# 1NC Round 1

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#### Neolib isn’t a monolithic root cause but pervasive – micropolitics disseminates post-Fordist productivity into remote terrains of lived experience to corrupt dissent.

Papadopoulos 8 (Dimitris, School of Social Science @Cardiff U, Leicester Reader in Sociology and Organisation. “In the ruins of representation: Identity, individuality, subjectification”, British Journal of Social Psychology, 47.1, ebsco//shree)

The turn to micropolitics and the dissolution of the foundationalist understandings of identity (either in its essentialist or discursive reductionist versions) enable political analyses of previously neglected and effaced domains of everyday life. But do micropolitics effectively challenge state regulation and open pathways for the emergence of a multiplicity of different modes of embodied subjectification? Or does embodied subjectification become a new mode of state regulated existence? The power of micropolitics is thought to lie in the fact that they bypass the reproduction of the state as an intact and paramount entity of power. Micropolitics harness everyday lived and embodied experience as a vital matter of political struggles which aim to reinvigorate civil society, that is, the struggles of associations of people which develop outside of state institutions (Warner, 2002). However, seen historically, since the 1980s micropolitics have increasingly become integral to the effective realization of neoliberal governance. This is because this mode of engagement is aligned with transformations which have occurred at the level of the state. The neoliberal state is not a monolithic container, rather it disseminates into the most remote terrains of everyday experience. The dismantling of welfare systems has accelerated, and finally consolidated, the state’s withdrawal from the traditional role of centralized organizer of society. However, the result has not been the disappearance of the state itself, rather we are witnessing the disappearance of the welfare state and the emergence of new one (Fairbrother & Rainnie, 2005; Jessop, 2002; Sassen, 1999). Social control is primarily performed through the colonization of previously regarded private areas of individual existence: the body, health, fashion and well-being, sexuality, your living-room. In this process, embodied subjectification and micropolitics have become necessary elements for the functioning of the neoliberal state. The neoliberal state needs, more than self-regulating individuals, networked actors who actively forge the structures necessary for the transformation from centralized state powers to disseminated modes of neoliberal regulation (Marazzi, 1998; Neilson & Rossiter, 2005; Papadopoulos, 2003; Stephenson, 2003). Hence, although they arose as an attempt to challenge the overly narrow focus on the state, micropolitics have played a vital role in shifting the historical function of the state from centralized control into a disseminated form of control which operates effectively in the terrain of social and cultural life. In this sense, both state- and micropolitics articulate their political agenda inside the terrain of the state and affirm its function and centrality in social life. This is the moment where embodied subjectification and the broader project of critical psychology amplify the production of affirmative subjectivity, a subjectivity which paradoxically solidifies state regulation by operating at its margins. However, the generation of affirmative subjectivity is more than a form of political regulation in contemporary North-Atlantic societies. It is also a productive force in the literal sense. The traditional apparatus for measuring and diagnosing individual differences was insufficient as a response to the social and economical transformations related to post-Fordist labour (Bowring, 2002; Gorz, 2004; Lazzarato, 2002; Moulier Boutang, 2003; Williams, 1994). This is because post-Fordism appropriates as productive resources precisely these forms of individual action and experience, which refer to the totality of individual subjectivity: relationality, emotions, memory, communication, creativity and primarily, the totality of the body. Critical psychology’s conceptualization captures the core tenet of the post-Fordist transformation in a magnificent way: embodied subjectification becomes the algorithm for the realization of the process of the ‘subjectivization of work’, a process which lies in the heart of post-Fordist productivity (Lohr & Nickel, 2005; Moldaschl & Voss, 2003; Scho¨nberger & Springer, 2003). Yet critical psychology neither traces possible ruptures in the post-Fordist arrangement nor explores everyday forms of exodus and disobedience (Moulier Boutang, 1998; Virno, 2004). In other words, the critical psychological view of subjectification can elucidate, or diagnose, the productive role of the psychology in the social earthquake which accompanied the post-Fordist reorganization of labour and everyday sociality in North-Atlantic societies (Gordo-Lo´pez & Pujol Tarre´s, 2004; Papadopoulos, 2004). However, critical psychology is unable to engage with the suppressed potentialities of post-Fordist social relations which could lead to forms of political engagement that question post-Fordism itself (Karakayali & Tsianos, 2005; Negri, 1999; Santos, 2001; Stephenson, 2004). The reason for this is, as I argued above, that embodied subjectification is the core productive form of today’s sociality. Embodied subjectification is not only a heuristic tool which enables social researchers to understand power relations in post-Fordist North-Atlantic societies, but also the very guarantor of what Weber (1978) calls ‘legitimate domination’. A form of domination which is actively and willingly performed differently by each individual and congeals a form of power, which, following Hannah Arendt (1970), emerges not as a means to dominate but by the very fact that people act together. Embodied subjectification (and its very theoreticization by governmentality studies) is a form of obedience to today’s configuration of power in North-Atlantic societies. In this sense, micropolitics and embodied subjectification constitute a form of affirmative subjectivity in neoliberal and post-Fordist conditions. In the last part of the paper, I will briefly discuss Jacques Rancie`re’s concept of politics as a means for interfering in the production of affirmative subjectivity (for a more broad discussion of this issue s. Stephenson & Papadopoulos, 2006).

