaled a turn toward the language of recognition: a politics more sensitive to difference. But this turn was also not without its disadvantages. Gone was the Left’s hope for an emerging class consciousness, a movement of the “people” seeking greater realms of freedom. Instead of challenging the top-down structures of late capitalism, radicals now aspired to create—what post-Marxists were frequently calling—“spaces of freedom.” If one of the explicit targets of the global justice movement of the late 1990s was the exploitative trade policies of the World Trade Organization, then its underlying critique was the alienating patterns of its bureaucracy: the erosion of spaces for self-determination and expression. The crisis of globalization was that it stripped individuals of their rights to participate, to act as free agents in a society that was increasingly becoming shaped by a set of global institutions. What most troubled leftists over the past three or four decades was not the increasingly unequal distribution of goods and services in capitalist societies but the increasingly unequal distribution of power. As one frequently sighted placard from the 1999 Seattle protests read, “No globalization without participation!”

Occupy Wall Street has come to represent the latest turn in this movement toward local and more horizontal spaces of freedom. Occupation was, itself, a matter of recovering local space: a way to repoliticize the square. And in a moment characterized by foreclosure, it was also symbolically, and sometimes literally, an attempt to reclaim lost homes and abandoned properties. But there was also a deeper notion of space at work. Occupy Wall Street sought out not only new political spaces but also new ways to relate to them. By resisting the top-down management of representative democracy as well as the bottom-up ideals of labor movements, Occupiers hoped to create a new politics in which decisions moved neither up nor down but horizontally. While embracing the new reach of globalization—linking arms and webcams with their encamped comrades in Madrid, Tel Aviv, Cairo, and Santiago—they were also rejecting its patterns of consolidation, its limits on personal freedom, its vertical and bureaucratic structures of decision-making.

Time was also to be transformed. The general assemblies and general strikes were efforts to reconstruct, and make more autonomous, our experience of time as well as space. Seeking to escape from the Taylorist demands of productivity, the assemblies insisted that decision-making was an endless process. Who we are, what we do, what we want to be are categories of flexibility, and consensus is as much about repairing this sense of open-endedness as it is about agreeing on a particular set of demands. Life is a mystery, as one pop star fashionista has insisted, and Occupiers wanted to keep it that way. Likewise, general strikes were imagined as ways in which workers could take back time—regain those parts of life that had become routinized by work. Rather than attempts to achieve large-scale reforms, general strikes were improvisations, escapes from the daily calculations of production that demonstrated that we can still be happy, creative, even productive individuals without jobs. As one unfurled banner along New York’s Broadway read during this spring’s May Day protests, “Why work? Be happy.”

In many ways, the Occupy movement was a rebellion against the institutionalized nature of twenty-first century capitalism and democracy. Equally skeptical of corporate monopolies as it was of the technocratic tendencies of the state, it was ultimately an insurgency against control, against the ways in which organized power and capital deprived the individual of the time and space needed to control his or her life. Just as the vertically inclined leftists of the twentieth century leveraged the public corporation—the welfare state—against the increasingly powerful number of private ones, so too were Occupy and, more generally, the horizontalist Left to embrace the age of the market: at the center of their politics was the anthropological “man” in both his forms—*homo faber* and *homo ludens*—who was capable of negotiating his interests outside the state. For this reason, the movement did not fit neatly into right or left, conservative or liberal, revolutionary or reformist categories. On the one hand, it was sympathetic to the most classic of left aspirations: to dismantle governing hierarchies. On the other, its language was imbued with a strident individualism: a politics of anti-institutionalism and personal freedom that has most often been affiliated with the Right.

Seeking an alternative to the bureaucratic tendencies of capitalism and socialism, Occupiers were to frequently invoke the image of autonomy: of a world in which social and economic relations exist outside the institutions of the state. **Their aspiration was a society based on organic, decentralized circuits of exchange and deliberation—on voluntary associations, on local debate**, on loose networks of affinity groups.

If political and economic life had become abstracted in the age of globalization and financialization, then Occupy activists wanted to re-politicize our everyday choices. As David Graeber, one of Occupy’s chief theoretical architects, explained two days after Zuccotti Park was occupied, “The idea is essentially that “the system is not going to save us,” so “we’re going to have to save ourselves.”

Borrowing from the anarchist tradition, Graeber has called this work “direct action”: the practice of circumventing, even on occasion subverting, hierarchies through practical projects. Instead of attempting “to pressure the government to institute reforms” or “seize state power,” direct actions seek to “build a new society in the shell of the old.” By creating spaces in which individuals take control over their lives, it is a strategy of acting and thinking “as if one is already free.” Marina Sitrin, another prominent Occupier, has offered another name for this politics—“horizontalism”: “the use of direct democracy, the striving for consensus” and “processes in which everyone is heard and new relationships are created.” It is a politics that not only refuses institutionalization but also imagines a new subjectivity from which one can project the future into the present.

Direct action and horizontal democracy are new names, of course, for old ideas. They descend—most directly—from the ideas and tactics of the global justice movement of the 1990s and 2000s. Direct Action Network was founded in 1999 to help coordinate the anti-WTO protests in Seattle; *horizontalidad*, as it was called in Argentina, emerged as a way for often unemployed workers to organize during the financial crisis of 2001. Both emerged out of the theories and practices of a movement that was learning as it went along. The ad hoc working groups, the all-night bull sessions, the daylong actions, the decentralized planning were all as much by necessity as they were by design. They were not necessarily intended at first. But what emerged out of anti-globalization was a new vision of globalization. Local and horizontal in practice, direct action and democracy were to become catchphrases for a movement that was attempting to resist the often autocratic tendencies of a fast-globalizing capitalism.

But direct action and horizontal democracy also tap into a longer, if often neglected, tradition on the left: the anarchism, syndicalism, and autonomist Marxism that stretch from Peter Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, and Rosa Luxemburg to C.L.R. James, Cornelius Castoriadis, and Antonio Negri. If revolutionary socialism was a theory about ideal possibilities, then anarchism and autonomism often focused on the revolutionary practices themselves. The way in which the revolution was organized was the primary act of revolution. Autonomy, as the Greco-French Castoriadis told *Le Monde* in 1977, demands not only “the elimination of dominant groups and of the institutions embodying and orchestrating that domination” but also new modes of what he calls “self-management and organization.”

With direct action and horizontal democracy, the Occupy movement not only developed a set of new tactics but also a governing ideology, a theory of time and space that runs counter to many of the practices of earlier leftist movements. Unlike revolutionary socialism or evolutionary social democracy—Marx’s Esau and Jacob—Occupiers conceived of time as more cyclical than developmental, its understanding of space more local and horizontal than structural and vertical. The revolution was to come but only through everyday acts. It was to occur only through—what Castoriadis obliquely referred to as—“the self-institution of society.”

The seemingly spontaneous movement that emerged after the first general assemblies in Zuccotti Park was not, then, sui generis but an elaboration of a much larger turn by the Left. As occupations spread across the country and as activists begin to exchange organizational tactics, it was easy to forget that what was happening was, in fact, a part of a much larger shift in the scale and plane of Western politics: a turn toward more local and horizontal patterns of life, a growing skepticism toward the institutions of the state, and an increasing desire to seek out greater realms of personal freedom. And although its hibernation over the summer has, perhaps, marked the end of the Occupy movement, OWS has also come to represent an important—and perhaps more lasting—break. In both its ideas and tactics, it has given us a new set of desires—autonomy, radical democracy, direct action—that look well beyond the ideological and tactical tropes of socialism. Its occupations and general assemblies, its flash mobs and street performances, its loose network of activists all suggest a bold new set of possibilities for the Left: a horizontalist ethos that believes that revolution will begin by transforming our everyday lives.

It can be argued that horizontalism is, in many ways, a product of the growing disaggregation and individuation of Western society; that **it is a kind of free-market leftism: a politics jury-rigged out of the very culture it hopes to resist.** For not only does it emphasize the agency of the individual, but it draws one of its central inspirations from a neoclassical image: that of the self-managing society—the polity that functions best when the state is absent from everyday decisions.

But one can also find in its anti-institutionalism an attempt to speak in today’s language for yesterday’s goals. If we must live in a society that neither trusts nor feels compelled by collectivist visions, then horizontalism offers us a leftism that attempts to be, at once, both individualist and egalitarian, anti-institutional and democratic, open to the possibilities of self-management and yet also concerned with the casualties born out of an age that has let capital manage itself for far too long. Horizontalism has absorbed the crisis of knowledge—what we often call “postmodernism”—and the crisis of collectivism—what we often call “neoliberalism.” But instead of seeking to return to some golden age before our current moment of fracture, it seeks—for better and worse—to find a way to make leftist politics conform to our current age of anti-foundationalism and institutionalism. As Graeber argued in the prescriptive last pages of his anthropological epic, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, “Capitalism has transformed the world in many ways that are clearly irreversible” and we therefore need to give up “the false choice between state and market that [has] so monopolized political ideology for the last centuries that it made it difficult to argue about anything else.” We need, in other words, to stop thinking like leftists.