#### The question of this debate is which model translates collectives to overcome commoditization of dissent---scaling up from “local” to “global” gets the direction of causality wrong by mystifying how world economies structure local relations – misdiagnosis turns solvency.

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Despite the emphasis on multiple scales of analysis, ‘‘webs of relation” (Rocheleau and Roth, 2007), ‘‘chains of explanation” (Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987, p. 27), ‘‘bottom-up” (Blaikie, 1985, p. 82), or ‘‘progressive contextualisation” (Vayda, 1983), most of the work in political ecology privileges spatio-temporally limited social contexts over longer-term, macro-scale social processes (Bridge, 2002, p. 371). While this may be the outcome of a recent distancing from political economy perspectives (Brown and Purcell, 2005, p. 611), the problem was inherent from the very beginning, with a tendency to emphasise the ‘‘regional” or meso-scale (and then ‘‘local”, or micro-scale) as the starting unit of analysis. This analytical centring of smaller-scale dynamics has resulted in an inability to integrate general patterns and interconnections with ethnographic and eco- systemic data (Blaikie, 1999, p. 140; Brown and Purcell, 2005, p. 612). This is far from saying that micro- or meso-specificity is less important than macro-specificity (the two are equally important in my view). Micro- and meso-level analysis is pivotal in under- standing people–environment relations, especially given that the most tangible occur largely over small areas. Yet emphasis on the smaller scale becomes a hindrance when it guides, rather than builds the empirical foundations of a research project. With few exceptions, political ecology continues to suffer from a methodological insis- tence on explaining people–environment relations through the analysis of smaller-scale circumstances and/or starting points. Planet-wide environmental and, since at least 500 years ago, social processes enable and/or constrain smaller-scale people–environment relations, especially with recent human-induced shifts in atmosphere composition (radiative forcing through greenhouse gas emissions, stratospheric ozone layer disruption through the emissions of bromines and chlorofluorocarbons, regional releases of atmospheric pollutants through burning vegetation and coal com- bustion, etc.). The scale of analysis adopted in a research project may depend on the kind of question one wishes to answer (Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987, p. 65), but ultimately larger-scale processes must be included to arrive at explanations that go beyond appeals to complexity (Blaikie, 1985) or beyond eclecticism in the frameworks being combined (Blaikie, 1999, p. 139). The matter is exacerbated when phenomena in some parts of the whole are confused for evidence that negates either the existence of the entire system (or of any systemic process at all) or denies the possibility of a general theory on resource management (e.g., Black, 1990; Forsyth, 2003). There are other epistemological repercussions from such small locality-specific analyses and small-to-large scale approaches. One is treating places (or regions) as isolatable (often implicitly, by not paying attention to wider systemic processes), which enabled political ecology to circumscribe the range of social and environmental contexts to those far away from most political ecologists’ homes (McCarthy, 2002; Robbins, 2004). The underlying problem was reflected in the exclusion of places outside rural ‘‘third” world areas from the purview of political ecology (countries in the former state-socialist camp are still mostly ignored).2 Recent attention to wealthy industrialised capitalist societies and urban ecosystems is a helpful first step in moving political ecology away from a relatively narrow focus3 and into more promising cross-comparative terrain that can generate more systematic analy- sis (see works guest edited by Heynen and Robbins, 2005; Paulson and Gezon, 2005; Schroeder et al., 2006).

#### Neolib commoditizes life, ensures inequality, eco-crisis

Harvey 5 (David, FBA is the Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Geography @ the Graduate Center of the City Univ. of New York, A Brief History of Neoliberalism, pgs 165-171//shree)

To presume that markets and market signals can best determine all allocative decisions is to presume that everything can in principle be treated as a commodity. Commodification presumes the existence of property rights over processes, things, and social relations, that a price can be put on them, and that they can be traded subject to legal contract. The market is presumed to work as an appropriate guide––an ethic––for all human action. In practice, of course, every society sets some bounds on where commodification begins and ends. Where the boundaries lie is a matter of contention. Certain drugs are deemed illegal. The buying and selling of sexual favours is outlawed in most US states, though elsewhere it may be legalized, decriminalized, and even state-regulated as an industry. Pornography is broadly protected as a form of free speech under US law although here, too, there are certain forms (mainly concerning children) that are considered beyond the pale. In the US, conscience and honour are supposedly not for sale, and there exists a curious penchant to pursue ‘corruption’ as if it is easily distinguishable from the normal practices of influence-peddling and making money in the marketplace. The commodification of sexuality, culture, history, heritage; of nature as spectacle or as rest cure; the extraction of monopoly rents from originality, authenticity, and uniqueness (of works or art, for example)––these all amount to putting a price on things that were never actually produced as commodities.17 There is often disagreement as to the appropriate- ness of commodification (of religious events and symbols, for example) or of who should exercise the property rights and derive the rents (over access to Aztec ruins or marketing of Aboriginal art, for example).¶ Neoliberalization has unquestionably rolled back the bounds of commodification and greatly extended the reach of legal contracts. It typically celebrates (as does much of postmodern theory) ephemerality and the short-term contract––marriage, for example, is understood as a short-term contractual arrangement rather than as a sacred and unbreakable bond. The divide between neoliberals and neoconservatives partially reflects a difference as to where the lines are drawn. The neoconservatives typically blame ‘liberals’, ‘Hollywood’, or even ‘postmodernists’ for what they see as the dissolution and immorality of the social order, rather than the corporate capitalists (like Rupert Murdoch) who actually do most of the damage by foisting all manner of sexually charged if not salacious material upon the world and who continually flaunt their pervasive preference for short-term over long-term commitments in their endless pursuit of profit.¶ But there are far more serious issues here than merely trying to protect some treasured object, some particular ritual or a preferred corner of social life from the monetary calculus and the short-term contract. For at the heart of liberal and neoliberal theory lies the necessity of constructing coherent markets for land, labour, and money, and these, as Karl Polanyi pointed out, ‘are obviously not commodities . . . the commodity description of labour, land, and money is entirely fictitious’. While capitalism cannot function without such fictions, it does untold damage if it fails to acknowledge the complex realities behind them. Polanyi, in one of his more famous passages, puts it this way:¶ To allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment, indeed, even of the amount and use of purchasing power, would result in the demolition of society. For the alleged commodity ‘labour power’ cannot be shoved about, used indiscriminately, or even left unused, without affecting also the human individual who happens to be the bearer of this peculiar commodity. In disposing of man’s labour power the system would, incidentally, dispose of the physical, psychological, and moral entity ‘man’ attached to that tag. Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime and starvation. Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighborhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted, military safety jeopardized, the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed. Finally, the market administration of purchasing power would periodically liquidate business enterprise, for shortages and surfeits of money would prove as disastrous to business as floods and droughts in primitive society.18¶ The damage wrought through the ‘floods and droughts’ of fictitious capitals within the global credit system, be it in Indonesia, Argentina, Mexico, or even within the US, testifies all too well to Polanyi’s final point. But his theses on labour and land deserve further elaboration.