But herein lies the problem. Not all possible forms of human existence and social interaction, no matter how removed they are from the institutions of power and capital, are good forms of social organization. Although it is easy to look enthusiastically to those societies—ancient or modern, Western or non-Western—that exist beyond the structures of the state, they, too, have their own patterns of hierarchy, their own embittered lines of inequality and injustice. More important, to select one form of social organization over the other is **always an act of exclusion**. Instituting and then protecting a particular way of life will always require a normative commitment in which not every value system is respected—in which, in other words, there is a moral hierarchy.

More problematically, by working outside structures of power one may circumvent coercive systems but one does **not necessarily subvert them**. Localizing politics—stripping it of its larger institutional ambitions—has, to be sure, its advantages. But without a larger structural vision, it does not go far enough. “Bubbles of freedom,” as Graeber calls them, may create a larger variety of non-institutional life. But they will always neglect other crucial avenues of freedom: in particular, those social and economic rights that can only be protected from the top down. In this way, the anti-institutionalism of horizontalism comes dangerously close to that of the libertarian Right. The turn to previous eras of social organization, the desire to locate and confine politics to a particular regional space, the deep skepticism toward all forms of institutional life not only mirror the aspirations of libertarianism but help cloak those hierarchies spawned from non-institutional forms of power and capital.

This is a particularly pointed irony for a political ideology that claims to be opposed to the many injustices of a non-institutional market—in particular, its unregulated financial schemes. Perhaps this is an irony deeply woven into the theoretical quilt of autonomy: a vision that, as a result of its anti-institutionalism, is drawn to all sites of individual liberation—even those that are to be found in the marketplace. As Graeber concludes in *Debt*, “Markets, when allowed to drift entirely free from their violent origins, invariably begin to grow into something different, into networks of honor, trust, and mutual connectedness,” whereas “the maintenance of systems of coercion constantly do the opposite: turn the products of human cooperation, creativity, devotion, love and trust back into numbers once again.”

In many ways, this is the result of a set of political ideas that have lost touch with their origins. The desire for autonomy was born out of the socialist—if not also often the Marxist—tradition and there was always a guarded sympathy for the structures needed to oppose organized systems of capital and power. Large-scale institutions were, for thinkers such as Castoriadis, Negri, and C.L.R. James, still essential if every cook was truly to govern. To only “try to create ‘spaces of freedom’ ‘alongside’ of the State” meant, as Castoriadis was to argue later in his life, to back “down from the problem of politics.” In fact, this was, he believed, the failure of 1968: “the inability to set up new, different institutions” and recognize that “there is no such thing as a society without institutions.”

This is—and will be—a problem for the horizontalist Left as it moves forward. As a leftism ready-made for an age in which all sides of the political spectrum are arrayed against the regulatory state, it is always in danger of becoming absorbed into the very ideological apparatus it seeks to dismantle. For it aspires to a decentralized and organic politics that, in both principle and practice, shares a lot in common with its central target. Both it and the “free market” are anti-institutional. And the latter will remain so without larger vertical measures. Structures, not only everyday practices, need to be reformed. The revolution cannot happen only on the ground; it must also happen from above. A direct democracy still needs its indirect structures, individual freedoms still need to be measured by their collective consequences, and notions of social and economic equality still need to stand next to the desire for greater political participation. Deregulation is another regulatory regime, and to replace it requires new regulations: institutions that will limit the excesses of the market. As Castoriadis insisted in the years after 1968, the Left’s task is not only to abolish old institutions but to discover “new kinds of relationship between society and its institutions.”

Horizontalism has come to serve as an important break from the static strategies and categories of analysis that have slowed an aging and vertically inclined Left. OWS was to represent its fullest expression yet, though it has a much longer back story and still—one hopes—a promising future. But horizontalists such as Graeber and Sitrin will struggle to establish spaces of freedom if they cannot formulate a larger vision for a society. Their vision is not—as several on the vertical left have suggested—too utopian but not utopian enough: in seeking out local spaces of freedom, they have confined their ambitions; they have, in fact, come, at times, to mirror the very ideology they hope to resist. In his famous retelling of the turtle parable, Clifford Geertz warned that in “the search of all-too-deep-lying turtles,” we have to be careful to not “lose touch with the hard surfaces of life—with the political, economic, stratificatory realities within which men are everywhere contained.” This is an ever-present temptation, and one that, in our age of ever more stratification, we must resist.

#### Our alternative is boring politics—it’s the only way to prevent criticism from being an end in itself

**Frank '12** Thomas, brilliant badass, author of *What's the Matter with Kansas?* and editor of *The Baffler* "To the Precinct Station: How theory met practice …and drove it absolutely crazy" http://www.thebaffler.com/past/to\_the\_precinct\_station

Occupy itself is pretty much gone. It was evicted from Zuccotti Park about two months after it began—an utterly predictable outcome for which the group seems to have made inadequate preparation. OWS couldn’t bring itself to come up with a real set of demands until after it got busted, when it finally agreed on a single item. With the exception of some residual groups here and there populated by the usual activist types, OWS has today pretty much fizzled out. The media storm that once surrounded it has blown off to other quarters.

Pause for a moment and compare this record of accomplishment to that of Occupy’s evil twin, the Tea Party movement, and the larger right-wing revival of which it is a part. Well, under the urging of this trumped-up protest movement, the Republican Party proceeded to ***win a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives***; in the state legislatures of the nation it ***took some six hundred seats*** from the Democrats; as of this writing it is still ***purging Republican senators and congressmen*** deemed insufficiently conservative and has even succeeded in ***having one of its own named as the GOP’s vice-presidential candidate***.

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*T*he question that the books under consideration here seek to answer is: What is the magic formula that made OWS so successful? But it’s exactly the wrong question. What we need to be asking about Occupy Wall Street is: Why did this effort fail? How did OWS blow all the promise of its early days? Why do even the most popular efforts of the Left come to be mired in a gluey swamp of academic talk and pointless antihierarchical posturing?

The action certainly started with a bang. When the occupation of Zuccotti Park began, in September 2011, the OWS cause was overwhelmingly popular; indeed, as Todd Gitlin points out, hating Wall Street may well have been the most popular left-wing cause since the thirties. Inequality had reached obscene levels, and it was no longer the act of a radical to say so. The bank bailouts of the preceding years had made it obvious that government was captured by organized money. Just about everyone resented Wall Street in those days; just about everyone was happy to see someone finally put our fury in those crooks’ overpaid faces. People flocked to the OWS standard. Cash donations poured in; so did food and books. Celebrities made appearances in Zuccotti, and the media began covering the proceedings with an attentiveness it rarely gives to leftist actions.

But these accounts, with a few exceptions here and there, misread that overwhelming approval of Occupy’s *cause* as an approval of the movement’s *mechanics*: the camping out in the park, the way food was procured for an army of protesters, the endless search for consensus, the showdowns with the cops, the twinkles. These things, almost every writer separately assumes, are what the Occupy phenomenon was *really* about. These are the details the public hungers to know.

The building of a “community” in Zuccotti Park, for example, is a point of special emphasis. Noam Chomsky’s thoughts epitomize the genre when he tells us that “one of the main achievements” of the movement “has been to create communities, real functioning communities of mutual support, democratic interchange,” et cetera. The reason this is important, he continues, is because Americans “tend to be very isolated and neighborhoods are broken down, community structures have broken down, people are kind of alone.” How building such “communities” helps us to tackle the power of high finance is left unexplained, as is Chomsky’s implication that a city of eight million people, engaged in all the complexities of modern life, should learn how humans are supposed to live together by studying an encampment of college students.

The actual sins of Wall Street, by contrast, are much less visible. For example, when you read *Occupying Wall Street*, the work of a team of writers who participated in the protests, you first hear about the subject of predatory lending when a sympathetic policeman mentions it in the course of a bust. The authors themselves never bring it up.

And if you want to know how the people in Zuccotti intended to block the banks’ agenda—how they intended to stop predatory lending, for example—you have truly come to the wrong place. Not because it’s hard to figure out how to stop predatory lending, but because the way the Occupy campaign is depicted in these books, it seems to have had no intention of doing anything except building “communities” in public spaces and inspiring mankind with its noble refusal to have leaders.

Unfortunately, though, that’s not enough. Building a democratic movement culture is essential for movements on the left, but it’s also just a starting point. Occupy never evolved beyond it. It did not call for a subtreasury system, like the Populists did. It didn’t lead a strike (a real one, that is), or a sit-in, or a blockade of a recruitment center, or a takeover of the dean’s office. The IWW free-speech fights of a century ago look positively Prussian by comparison.