¶ Individuals enter the labour market as persons of character, as individuals embedded in networks of social relations and socialized in various ways, as physical beings identifiable by certain characteristics (such as phenotype and gender), as individuals who have accumulated various skills (sometimes referred to as ‘human cap- ital’) and tastes (sometime referred to as ‘cultural capital’), and as living beings endowed with dreams, desires, ambitions, hopes, doubts, and fears. For capitalists, however, such individuals are a mere factor of production, though not an undifferentiated factor since employers require labour of certain qualities, such as physical strength, skills, flexibility, docility, and the like, appropriate to cer- tain tasks. Workers are hired on contract, and in the neoliberal scheme of things short-term contracts are preferred in order to maximize flexibility. Employers have historically used differentiations within the labour pool to divide and rule. Segmented labour markets then arise and distinctions of race, ethnicity, gen- der, and religion are frequently used, blatantly or covertly, in ways that redound to the employers’ advantage. Conversely, workers may use the social networks in which they are embedded to gain privileged access to certain lines of employment. They typically seek to monopolize skills and, through collective action and the creation of appropriate institutions, seek to regulate the labour market to protect their interests. In this they are merely construct- ing that ‘protective covering of cultural institutions’ of which Polanyi speaks.¶ Neoliberalization seeks to strip away the protective coverings that embedded liberalism allowed and occasionally nurtured. The general attack against labour has been two-pronged. The powers of trade unions and other working-class institutions are curbed or dismantled within a particular state (by violence if necessary). Flexible labour markets are established. State withdrawal from social welfare provision and technologically induced shifts in job structures that render large segments of the labour force redun- dant complete the domination of capital over labour in the market- place. The individualized and relatively powerless worker then confronts a labour market in which only short-term contracts are offered on a customized basis. Security of tenure becomes a thing of the past (Thatcher abolished it in universities, for example). A ‘personal responsibility system’ (how apt Deng’s language was!) is substituted for social protections (pensions, health care, protec- tions against injury) that were formerly an obligation of employers and the state. Individuals buy products in the markets that sell social protections instead. Individual security is therefore a matter of individual choice tied to the affordability of financial products embedded in risky financial markets.¶ The second prong of attack entails transformations in the spa- tial and temporal co-ordinates of the labour market. While too much can be made of the ‘race to the bottom’ to find the cheapest and most docile labour supplies, the geographical mobility of capital permits it to dominate a global labour force whose own geographical mobility is constrained. Captive labour forces abound because immigration is restricted. These barriers can be evaded only by illegal immigration (which creates an easily exploitable labour force) or through short-term contracts that permit, for example, Mexican labourers to work in Californian agribusiness only to be shamelessly shipped back to Mexico when they get sick and even die from the pesticides to which they are exposed.¶ Under neoliberalization, the figure of ‘the disposable worker’ emerges as prototypical upon the world stage.19 Accounts of the appalling conditions of labour and the despotic conditions under which labourers work in the sweatshops of the world abound. In China, the conditions under which migrant young women from rural areas work are nothing short of appalling: ‘unbearably long hours, substandard food, cramped dorms, sadistic managers who beat and sexually abuse them, and pay that arrives months late, or sometimes not at all’.20 In Indonesia, two young women recounted their experiences working for a Singapore-based Levi-Strauss subcontractor as follows:¶ We are regularly insulted, as a matter of course. When the boss gets angry he calls the women dogs, pigs, sluts, all of which we have to endure patiently without reacting. We work officially from seven in the morning until three (salary less than $2 a day), but there is often compulsory overtime, sometimes––especially if there is an urgent order to be delivered––until nine. However tired we are, we are not allowed to go home. We may get an extra 200 rupiah (10 US cents) . . . We go on foot to the factory from where we live. Inside it is very hot. The building has a metal roof, and there is not much space for all the workers. It is very cramped. There are over 200 people working there, mostly women, but there is only one toilet for the whole factory . . . when we come home from work, we have no energy left to do anything but eat and sleep . . .21¶ Similar tales come from the Mexican maquila factories, the Taiwanese- and Korean-operated manufacturing plants in Honduras, South Africa, Malaysia, and Thailand. The health haz- ards, the exposure to a wide range of toxic substances, and death on the job pass by unregulated and unremarked. In Shanghai, the Taiwanese businessman who ran a textile warehouse ‘in which 61 workers, locked in the building, died in a fire’ received a ‘lenient’ two-year suspended sentence because he had ‘showed repentance’ and ‘cooperated in the aftermath of the fire’.22¶ Women, for the most part, and sometimes children, bear the brunt of this sort of degrading, debilitating, and dangerous toil.23 The social consequences of neoliberalization are in fact extreme. Accumulation by dispossession typically undermines whatever powers women may have had within household production/ marketing systems and within traditional social structures and relocates everything in male-dominated commodity and credit markets. The paths of women’s liberation from traditional patri- archal controls in developing countries lie either through degrad- ing factory labour or through trading on sexuality, which varies from respectable work as hostesses and waitresses to the sex trade (one of the most lucrative of all contemporary industries in which a good deal of slavery is involved). The loss of social protec- tions in advanced capitalist countries has had particularly negative effects on lower-class women, and in many of the ex-communist countries of the Soviet bloc the loss of women’s rights through neoliberalization has been nothing short of catastrophic.