With Occupy, the **horizontal culture was everything. “The process is the message**,” as the protesters used to say and as most of the books considered here largely concur. The aforementioned camping, the cooking, the general-assembling, the filling of public places: that’s what Occupy was all about. Beyond that there seems to have been virtually no strategy to speak of, no agenda to transmit to the world.

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*W*hether or not to have demands, you might recall, was something that Occupy protesters debated hotly among themselves in the days when Occupy actually occupied something. Reading these books a year later, however, that debate seems to have been consensed out of existence. Virtually none of the authors reviewed here will say forthrightly that the failure to generate demands was a tactical mistake. On the contrary: the quasi-official account of the episode (*Occupying Wall Street*) laughs off demands as a fetish object of literal-minded media types who stupidly crave hierarchy and chains of command. Chris Hedges tells us that demands were something required only by “the elites, and their mouthpieces in the media.” Enlightened people, meanwhile, are supposed to know better; demands imply the legitimacy of the adversary, meaning the U.S. government and its friends, the banks. Launching a protest with no formal demands is thought to be a great accomplishment, a gesture of surpassing democratic virtue.

And here we come to the basic contradiction of the campaign. To protest Wall Street in 2011 was to protest, obviously, the outrageous financial misbehavior that gave us the Great Recession; it was to protest the political power of money, which gave us the bailouts; it was to protest the runaway compensation practices that have turned our society’s productive labor into bonuses for the 1 percent. All three of these catastrophes, however, were brought on by deregulation and tax-cutting—***by a philosophy of liberation as anarchic in its rhetoric as Occupy was in reality***. Check your premises, Rand-fans: it was the bankers’ own uprising against the hated state that wrecked the American way of life.

Nor does it require poststructuralism-leading-through-anarchism to understand how to reverse these developments. **You do it by rebuilding a powerful and competent regulatory state. You do it by rebuilding the labor movement. *You do it with bureaucracy***.

Occupiers often seemed aware of this. Recall what you heard so frequently from protesters’ lips back in the days of September 2011: Restore the old Glass-Steagall divide between investment and commercial banks, they insisted. **Bring back big government! Bring back safety! Bring back boredom!**

But that’s no way to fire the imagination of the world. So, how do you maintain the carnival while secretly lusting for the CPAs? By indefinitely suspending the obvious next step. By having no demands. Demands would have signaled that humorless, doctrinaire adults were back in charge and that the fun was over.

This was an inspired way to play the situation in the beginning, and for a time it was a great success. But it also put a clear expiration date on the protests. As long as demands and the rest of the logocentric requirements were postponed, Occupy could never graduate to the next level. It would remain captive to what Christopher Lasch criticized—way back in 1973—as the “cult of participation,” in which the experience of protesting is what protesting is all about.

#### We’ll situate our alternative in a specific context: you can embrace hacking as a means to break down capitalism – the positionality of programmers is key to determine the future of capitalism – demanding the freedom of all information on the web, both within and outside of the debate space is crucial to breaking down the dominant commodity form

**Crimethinc 13** [“Deserting the Digital Utopia,” Crimethinc, Oct 28, 2013 <http://www.crimethinc.com/texts/ex/digital-utopia.html>]

The Force Quits¶ For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Integration creates new exclusions; the atomized seek each other. Every new form of control creates another site of rebellion. Policing and security infrastructure have increased exponentially over the past two decades, but this has not produced a more pacified world—on the contrary, the greater the coercion, the more instability and unrest. The project of controlling populations by digitizing their interactions and environments is itself a coping strategy to forestall the upheavals that are bound to follow the economic polarization, social degradation, and ecological devastation wrought by capitalism.¶ The wave of uprisings that has swept the globe since 2010—from Tunisia and Egypt through Spain and Greece to the worldwide Occupy movement, and most recently Turkey and Brazil—has largely been understood as a product of the new digital networks. Yet it is also a reaction against digitization and the disparities it reinforces. News of Occupy encampments spread via the Internet, but those who populated them were there because they were unsatisfied with the merely virtual—or because, being poor or homeless, they had no access to it at all. Before 2011, who could have imagined that the Internet would produce a worldwide movement premised on permanent presence in shared physical space?¶ This is only a foretaste of the backlash that will ensue as more and more of life is fitted to the digital grid. The results are not foreordained, but we can be sure there will be new opportunities for people to come together outside and against the logic of capitalism and state control. As we witness the emergence of digital citizenship and the identity market, let us begin by asking what technologies the digitally excluded non-citizen will need. The tools employed during the fight for Gezi Park in Istanbul in summer 2013 could present a humble starting place. How can we extrapolate from protest mapping to the tools that will be necessary for insurrection and survival, especially where the two become one and the same? Looking to Egypt, we can see the need for tools that could coordinate the sharing of food—or disable the military.¶ Understanding the expansion of the digital as an enclosure of our potential doesn’t mean ceasing to use digital technology. Rather, it means changing the logic with which we approach it. Any positive vision of a digital future will be appropriated to perpetuate and abet the ruling order; the reason to engage on the terrain of the digital is to destabilize the disparities it imposes. Instead of establishing digital projects intended to prefigure the world we wish to see, we can pursue digital practices that disrupt control. Rather than setting out to defend the rights of a new digital class—or to incorporate everyone into such a class via universal citizenship—we can follow the example of the disenfranchised, beginning from contemporary uprisings that radically redistribute power.¶ Understood as a class, programmers occupy the same position today that the bourgeoisie did in 1848, wielding social and economic power disproportionate to their political leverage. In the revolutions of 1848, the bourgeoisie sentenced humanity to two more centuries of misfortune by ultimately siding with law and order against poor workers. Programmers enthralled by the Internet revolution could do even worse today: they could become digital Bolsheviks whose attempt to create a democratic utopia produces the ultimate totalitarianism.¶ On the other hand, if a critical mass of programmers shifts their allegiances to the real struggles of the excluded, the future will be up for grabs once more. But that would mean abolishing the digital as we know it—and with it, themselves as a class. Desert the digital utopia.

#### Capitalism is reaching a tipping point – saturating the entire globe with digital products ensures the constant evaluation, ranking, and disposability of all people – any alternative fails without subverting this technological paradigm