¶ So how, then, do disposable workers––women in particular–– survive both socially and affectively in a world of flexible labour markets and short-term contracts, chronic job insecurities, lost social protections, and often debilitating labour, amongst the wreckage of collective institutions that once gave them a modicum of dignity and support? For some the increased flexibility in labour markets is a boon, and even when it does not lead to material gains the simple right to change jobs relatively easily and free of the traditional social constraints of patriarchy and family has intangible benefits. For those who successfully negotiate the labour market there are seemingly abundant rewards in the world of a capitalist consumer culture. Unfortunately, that culture, however spectacular, glamorous, and beguiling, perpetually plays with desires without ever conferring satisfactions beyond the limited identity of the shopping mall and the anxieties of status by way of good looks (in the case of women) or of material possessions. ‘I shop therefore I am’ and possessive individualism together con- struct a world of pseudo-satisfactions that is superficially exciting but hollow at its core. But for those who have lost their jobs or who have never managed to move out of the extensive informal economies that now provide a parlous refuge for most of the world’s disposable work- ers, the story is entirely different. With some 2 billion people condemned to live on less than $2 a day, the taunting world of capitalist consumer culture, the huge bonuses earned in financial services, and the self-congratulatory polemics as to the emancipa- tory potential of neoliberalization, privatization, and personal responsibility must seem like a cruel joke. From impoverished rural China to the affluent US, the loss of health-care protections and the increasing imposition of all manner of user fees adds considerably to the financial burdens of the poor.24

#### Vote neg for a historical materialist world-systems approach.

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Today the terms “world economy”, “world market”, and “globalization” are commonplace, appearing in the sound-bites of politicians, media commentators, and unemployed workers alike. But few know that the most important source for these phrases lies with work started by sociologists in the early Seventies. At a time when the mainstream assumption of accepted social, political, and economic science held that the “wealth of nations” reflected mainly on the cultural developments within those nations, a growing group of social scientists recognized that national “development” could be best understood as the complex outcome of local interactions with an aggressively expanding Europe-centered “world-system” (Wallerstein 1974; Frank 1978).1 Not only did these scientists perceive the global nature of economic networks 20 years before they entered popular discourse, but they also saw that many of these networks extend back at least 600 years. Over this time, the peoples of the globe became linked into one integrated unit: the modern world-system. Now, 20 years on, social scientists working in the area are trying to understand the history and evolution of the whole system, as well as how local, national and regional entities have been integrated into it. This current research has required broadening our perspective to include deeper temporal and larger spatial frameworks. For example, some recent research has compared the modern Europe-centered world-system of the last six hundred years with earlier, smaller intersocietal networks that have existed for millennia (Frank and Gills 1993; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997). Other work uses the knowledge of cycles and trends that has grown out of world-systems research to anticipate likely future events with a precision impossible before the advent of the theory. This is still a new field and much remains to be done, but enough has already been achieved to provide a valuable understanding of the phenomenon of globalization. The discourse about globalization has emerged mainly in the last decade. The term means many different things, and there are many reasons for its emergence as a popular concept. The usage of this term generally implies that a recent change (within the last decade or two) has occurred in technology and in the size of the arena of economic competition. The general idea is that information technology has created a context in which the global market, rather than separate national markets, is the relevant arena for economic competition. It then follows that economic competitiveness needs to be assessed in the global context, rather than in a national or local context. These notions have been used to justify the adoption of new practices by firms and governments all over the world and these developments have altered the political balances among states, firms, unions and other interest groups. The first task is to put this development into historical context. The world-systems perspective has shown that intersocietal geopolitics and geoeconomics has been the relevant arena of competition for national-states, firms and classes for hundreds of years. The degree of international connectedness of economic and political/military networks was already important in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The first “transnational corpora-tions” (TNCs) were the great chartered companies of the seventeenth century. They organized both production and exchange on an intercontinental scale. The rise and fall of hegemonic core powers, which continues today with the relative decline of the United States hegemony, was already in full operation in the seventeenth century rise and fall of Dutch hegemony (see Arrighi 1994; Modelski and Thompson 1996; Taylor 1996). The capitalist world-economy has experienced cyclical processes and secular trends for hundreds of years (Chase-Dunn 1998:Chapter 2). The cyclical processes include the rise and fall of hegemons, the Kondratieff wave (a forty to sixty year business cycle)2 , a cycle of warfare among core states (Goldstein 1988), and cycles of colonization and decolonization (Bergesen and Schoenberg 1980). The world-system has also experienced several secular trends including a long-term proletarianization of the world work force, growing concentration of capital into larger and larger firms, increasing internationalization of capital investment and of trade, and accelerating internationalization of political structures. In this perspective, globalization is a long-term upward trend of political and economic change that is affected by cyclical processes. The most recent technological changes, and the expansions of international trade and investment, are part of these long-run changes. One question is exactly how the most recent changes compare with the long-run trends? And what are the important continuities as well as the qualitative differences that accompany these changes? These are the questions that I propose to explore. types of globalization There are at least five different dimensions of globalization that need to be distinguished. There are also several misunderstandings and misinterpretations that need to be clarified. Let us evaluate five different meanings of globalization: (1) Common ecological constraints This aspect of globalization involves global threats due to our fragile ecosystem and the globalization of ecological risks. Anthropogenic causes of ecological degradation have long operated, and these in turn have affected human social evolution (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997). But ecological degradation has only recently begun to operate on a global scale. This fact creates a set of systemic constraints that require global collective action. (2) Cultural globalization This aspect of globalization relates to the diffusion of two sets of cultural phenomena: • the proliferation of individualized values, originally of Western origin, to ever larger parts of the world population. These values are expressed in social constitutions that recognize individual rights and identities and transnational and international efforts to protect “human rights.” • the adoption of originally Western institutional practices. Bureaucratic organization and rationality, belief in a law-like natural universe, the values of economic efficiency and political democracy have been spreading throughout the world since they were propagated in the European Enlightenment (Meyer 1996; Markoff 1996). Whereas some of the discussions of the world polity assume that cultural components have been a central aspect of the modern world-system from the start (e.g. Meyer 1989; Mann 1986), I emphasize the comparatively non-normative nature of the modern world-system (Chase-Dunn 1998: Chapter 5). But I acknowledge the growing salience of cultural consensus in the last 100 years. Whereas the modern world-system has always been, and is still, multicultural, the growing influence and acceptance of Western values of rationality, individualism, equality, and efficiency is an important trend of the twentieth century. (3) Globalization of communication Another meaning of globalization is connected with the new era of information technology. Anthony Giddens(1996) insists that social space comes to acquire new qualities with generalized electronic communications, albeit only in the networked parts of the world. In terms of accessibility, cost and velocity, the hitherto more local political and geographic parameters that structured social relationships are greatly expanded. One may well argue that time-space compression (Harvey 1989) by new information technologies is simply an extension and acceleration of the very long-term trend toward technological development over the last ten millenia (Chase-Dunn 1994). Yet, the rapid decrease in the cost of communications may have qualitatively altered the relationship between states and consciousness and this may be an important basis for the formation of a much stronger global civil society. Global communication facilities have the power to move things visible and invisible from one part of the globe to another whether any nation-state likes it or not. This applies not only to economic exchange, but also to ideas, and these new networks of communication can create new political groups and alignments. How, and to what extent, will this undermine the power of states to structure social relationships? (4) Economic globalization Economic globalization means globe-spanning economic relationships. The interrelationships of markets, finance, goods and services, and the networks created by transnational corporations are the most important manifestations of this. Though the capitalist world-system has been international in essence for centuries, the extent and degree