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The ideal capitalist product would derive its value from the ceaseless unpaid labor of the entire human race. We would be dispensable; it would be indispensable. It would integrate all human activity into a single unified terrain, accessible only via additional corporate products, in which sweatshop and marketplace merged. It would accomplish all this under the banner of autonomy and decentralization, perhaps even of “direct democracy.”¶ Surely, were such a product invented, some well-meaning anti-capitalists would proclaim that the kingdom of heaven was nigh—it only remained to subtract capitalism from the equation. The anthem of the lotus-eaters.¶ It would not be the first time dissidents have extrapolated their utopia from the infrastructure of the ruling order. Remember the enthusiasm Karl Marx and Ayn Rand shared for railroads! By contrast, we believe that the technology produced by capitalist competition tends to incarnate and impose its logic; if we wish to escape this order, we should never take its tools for granted. When we use tools, they use us back.¶ Here follows our attempt to identify the ideology built into digital technology and to frame some hypotheses about how to engage with it.¶ The Net Closes¶ In our age, domination is not just imposed by commands issued from rulers to ruled, but by algorithms that systematically produce and constantly recalibrate power differentials. The algorithm is the fundamental mechanism perpetuating today’s hierarchies; it determines the possibilities in advance, while offering an illusion of freedom as choice. The digital reduces the infinite possibilities of life to a lattice of interconnecting algorithms—to choices between zeros and ones. The world is whittled down to representation, and representation expands to fill the world; the irreducible disappears. That which does not compute does not exist. The digital can present a breathtaking array of choices—of possible combinations of ones and zeros—but the terms of each choice are set in advance.¶ A computer is a machine that performs algorithms. The term originally designated a human being who followed orders as rigidly as a machine. Alan Turing, the patriarch of computer science, named the digital computer as a metaphorical extension of the most impersonal form of human labor: “The idea behind digital computers may be explained by saying that these machines are intended to carry out any operations which could be done by a human computer.” In the fifty years since, we have seen this metaphor inverted and inverted again, as human and machine become increasingly indivisible. “The human computer is supposed to be following fixed rules,” Turing continued; “he has no authority to deviate from them in any detail.”¶ Just as timesaving technologies have only made us busier, giving the busywork of number crunching to computers has not freed us from busywork—it has made computing integral to every facet of our lives. In post-Soviet Russia, numbers crunch you.¶ Since the beginning, the object of digital development has been the convergence of human potential and algorithmic control. There are places where this project is already complete. The iPhone “Retina display” is so dense that an unaided human eye cannot tell it is comprised of pixels. There are still gaps between the screens, but they grow smaller by the day.¶ The Net that closes the space between us closes the spaces within us. It encloses commons that previously resisted commodification, commons such as social networks that we can only recognize as such now that they are being mapped for enclosure. As it grows to encompass our whole lives, we have to become small enough to fit into its equations. Total immersion. Information Everywhere, Communication Nowhere¶ The Digital Divides¶ Well-intentioned liberals are concerned that there are entire communities not yet integrated into the global digital network. Hence free laptops for the “developing world,” hundred-dollar tablets for schoolchildren. They can only imagine the one of digital access or the zero of digital exclusion. Given this binary, digital access is preferable—but the binary itself is a product of the process that produces exclusion, not a solution to it.¶ “We were once told that the airplane had ‘abolished frontiers’; actually, it is only since the airplane became a serious weapon that frontiers have become definitely impassable.”¶ –George Orwell,¶ “You and the Atomic Bomb”¶ The project of computerizing the masses recapitulates and extends the unification of humanity under capitalism. No project of integration has ever extended as widely or penetrated as deeply as capitalism, and the digital will soon fill its entire space. “The poor don’t have our products yet!”—that’s the rallying cry of Henry Ford. Amazon.com sells tablets below cost, too, but they acknowledge it as a business investment. Individual workers depreciate without digital access; but being available at a single click, compelled to compete intercontinentally in real time, will not make the total market value of the working class appreciate. Capitalist globalization has already shown this. More mobility for individuals does not ensure more parity across the board.¶ To integrate is not necessarily to equalize: the leash, the rein, and the whip are also connective. Even where it connects, the digital divides.¶ Like capitalism, the digital divides haves from have-nots. But a computer is not what the has-not lacks. The has-not lacks power, which is not apportioned equally by digitization. Rather than a binary of capitalists and proletarians, a universal market is emerging in which each person will be ceaselessly evaluated and ranked. Digital technology can impose power differentials more thoroughly and efficiently than any caste system in history.¶ Already, your ability to engage in social and economic relations of all kinds is determined by the quality of your processor. At the lower end of the economic spectrum, the unemployed person with the smartphone snaps up the cheaper ride on Craigslist (where hitchhiking used to be equal opportunity). At the upper end, the high-frequency trader profits directly on the processing power of his computers (making old-fashioned stockbroking look fair by comparison), as does the Bitcoin miner.¶ It is unthinkable that digital equality could be built on such an uneven terrain. The gap between rich and poor has not closed in the nations at the forefront of digitization. The more widespread digital access becomes, the more we will see social and economic polarization accelerate. Capitalism produces and circulates new innovations faster than any previous system, but alongside them it produces ever-increasing disparities: where equestrians once ruled over pedestrians, stealth bombers now sail over motorists.11. You can use a 3D printer to make a gun, but the NSA can make computer worms that seize control of entire industrial systems. And the problem is not just that capitalism is an unfair competition, but that it imposes this competition on every sphere of life. Digitization makes it possible to incorporate the most intimate aspects of our relations into its logic.¶ The digital divide doesn’t just run between individuals and demographics; it runs through each of us. In an era of precarity, when everyone simultaneously occupies multiple shifting social and economic positions, digital technologies selectively empower us according to the ways we are privileged while concealing the ways we are marginalized. The grad student who owes fifty thousand dollars communicates with other debtors through social media, but they are more likely to share their résumés or rate restaurants than to organize a debt strike.¶ Only when we understand the protagonists of our society as networks rather than freestanding individuals can the gravity of this hit home: digital collectivity is premised on market success, whereas we all experience failure in isolation. In the social networks of the future—which advertisers, credit agencies, employers, landlords, and police will monitor in a single matrix of control—we may only encounter each other insofar as we affirm the market and our value on it.¶ The more widespread digital access becomes, the more we can expect to see social and economic polarization accelerate.

#### The affirmative obfuscates the resurgence of capitalism as an explanatory force for the ongoing DIGITAL FEUDALISM of the status quo—absent explicit refusal of the logic of capitalism, the internet is dominated by cyber elites that police all possibilities of dissent

**Crimethinc 13** [“Deserting the Digital Utopia,” Crimethinc, Oct 28, 2013 <http://www.crimethinc.com/texts/ex/digital-utopia.html>]

The System Updates¶ Competition and market expansion have always stabilized capitalism by offering new social mobility, giving the poor a stake in the game just when they had no more reason to play along. But now that the entire world is integrated into a single market and capital is concentrating in the hands of a shrinking elite, what could forestall a new wave of revolt?¶ The aforementioned Henry Ford was one of the innovators who responded to the last major crisis that threatened capitalism. Raising salaries and increasing mass-production and credit, he expanded the market for his products—undercutting the revolutionary demands of the labor movement by turning producers into consumers. This encouraged even the most precarious workers to aspire to inclusion rather than revolution.¶ The following generation’s struggles erupted on a new terrain, as consumers reprised producers’ demand for self-determination in the marketplace: first as a demand for individuality, and then, when that was granted, for autonomy. This culminated with the classic imperative of the do-it-yourself counterculture—“Become the media”—just as the global telecommunications infrastructure was miniaturized to make individual workers as flexible as national economies.¶ We have become the media, and our demand for autonomy has been granted—but this has not rendered us free. Just as the struggles of producers were defused by turning them into consumers, the demands of consumers have been defused by turning them into producers: where the old media had been top-down and unidirectional, the new media derive their value from user-created content. Meanwhile, globalization and automation eroded the compromise Ford had brokered between capitalists and a privileged subset of the working class, producing a redundant and precarious population.¶ In this volatile context, new corporations like Google are updating the Fordist compromise via free labor and free distribution. Ford offered workers greater participation in capitalism via mass consumption; Google gives everything away for free by making everything into an unpaid job. In offering credit, Ford enabled workers to become consumers by selling their future as well as present labor; Google has dissolved the distinction between production, consumption, and surveillance, making it possible to capitalize on those who may never have anything to spend at all.¶ Attention itself is supplementing financial capital as the determinant currency in our society. It is a new consolation prize for which the precarious may compete—those who will never be millionaires can still dream of a million youtube views—and a new incentive to drive the constant innovation capitalism necessitates. As in the financial market, corporations and individuals alike may try their luck, but those who control the structures through which attention circulates wield the greatest power. Google’s ascendancy does not derive from advertising revenue or product sales but from the ways it shapes the flows of information.¶ Looking ahead down this road, we can imagine a digital feudalism in which finance capital and attention have both been consolidated in the hands of an elite, and a benevolent dictatorship of computers (human and otherwise) maintains the Internet as a playpen for a superfluous population. Individual programs and programmers will be replaceable—the more internal mobility a hierarchical structure offers, the more robust and resilient it is—but the structure itself will be nonnegotiable. We can even imagine the rest of the population participating on an apparently horizontal and voluntary basis in refining the programming—within certain parameters, of course, as in all algorithms.¶ Digital feudalism could arrive under the banner of direct democracy, proclaiming that everyone has the right to citizenship and participation, presenting itself as a solution to the excesses of capitalism. Those who dream of a guaranteed basic income, or who wish to be compensated for the online harvesting of their “personal data,” must understand that these demands would only be realized by an all-seeing surveillance state—and that such demands legitimize state power and surveillance even if they are never granted. Statists will use the rhetoric of digital citizenship to justify mapping everyone in new cartographies of control, fixing each of us to a single online identity in order to fulfill their vision of a society subject to total regulation and enforcement. “Smart cities” will impose algorithmic order on the offline world, replacing the unsustainable growth imperative of contemporary capitalism with new imperatives: surveillance, resilience, and management.22. Smart cities will not be based on greener buildings, but on the surveillance and control of our personal possessions: Walmart is already using RFID chips, the same chips used in US passports, to track the flows of its commodities across the globe.¶ In this dystopian projection, the digital project of reducing the world to representation converges with the program of electoral democracy, in which only representatives acting through the prescribed channels may exercise power. Both set themselves against all that is incomputable and irreducible, fitting humanity to a Procrustean bed. Fused as electronic democracy, they would present the opportunity to vote on a vast array of minutia, while rendering the infrastructure itself unquestionable—the more participatory a system is, the more “legitimate.” Yet every notion of citizenship implies an excluded party; every notion of political legitimacy implies a zone of illegitimacy.¶ Genuine freedom means being able to determine our lives and relations from the ground up. We must be able to define our own conceptual frameworks, to formulate the questions as well as the answers. This is not the same as obtaining better representation or more participation in the prevailing order. Championing digital inclusivity and “democratic” state stewardship equips those who hold power to legitimize the structures through which they wield it.¶ It is a mistake to think that the tools built to rule us would serve us if only we could depose our masters. That’s the same mistake every previous revolution has made about police, courts, and prisons. The tools of liberation must be forged in the struggle to achieve it.

#### That’s the only way to break the guilt and resentment cycle. We’re not interested in the holier-than-thou approach of two white kids from Michigan calling them capitalist—rather, political critique is constructive collectivist engagement—that’s key to prevent the ballot from becoming a palliative endorsement of identity

Enns 12—Professor of Philosophy at McMaster University (Dianne, The Violence of Victimhood, 28-30)

Guilt and Ressentiment We need to think carefully about what is at stake here. Why is this perspective appealing, and what are its effects? At first glance, the argument appears simple: white, privileged women, in their theoretical and practical interventions, must take into account the experiences and conceptual work of women who are less fortunate and less powerful, have fewer resources, and are therefore more subject to systemic oppression. The lesson of feminism's mistakes in the civil rights era is that this “mainstream” group must not speak for other women. But such a view must be interrogated. Its effects, as I have argued, include a veneration of the other, moral currency for the victim, and an insidious competition for victimhood. We will see in later chapters that these effects are also common in situations of conflict where the stakes are much higher. ¶ We witness here a twofold appeal: otherness discourse in feminism appeals both to the guilt of the privileged and to the resentment, or ressentiment, of the other. Suleri's allusion to “embarrassed privilege” exposes the operation of guilt in the misunderstanding that often divides Western feminists from women in the developing world, or white women from women of color. The guilt of those who feel themselves deeply implicated in and responsible for imperialism merely reinforces an imperialist benevolence, polarizes us unambiguously by locking us into the categories of victim and perpetrator, and blinds us to the power and agency of the other. Many fail to see that it is embarrassing and insulting for those identified as victimized others not to be subjected to the same critical intervention and held to the same demands of moral and political responsibility. Though we are by no means equal in power and ability, wealth and advantage, we are all collectively responsible for the world we inhabit in common. The condition of victimhood does not absolve one of moral responsibility. I will return to this point repeatedly throughout this book.¶ Mohanty's perspective ignores the possibility that one can become attached to one's subordinated status, which introduces the concept of *ressentiment*, the focus of much recent interest in the injury caused by racism and colonization. Nietzsche describes ressentiment as the overwhelming sentiment of “slave morality,” the revolt that begins when ressentiment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values. 19 The sufferer in this schema seeks out a cause for his suffering—“ a guilty agent who is susceptible to suffering”— someone on whom he can vent his affects and so procure the anesthesia necessary to ease the pain of injury. The motivation behind ressentiment, according to Nietzsche, is the desire “to deaden, by means of a more violent emotion of any kind, a tormenting, secret pain that is becoming unendurable, and to drive it out of consciousness at least for the moment: for that one requires an affect, as savage an affect as possible, and, in order to excite that, any pretext at all.” 20 In its contemporary manifestation, Wendy Brown argues that ressentiment acts as the “righteous critique of power from the perspective of the injured,” which “delimits a specific site of blame for suffering by constituting sovereign subjects and events as responsible for the ‘injury’ of social subordination.” Identities are fixed in an economy of perpetrator and victim, in which revenge, rather than power or emancipation, is sought for the injured, making the perpetrator hurt as the sufferer does. 21¶ 30¶ Such a concept is useful for understanding why an ethics of absolute responsibility to the other appeals to the victimized. Brown remarks that, for Nietzsche, the source of the triumph of a morality rooted in ressentiment is the denial that it has any access to power or contains a will to power. Politicized identities arise as both product of and reaction to this condition; the reaction is a substitute for action— an “imaginary revenge,” Nietzsche calls it. Suffering then becomes a social virtue at the same time that the sufferer attempts to displace his suffering onto another. The identity created by ressentiment, Brown explains, becomes invested in its own subjection not only through its discovery of someone to blame, and a new recognition and revaluation of that subjection, but also through the satisfaction of revenge. 22¶ The outcome of feminism's attraction to theories of difference and otherness is thus deeply contentious. First, we witness the further reification reification of the very oppositions in question and a simple reversal of the focus from the same to the other. This observation is not new and has been made by many critics of feminism, but it seems to have made no serious impact on mainstream feminist scholarship or teaching practices in women's studies programs. Second, in the eagerness to rectify the mistakes of “white, middle-class, liberal, western” feminism, the other has been uncritically exalted, which has led in turn to simplistic designations of marginal, “othered” status and, ultimately, a competition for victimhood. Ultimately, this approach has led to a new moral code in which ethics is equated with the responsibility of the privileged Western woman, while moral immunity is granted to the victimized other. Ranjana Khanna describes this operation aptly when she writes that in the field of transnational feminism, the reification of the other has produced “separate ethical universes” in which the privileged experience paralyzing guilt and the neocolonized, crippling resentment. The only “overarching imperative” is that one does not comment on another's ethical context. An ethical response turns out to be a nonresponse. 23 Let us turn now to an exploration of this third outcome.

#### Interest convergence innate to capitalism accounts for the material context of the 1960’s civil rights gains discussed in their hooks evidence– Only our framework consistently explains the ups AND downs of minority empowerment by identifying the implicit bargain between concessions from government elites and the ideological support of black communities—consider this in the context of their gaze arguments, which are not something they can solve

Delgado, 02. Law Professor @ University of Colorado-Boulder – 2002 (Richard, “Explaining the Rise and Fall of African American Fortunes: Interest Convergence and Civil Rights Gains,” Review of Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review, Volume 37 [37 Harv. C.R.-C.L. L. Rev. 369], pp. 369-387 at 385-6) jfs

Mary Dudziak's Cold War Civil Rights demonstrates how the self-interest of elite groups fueled breakthroughs for blacks in order to advance U.S. strategic objectives in the Cold War with international communism. An impressive feat of historical research, *Cold War Civil Rights* strengthens the case for crediting material explanations for the uneven line of racial progress and retreat. Historical materialism, however, is capable of much more than just explaining how the Civil Rights era began. The very same premises that enable Dudziak to show how the United States tolerated, indeed encouraged, black breakthroughs in the 1950s and 1960s also explain how that impressive period of change came to an end. This Essay posits that an implicit part of the deal that America's power brokers offered blacks in return for black gains was blacks' willingness to go along with America's [\*386] strategic efforts,

## 2nc round 2

### 2nc link

#### Concrete political demands are necessary despite the evil of the state—their approach bears a strange equivalence to Rand’s philosophy

Frank '12 Thomas, brilliant badass, author of *What's the Matter with Kansas?* and editor of *The Baffler* "To the Precinct Station: How theory met practice …and drove it absolutely crazy" http://www.thebaffler.com/past/to\_the\_precinct\_station