of trade and investment globalization has increased greatly in recent decades. Economic globalization has been accelerated by what information technology has done to the movement of money. It is commonly claimed that the market’s ability to shift money from one part of the globe to another by the push of a button has changed the rules of policy-making, putting economic decisions much more at the mercy of market forces than before. The world-system has undergone major waves of economic globalization before, especially in the last decades of the the nineteenth century. One important question is whether or not the most recent wave has actually integrated the world to a qualitatively greater extent that it was integrated during the former wave. All the breathy discussions of global capitalism and global society assume that this is the case, but careful comparative research indicates that this is not so (see below and Chase-Dunn, Kawano and Brewer 2000). (5) Political globalization Political globalization consists of the institutionalization of international political structures. The Europe-centered world-system has been primarily constituted as an interstate system—a system of conflicting and allying states and empires. Earlier world-systems, in which accumulation was mainly accomplished by means of institutionalized coercive power, experienced an oscillation between multicentric interstate systems and core-wide world empires in which a single “universal” state conquered all or most of the core states in a region. The Europe-centered system has also experienced a cyclical alternation between political centralization and decentralization, but this has taken the form of the rise and fall of hegemonic core states that do not conquer the other core states. Hence the modern world-system has remained multicentric in the core, and this is due mainly to the shift toward a form of accumulation based more on the production and profitable sale of commodities—capitalism. The hegemons have been the most thoroughly capitalist states and they have preferred to follow a strategy of controlling trade and access to raw material imports from the periphery rather than conquering other core states to extract tribute or taxes. Power competition in an interstate system does not require much in the way of cross-state cultural consensus to operate systemically. But since the early nineteenth century the European interstate system has been developing both an increasingly consensual international normative order and a set of international political structures that regulate all sorts of interaction. This phenomenon has been termed “global governance” by Craig Murphy (1994) and others. It refers to the growth of both specialized and general international organizations. The general organizations that have emerged are the Concert of Europe, the League of Nations and the United Nations. The sequence of these “proto-world-states” constitutes a process of institution-building, but unlike earlier “universal states” this one is slowly emerging by means of condominium among core states rather than conquest. This is the trend of political globalization. It is yet a weak, but persistent, concentration of sovereignty in international institutions. If it continues it will eventuate in a single global state that could effectively outlaw warfare and enforce its illegality. The important empirical question, analogous to the discussion of economic globalization above, is the relative balance of power between international and global political organizations vis a vis national states. We assume this to be an upward trend, but like economic globalization it probably is also a cycle. Measuring Economic Globalization The brief discussion above of economic globalization implies that it is a long-run upward trend. The idea is that international economic competition as well as geopolitical competition were already important in the fourteenth century and that they became increasingly important as more and more international trade and international investment occurred. In its simplest form this would posit a linear upward trend of economic globalization. An extreme alternative hypothesis about economic globalization would posit a completely unintegrated world composed of autarchic national economies until some point (perhaps in the last few decades) at which a completely global market for commodities and capital suddenly emerged. Let us examine data that can tell us more about the temporal emergence of economic globalization. There are potentially a large number of different indicators of economic globalization and they may or may not exhibit similar patterns with respect to change over time. Trade globalization can be operationalized as the proportion of all world production that crosses international boundaries. Investment globalization would be the proportion of all invested capital in the world that is owned by non-nationals (i.e. “foreigners”). And we could also investigate the degree of economic integration of countries by determining the extent to which national economic growth rates are correlated across countries. 