Leaderlessness is another virtue claimed by ***indignados*** on the right as well as left. In fact, there’s even a chapter in the 2010 “Tea Party manifesto” written by Dick Armey that is entitled, “We are a Movement of Ideas, Not Leaders”—which is ironic, since Armey is commonly referred to as “Leader Armey,” in recognition of the days when he was majority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives. The reasoning, though, is the same here as it is with Occupy. As Armey puts it, “If they knew who was in charge, they could attack him or her. They could crush the inconvenient dissent of the Tea Party.” Occupiers, of course, say pretty much the same thing: if you have leaders, they can be co-opted. Surely, though, the distinctive Occupy idea that protesting is an end in itself—that “the process is the message”—surely *that* is unique, right? After all, Occupiers and their chroniclers have spent so much brainpower theorizing and explicating and defending the idea that horizontalism is a model and a demand and a philosophy rolled into one that it can’t possibly be shared by their political opposite. But of course it is—with the theory slightly modified. “We call this complex and diverse movement ‘beautiful chaos,’” writes Leader Armey in his Tea Party manifesto. “By this we reference what is now the dominant understanding in organizational management theory: decentralization of personal knowledge is the best way to maximize the contributions of people.” While the glorious decentralization of OWS was supposed to enact some academic theory of space-creating, the glorious decentralization of the Tea Party enacts the principles of the market; it enacts the latest in management theory; it enacts democracy itself. Big-government liberals, on the other hand, are in Armey’s account drawn to hierarchy as surely as are the big-media dumbshits scorned by Occupy’s chroniclers: “They can’t imagine an undirected social order,” Armey declares. *“Someone needs to be in charge.”* Armey’s coauthor, Matt Kibbe, then grabs this idea and gallops downfield. “This is not a political party,” he insists; “it is a social gathering.” Tea Party events don’t have drum circles, as far as I know, but Kibbe nevertheless says he is “reminded of the sense of community you used to experience in the parking lot before a Grateful Dead concert: peaceful, connected, smiling, gathered in common purpose.” It is “a revolt from the bottom up,” he declares. It is “a community in the fullest sense of the word.” If you look closely enough at Tea Party culture, you can even find traces of the Occupiers’ refusal to make explicit demands. Consider movement inamorata Ayn Rand (a philosopher every bit as prolix as Judith Butler) and her 1957 magnum opus ***Atlas Shrugged***, where “demands” are something that government makes on behalf of its lazy and unproductive constituents. Businessmen, by contrast, deal in contracts; they act only via the supposedly consensual relations of the market. As John Galt, the leader of the book’s capital strike, explains in a lengthy speech to the American people Rand clearly loathed: “We have no demands to present to you, no terms to bargain about, no compromise to reach. You have nothing to offer us. *We do not need you.*” **A strike with no demands?** *Wha-a-a-a?* **Why not? Because demands would imply the legitimacy of their enemy, the state**. Rand’s fake-sophisticated term for this is “the sanction of the victim.” In the course of actualizing himself, the business tycoon—the “victim,” in Rand’s distorted worldview—is supposed to learn to withhold his blessing from the society that exploits him via taxes and regulations. Once enlightened, this billionaire is to have nothing to do with the looters and moochers of the liberal world; it is to be adversarial proceedings only. So how do Rand’s downtrodden 1 percent plan to prevail? *By building a model community in the shell of the old, exactly as Occupy intended to do.* Instead of holding assemblies in the park, however, her persecuted billionaires retreat to an uncharted valley in Colorado where they practice perfect noncoercive capitalism, complete with a homemade gold standard. A high-altitude Singapore, I guess. Then, when America collapses—an eventuality Rand describes in hundreds of pages of quasi-pornographic detail—the tycoons simply step forward to take over. One last similarity. The distinctive ideological move of the Tea Party was, of course, to redirect the public’s fury away from Wall Street and toward government. And Occupy did it too, in a more abstract and theoretical way. Consider, for example, the words anthropologist Jeffrey Juris chooses when telling us why occupying parks was the thing to do: “the occupations contested the sovereign power of the state to regulate and control the distribution of bodies in space [five citations are given here], in part, by appropriating and resignifying particular urban spaces such as public parks and squares as arenas for public assembly and democratic expression [three more citations].” This kind of rhetoric is entirely typical of both Occupy and the academic Left—always fighting “the state” and its infernal power to “regulate and control”—but it doesn’t take a very close reading of the text to notice that this language, with a little tweaking, could also pass as a libertarian protest against zoning. Since none of the books described here take seriously the many obvious parallels between the two protests, none of them offers a theory for why the two were so strikingly similar. Allow me, then, to advance my own. The reason Occupy and the Tea Party were such uncanny replicas of one another is because they both drew on the lazy, reflexive libertarianism that suffuses our idea of protest these days, all the way from Disney Channel teens longing to be themselves to punk rock teens vandalizing a Starbucks. From Chris Hedges to Paul Ryan, every dissenter imagines that they are rising up against “the state.” It’s in the cultural DNA of our times, it seems; our rock ‘n’ roll rebels, our Hollywood heroes, even our FBI agents. They all hate the state—protesters in Zuccotti Park as well as the Zegna-wearing traders those protesters think they’re frightening. But here’s the rub: only the Right manages to profit from it.

#### Even if cap is experienced racially for them—that doesn’t deny our argument—even if they destabilize race—cap ensures a constant reshuffling of artificial divisions—perm is deck chairs

Dave **Hill**, teaches at Middlesex University and is Visiting Professor of Critical Education Policy and Equality Studies at the University of Limerick, Ireland. *Culturalist and Materialist Explanations of Class and "Race",* Cultural Logic **2009** http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Hill.pdf

In contrast to both Critical Race Theorists and revisionist socialists/left liberals/equivalence theorists, and those who see caste as the primary form of oppression, Marxists would agree that objectively- whatever our “race” or gender or sexuality or current level of academic attainment or religious identity, whatever the individual and group history and fear of oppression and attack- **the fundamental objective and material form of oppression in capitalism is class oppression**. Black and Women capitalists, or Jewish and Arab capitalists, or Dalit capitalists in India, exploit the labour power of their multi-ethnic men and women workers, essentially (in terms of the exploitation of labour power and the appropriation of surplus value) in just the same way as do white male capitalists, or upper-caste capitalists. But the subjective consciousness of identity, this subjective affirmation of one particular identity, while seared into the souls of its victims, **should not mask the objective nature of contemporary oppression under capitalism** – class oppression that, of course, hits some “raced” and gendered and caste and occupational sections of the working class harder than others. Martha Gimenez (2001:24) succinctly explains that “class is **not simply another ideology** legitimating oppression.” Rather, class denotes “exploitative relations between people **mediated by their relations to the means of production**.” Apple’s “parallellist,” or equivalence model of exploitation (equivalence of exploitation based on “race,” class and gender, his “tryptarchic” model of inequality) produces valuable data and insights into aspects of and the extent and manifestations of gender oppression and “race” oppression in capitalist USA. However, such analyses serve to **occlude the class-capital relation**, the class struggle, **to obscure an essential and defining nature of capitalism,** class conflict. Objectively, whatever our “race” or gender or caste or sexual orientation or scholastic attainment, whatever the individual and group history and fear of oppression and attack, the **fundamental form of oppression in capitalism is class oppression**. While the capitalist class is predominantly white and male, capital in theory and in practice can be blind to colour and gender and caste – even if that does not happen very often. African Marxist-Leninists such as Ngugi wa Thiong’o (e.g., Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Ngugi wa Mirii, 1985) know very well that **when the white colonialist oppressors were ejected** from direct rule over African states in the 1950s and 60s, the white bourgeoisie in some African states such as Kenya was **replaced by a black bourgeoisie**, acting in concert with transnational capital and/or capital(ists) of the former colonial power. Similarly in India, capitalism is no longer exclusively white. It is Indian, not white British alone. As Bellamy observes, the diminution of class analysis “**denies immanent critique of any critical bite,” effectively disarming a meaningful opposition to the capitalist thesis** (Bellamy, 1997:25). And as Harvey notes, neoliberal rhetoric, with its foundational emphasis upon individual freedoms, has the power to split off libertarianism, identity politics, multiculturalism, and eventually narcissistic consumerism from the social forces ranged in pursuit of justice through the conquest of state power. (Harvey, 2005:41) To return to the broader relationship between “race,” gender, and social class, and to turn to the USA, are there many who would deny that Condoleeza Rice and Colin Powell have more in common with the Bushes and the rest of the Unites States capitalist class, be it white, black or Latina/o, than they do with the workers whose individual ownership of wealth and power is an infinetismal fraction of those individual members of the ruling and capitalist class? The various oppressions, of caste, gender, “race,” religion, for example, are functional in dividing the working class and securing the reproduction of capital; constructing social conflict between men and women, or black and white, or different castes, or tribes, or religious groups, or skilled and unskilled, thereby tending to dissolve the conflict between capital and labor, thus occluding the class-capital relation, the class struggle, and to obscure the essential and defining nature of capitalism, the labor-capital relation and its attendant class conflict.

#### Race is constructed form the raw materials furnished by class relations—their fatalism on that front makes both problems inevitable

E. **San Juan,** Jr. , PhD harvard Marxism and the Race/Class Problematic: A Re-Articulation , Cultural Logic Vol 6 **2003**

No longer valid as a scientific instrument of classification, race today operates as a socio-political construction. Differences of language, beliefs, traditions, and so on can no longer be sanctioned by biological science as permanent, natural, and normal. Nonetheless they have become efficacious components of the racializing process, "inscribed through tropes of race, lending the sanction of God, biology, or the natural order to even presumably unbiased descriptions of cultural tendencies and differences" (Gates 1986, 5). It is evident that, as Colette Guillaumin (1995) has demonstrated, the class divisions of the feudal/tributary stage hardened and became naturalized, with blood lineage signifying pedigree, status, and rank. Industrial capital, however, destroyed kinship and caste-like affinities as a presumptive claim to wealth. 26. The capitalist mode of production articulated "race" with class in a peculiar way. While the stagnation of rural life imposed a racial or castelike rigidity to the peasantry, the rapid accumulation of wealth through the ever more intensifying exploitation of labor by capital could not so easily "racialize" the wage-workers of a particular nation, given the alienability of labor-power--unless certain physical or cultural characteristics can be utilized to divide the workers or render one group an outcast or pariah removed from the domain of "free labor." In the capitalist development of U.S. society, African, Mexican, and Asian bodies--more precisely, their labor power and its reproductive efficacy--were colonized and racialized; hence the idea of "internal colonialism" retains explanatory validity. "**Race" is thus constructed out of raw materials furnished by class relations, the history of class conflicts, and the vicissitudes of colonial/capitalist expansion and the building of imperial hegemony**. It is dialectically accented and operationalized not just to differentiate the price of wage labor within and outside the territory of the metropolitan power, but also to reproduce relations of domination-subordination invested with **an aura of naturality and fatality.** The refunctioning of physical or cultural traits as ideological and political signifiers of class identity reifies social relations. Such "racial" markers enter the field of the alienated labor process, concealing the artificial nature of meanings and norms, and essentializing or naturalizing historical traditions and values which are contingent on mutable circumstances.

### 2nc perm

#### Even if cap is experienced racially for them—that doesn’t deny our argument—even if they destabilize race—cap ensures a constant reshuffling of artificial divisions—perm is deck chairs

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In contrast to both Critical Race Theorists and revisionist socialists/left liberals/equivalence theorists, and those who see caste as the primary form of oppression, Marxists would agree that objectively- whatever our “race” or gender or sexuality or current level of academic attainment or religious identity, whatever the individual and group history and fear of oppression and attack- **the fundamental objective and material form of oppression in capitalism is class oppression**. Black and Women capitalists, or Jewish and Arab capitalists, or Dalit capitalists in India, exploit the labour power of their multi-ethnic men and women workers, essentially (in terms of the exploitation of labour power and the appropriation of surplus value) in just the same way as do white male capitalists, or upper-caste capitalists. But the subjective consciousness of identity, this subjective affirmation of one particular identity, while seared into the souls of its victims, **should not mask the objective nature of contemporary oppression under capitalism** – class oppression that, of course, hits some “raced” and gendered and caste and occupational sections of the working class harder than others. Martha Gimenez (2001:24) succinctly explains that “class is **not simply another ideology** legitimating oppression.” Rather, class denotes “exploitative relations between people **mediated by their relations to the means of production**.” Apple’s “parallellist,” or equivalence model of exploitation (equivalence of exploitation based on “race,” class and gender, his “tryptarchic” model of inequality) produces valuable data and insights into aspects of and the extent and manifestations of gender oppression and “race” oppression in capitalist USA. However, such analyses serve to **occlude the class-capital relation**, the class struggle, **to obscure an essential and defining nature of capitalism,** class conflict. Objectively, whatever our “race” or gender or caste or sexual orientation or scholastic attainment, whatever the individual and group history and fear of oppression and attack, the **fundamental form of oppression in capitalism is class oppression**. While the capitalist class is predominantly white and male, capital in theory and in practice can be blind to colour and gender and caste – even if that does not happen very often. African Marxist-Leninists such as Ngugi wa Thiong’o (e.g., Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Ngugi wa Mirii, 1985) know very well that **when the white colonialist oppressors were ejected** from direct rule over African states in the 1950s and 60s, the white bourgeoisie in some African states such as Kenya was **replaced by a black bourgeoisie**, acting in concert with transnational capital and/or capital(ists) of the former colonial power. Similarly in India, capitalism is no longer exclusively white. It is Indian, not white British alone. As Bellamy observes, the diminution of class analysis “**denies immanent critique of any critical bite,” effectively disarming a meaningful opposition to the capitalist thesis** (Bellamy, 1997:25). And as Harvey notes, neoliberal rhetoric, with its foundational emphasis upon individual freedoms, has the power to split off libertarianism, identity politics, multiculturalism, and eventually narcissistic consumerism from the social forces ranged in pursuit of justice through the conquest of state power. (Harvey, 2005:41) To return to the broader relationship between “race,” gender, and social class, and to turn to the USA, are there many who would deny that Condoleeza Rice and Colin Powell have more in common with the Bushes and the rest of the Unites States capitalist class, be it white, black or Latina/o, than they do with the workers whose individual ownership of wealth and power is an infinetismal fraction of those individual members of the ruling and capitalist class? The various oppressions, of caste, gender, “race,” religion, for example, are functional in dividing the working class and securing the reproduction of capital; constructing social conflict between men and women, or black and white, or different castes, or tribes, or religious groups, or skilled and unskilled, thereby tending to dissolve the conflict between capital and labor, thus occluding the class-capital relation, the class struggle, and to obscure the essential and defining nature of capitalism, the labor-capital relation and its attendant class conflict.

#### 6. The perm nullifies class as a useful means of inquiry—makes the alt superfluous through methodological individualism which echoes the failures of multiculturalism

E. San Juan, Jr. , PhD harvard Marxism and the Race/Class Problematic: A Re-Articulation , Cultural Logic Vol 6 2003

The implacably zombifying domination of the Cold War for almost half a century has made almost everyone allergic to the Marxian notion of class as a social category that can explain inequalities of power and wealth in the "free world." One symptom is the mantra of "class reductionism" or "economism" as **a weapon to silence** anyone who calls attention to the value of one's labor power, or one's capacity to work in order to survive, if not to become human. Another way of nullifying the concept of **class as an epistemological tool for understanding** the dynamics of capitalist society is to equate it with status, life-style, even an entire "habitus" or pattern of behavior removed from the totality of the social relations of production in any given historical formation. Often, class is reduced to income, or to voting preference within the strict limits of the bourgeois (that is, capitalist) electoral order. Some sociologists even play at being agnostic or nominalist by claiming that class displays countless meanings and designations relative to the ideological persuasion of the theorist/researcher, hence its general uselessness as an analytic tool. This has become the orthodox view of "class" in mainstream academic discourse. 2. Meanwhile, with the victory of the Civil Rights struggles in the sixties (now virtually neutralized in the last two decades), progressive forces relearned the value of the strategy of alliances and coalitions of various groups. These coalitions have demonstrated the power of demanding the recognition of group rights, the efficacy of the politics of identity. Invariably, ethnic or cultural identity became the primordial point of departure for political dialogue and action. Activists learned the lesson that Stuart Hall, among others, discovered in the eighties: the presumably Gramscian view that "there is no automatic identity or correspondence between economic, political and ideological processes" (1996, 437). This has led to the gradual burgeoning of a "politics of ethnicity predicated on difference and diversity." Nonetheless, Hall insisted that for people of color, class is often lived or experienced in the modality of race; in short, racism (racialized relations) often function as one of the factors that "overdetermine" (to use the Althusserian term) the formation of class consciousness. While this trend (still fashionable today in its version of cosmopolitanism, post-national or postcolonial criticism, eclectic transnationalism of all sorts) did not completely reject the concept of class, it **rendered it superfluous** by the formula of subsuming it within the putative **"intersectionality**" of race, gender, and class as a matrix of identity and agency. 3. One of the systematic ideological rationalizations of this approach is David Theo Goldberg's Racist Culture. Goldberg argues that class cannot be equated with race, or race collapsed into class; in short, culture cannot be dissolved into economics. That move "leaves unexplained those cultural relations race so often expresses, or it wrongly reduces these cultural relations to more or less veiled instantiations of class formation" (1993, 70). Race then becomes primarily an affair of race relations. It acquires **an almost fetishistic valorization** in this framework of elucidating social reality. A less one-sided angle may be illustrated by Amy Gutman's belief that class and race interact so intimately that we need a more nuanced calibration of the specific moments in which the racial determinant operates over and above the class determinant: "What we can say with near certainty is that if blacks who live in concentrated poverty, go to bad schools, or live in single-parent homes are also stigmatized by racial prejudice as whites are not, then even the most complex calculus of class is an imperfect substitute for also taking color explicitly into account" (2000, 96). What is clear in both Goldberg's and Gutman's analysis is that class (taken as a rigid phenomenal feature of identity) is only one aspect or factor in explaining any dynamic social situation, not the salient or fundamental relation. Unlike the Marxian concept of class as a relation of group antagonisms (more precisely, class conflict) that is the distinctive characteristic of the social totality in capitalism, class in current usage signifies an **element of identity**, a phenomenon whose meaning and value is **incomplete without taking into account other factors** like race, gender, locality, and so on. **Neoliberal pluralism** and the discourse of **methodological individualism** reign supreme in these legitimations of a reified world-system, what Henri Lefebvre (1971) calls "the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption."

## 1nr round 2

### Interest con

#### The 1AC makes the same bargain as the postwar Civil Rights Compromise. For the structures of white supremacy, racial equity is not an end in and of itself – The price extracted in exchange for the legitimacy of the plan is accepting the current terms of American nationalism which means that the official antiracism they advocate must remain blind to the linkage between race and the imperialism of American capital.

Melamed, 06. Assistant Professor in African American Studies @ Marquette (Jodi, “The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Multicultural Neoliberalism,” *Social Text* 89, Volume 24, Number 4, Winter, pp. 1-25 at 6) jfs

It is important to note that the study’s purview is as much geopolitical as racial. As racial liberalism incorporated antiracism and “the Negro” into the calculations of U.S. governmentality, racial equity became a means to secure U.S. interests. Racial equity was not an end in itself. Consequently, racial epistemology and politics were altered such that state-recognized antiracisms would have to validate culturally powerful notions of the U.S. nation-state and its foremost interests. Because the scope of the political in the postwar United States precisely shields matters of economy from robust democratic review, the suturing of liberal antiracism to U.S. nationalism, which manages, develops, and depoliticizes capitalism by collapsing it with Americanism, results in a situation where “official” antiracist discourse and politics actually limit awareness of global capitalism. *An American Dilemma* omits from its capacious study practically any mention of black left politics and culture, as Nikhil Singh has recently observed.10 One of its only indications that economy has something to do with racism comes in a discussion of employment discrimination. Thus years before red-baiting would narrow mainstream race politics into what has been called the civil rights compromise, liberal nationalism all on its own, without anticommunism, can be seen to bracket the global political economic critique of race and capitalism that had pervaded anticolonial and antiracist thinking in the first half of the twentieth century. In short, as racial liberal discourse became hegemonic in the 1950s, not only did race disappear as a referent for the inequality of the historical development of modern capitalism (a referentiality hard-won by earlier antiracisms). Official antiracism now explicitly required the victory and extension of U.S. empire, the motor force of capitalism’s next unequal development. Where placing the United States in the history of European colonialism had energized earlier antiracist movements led by people of color, from the “victory” of racial liberalism over white supremacy onward, official antiracisms in the United States remain under the injunction to take U.S. ascendancy for granted and to remain blind to global capitalism as a race issue.

#### AND, interest convergence acts as a safety valve for white elites to defuse the possibility of black revolution.

Lee, 07. Law Professor @ GW (Cynthia, “Cultural Convergence: Interest Convergence Theory Meets the Cultural Defense?” Arizona Law Review, Vol. 49, No. 4, Winter [49 Ariz. L. Rev. 911], George Washington University Legal Studies Research Paper No. 248; George Washington University Law School Public Law Research Paper No. 248, p. 922. [PDF Online @] http://ssrn.com/abstract=968754) Accessed 08.19.10 jfs

Bell also posited that the Brown decision helped America in its efforts to persuade African Americans that they were a welcome part of the United States. Bell pointed out that Blacks who had fought for this country in World War II were returning home to widespread racial discrimination. Elite whites worried that in the event of another war, African Americans might be reluctant to fight again. The Brown decision was thus important domestically as a symbol of America’s commitment to equality.52 In later work, Bell elaborated upon his theory, explaining: [Only] when whites perceive that it will be profitable or at least cost-free to serve, hire, admit, or otherwise deal with blacks on a nondiscriminatory basis, they do so. When they fear—accurately or not—that there may be a loss, inconvenience, or upset to themselves or other whites, discriminatory conduct usually follows.53 According to Bell, “racism is a permanent feature of American society, necessary for its stability and for the well-being of the majority of its citizens.”54 Interest convergence explains how Blacks “are able to achieve political gains despite the essentially racist nature of American society.”55 Commenting on Bell’s theory, Charles Ogletree notes that interest convergence works as a safety valve, permitting “short-term gains for African Americans when doing so furthers the short- or long-term goals of the white elite. . . . This is an important check on widespread disaffection that may end in revolution.”56

### Hacking

#### The self-evident history of the Western academy itself must be hacked—a radical re-orientation of the form knowledge production takes is necessary—this turns your Moten argument, accepting the ballot as a coherent piece of property that can be ACCUMULATED by you by DEBATING, on DEBATE’S terms is a double turn with your aff—you can be as radical as you want in terms of arguments, but you have refused to hack the ballot, you have not stolen it, in fact you have recognized it and recognized the university—try or die and proves our interest convergence arguments

Wark 04. McKenzie Wark, scholar, activist, hacker based in Australia, A Hacker Manifesto, https://www.academia.edu/182789/A\_Hacker\_Manifesto

History is itself an abstraction, hacked out of the recalcitrant information thrown off by the productive altercations of presents meshing with pasts. Out of the information ex- pressed by events, history forms orders of objective and sub- jective representation.

The representation of history dominant in any era is the product of the educational apparatus established by its ruling powers. Even dissenting history takes form within institutions not of its making. While not all history represents the interests of the ruling classes, the institution of history exists as something other than what it can become when free of class constraint, namely, the abstract guide to trans- formation of the ruling order in the interests of the produc- ing classes, whose collective action expresses the events his- tory merely represents.

History today still designates only the set of conditions, however recent they may be, from which one turns away in order to become.”\* For history to be something more than a representation, it must seek something more than its perfection as representation, as an image faithful to but apart from what it represents. It can express rather its difference from the state of affairs that present themselves under the authorship of the ruling class. It can be a history not just of what the world is, but what it can become.

[092]  This other history, this “hacker history,” brings together the record of events as an object apart from collective action with the action of the subjective force that struggles to free itself from its own objectification. Hacker history introduces the productive classes to the product of their own action, which is otherwise presented—not just by the ruling version of history but by the ruling class itself in all its actions—as a thing apart.

[093]  Hacker history hacks out of appearances, and returns to the productive classes, their own experience of the contain- ment of their free productive energy in successive property forms. From the direct subjection to an individual owner that is slavery, to the patchwork of local lordships and spiri- tualised subjection that is feudalism, to the abstract and uni- versalising private property of the commodified economy, in every era hitherto, a ruling class extracts a surplus from the free capacity of the productive classes. Hacker history not only represents to the productive classes what they have lost, it expresses what they may yet gain—the return of their own productive capacity in and for itself.

[094]  The history produced in the institutions of the ruling  classes makes history itself into a form of property. To  hacker history, the dominant history is but a visible instance  of the containment of productive power within representation by the dominant form of property. Even the would-be “radical” histories, the social histories, the history from be- low, end up as forms of property, traded according to their representational value, in an emerging market for com- modified communication. Critical history only breaks with dominant history when it advances to a critique of is own property form, and beyond, to the expression of a new pro- ductive history and history of the productive.

A hacker history challenges not just the content of history, but its form. Adding yet more representations to the heap of history’s goods, even representations of the oppressed and excluded, does nothing if it does not challenge the separation of history as representation from the great productive forces that make history in the first place. The educational apparatus of the overdeveloped world would make even the unscripted voice of the subaltern peasant part of its property, but the productive classes have need only of the speech of their own productivity to recover the productivity of speech.

What matters in the struggle for history is to express its potential to be otherwise, and to make it a part of the pro- ductive resources for the self-awareness of the productive classes themselves, including the hacker class. Hackers, like productive labour everywhere, can become a class for them- selves when equipped with a history that expresses their potential in terms of the potential of the whole of the dispossessed classes.

Hacker history does not need to be invented from scratch, as a fresh hack expressed out of nothing. It quite naturally borrows from the historical awareness of all the productive classes of past and present. The history of the free is a free history. It is the gift of past struggles to the present, which carries with it no obligation other than its implementation. It requires no elaborate study. It need be know only in the abstract to be practiced in the particular.

#### Hacking solves your intersectionality arguments—we’re not a vanguard, and we can form class alliances that solve

Wark 04. McKenzie Wark, scholar, activist, hacker based in Australia, A Hacker Manifesto, https://www.academia.edu/182789/A\_Hacker\_Manifesto

The hacker class, being numerically small and not owning the means of production, finds itself caught between a poli- tics of the masses from below and a politics of the rulers from above. It must bargain as best it can, or do what it does best—hack out a new politics, beyond this opposition. In the long run, the interests of the hacker class are in accord with those who would benefit most from the advance of abstrac- tion, namely those productive classes dispossessed of the means of production—farmers and workers. In the effort to realise this possibility the hacker class hacks politics itself, creating a new polity, turning mass politics into a politics of multiplicity, in which all the productive classes can express their virtuality.

The hacker interest cannot easily form alliances with forms of mass politics that subordinate minority differences to unity in action. Mass politics always run the danger of suppressing the creative, abstracting force of the interaction of differences. The hacker interest is not in mass representation, but in a more abstract politics that expresses the productivity of differences. Hackers, who produce many classes of knowledge out of many classes of experience, have the potential also to produce a new knowledge of class formation and action when working together with the collective experience of all the productive classes.

[045] A class is not the same as its representation. In politics one must beware of representations held out to be classes, which represent only a fraction of a class and do not express its multiple interests. Classes do not have vanguards that may speak for them. Classes express themselves equally in all of there multiple interests and actions.

[046] Through the development of abstraction, freedom may yet be wrested from necessity. The vectoralist class, like its pre- decessors, seeks to shackle abstraction to the production of scarcity and margin, not abundance and liberty. The forma- tion of the hacker class as a class comes at just this moment when freedom from necessity and from class domination appears on the horizon as a possibility. Negri: “What is this world of political, ideological and productive crisis, this world of sublimation and uncontrollable circulation? What is it, then, if not an epoch-making leap beyond everything humanity has hitherto experienced? . . . It constitutes simul- taneously the ruin and the new potential of all meaning.”\* All that it takes is the hacking of the hacker class as a class, a class capable of hacking property itself,

which is the fetter upon all productive means and on the productivity of meaning.

[047] The struggle among classes has hitherto determined the  disposition of the surplus, the regime of scarcity and the form in which production grows. But now the stakes are far higher. Survival and liberty are both on the horizon at once.

The ruling classes turn not just the producing classes into an instrumental resource, but nature itself, to the point where class exploitation and the exploitation of nature become the same unsustainable objectification. The potential of a class- divided world to produce its own overcoming comes not a moment too soon.