3 It would be ideal to have these measures over several centuries, but comparable fi gures are not available before the nineteenth century, and indeed even these are sparse and probably unrepresentative of the whole system until well into the twentieth century. Nevertheless we can learn some important things by examining those comparable data that are available. Figure 1 shows trade and investment globalization. Trade globalization is the ratio of estimated total world exports (the sum of the value of exports of all countries) divided by an estimate of total world product (the sum of all the national GDPs). Investment globalization is the total book value of all foreign direct investment divided by the total world product. The trade globalization figures show the hypothesized upward trend as well as a downturn that occurred between 1929 and 1950. Note that the time scale in Figure 1 is distorted by the paucity of data before 1950. It is possible that important changes in trade globalization are not visible in this series because of the wide temporal gaps in the data. Indeed a more recent study has shown that this is the case. There was a shorter and less well-defined wave of trade globalization from 1900 to 1929 (Chase-Dunn, Kawano and Brewer 2000). Figure 1 also shows that the trade indicator differs in some ways from the investment indicator. Investment globalization was higher (or as high) in 1913 as it was in 1991, while trade globalization was considerably lower in 1913 than it was in 1992. We have fewer time points for the investment data, so we cannot tell for sure about the shape of the changes that took place, but these two series imply that different indicators of economic globalization may show somewhat different trajectories. More research needs to be done on investment globalization to determine its exact trajectory and for comparison with trade globalization and other world-system cycles and trends. A third indicator of economic globalization is the correlation of national GDP growth rates (Grimes 1993). This shows the extent to which periods of national economic growth and stagnation have been synchronized across countries. In a fully integrated global economy it would be expected that growth and stagnation periods would be synchronized across countries and so there would be a high correlation of national growth rates. Grimes shows that, contrary to the hypothesis of a secular upward trend toward increasing global integration, the correlation among national growth rates fluctuates cyclically over the past two centuries. In a data series from 1860 to 1988 Grimes found two periods in which national economic growth decline sequences are highly correlated across countries: - 1913-1927; and after 1970. Before and in between these peaks are periods of very low synchronization. Further research needs to be done to determine the temporal patterns of different sorts of economic globalization. At this point we can say that the step-function version of a sudden recent leap to globalization can be rejected. The evidence we have indicates that there are both long-term secular trends and huge cyclical oscillations. Trade globalization shows a long-term trend with a big dip during the depression of the 1930s. The investment globalization indicates a cycle with at least two peaks, one before World War I and one after 1980. Grimes’s indicator of synchronous economic growth indicates a cyclical fluctuation with one peak in the 1920s and another since 1970. These results, especially those that imply cycles, indicate that change occurs relatively quickly and that the most recent period of globalization shares important features with earlier periods of intense international economic interaction. The question of the similarities and differences between the most recent wave and earlier waves of globalization is clearly an important one. systemic cycles of accumulation Giovanni Arrighi (1994) shows how hegemony in the modern world system has evolved in a series of “systemic cycles of accumulation” (SCAs) in which finance capital has employed different forms of organization and different relationships with organized state power. These qualitative organizational changes have accompanied the secular increase in the power of money and markets as regulatory forces in the modern world-system. The SCAs have been occurring in the Europe-centered world-system since at least the fourteenth century. Arrighi’s model shows both the similarities and the differences in the relationships that obtain between financial capital and states within the different systemic cycles of accumulation. The British SCA and the American SCA had both similarities and important differences. The main differences that Arrighi emphasizes are the “internalization of transaction costs” (represented by the vertical integration of TNCs) and the extent to which the U.S. tried to create “organized capitalism” on a global scale. The British SCA had fewer global firms and pushed hard for international free trade. The U.S. SCA is characterized by a much heavier focus on global firms and by a more structured approach to “global governance” possibly intended to produce economic growth in other core regions, especially those that are geopolitically strategic. Arrighi argues that President Roosevelt used the power of the hegemonic state to try to create a balanced world of capitalist growth. This sometimes meant going against the preferences of finance capital and U.S. corporations. For example, the Japanese miracle was made possible because the U.S. government prevented U.S. corporations from turning Japan (and Korea) into just one more dependent and peripheralized country. This policy of enlightened global Keynesianism was continued in a somewhat constrained form under later presidents, albeit in the guise of domestic “military Keynesianism” justified by the Soviet threat. In this interpretation the big companies and the finance capitalists returned to power with the decline in competitiveness of the U.S. economy. The rise of the Eurodollar market forced Nixon to abandon the Bretton Woods financial structure, and this was followed by ReaganismThatcherism, IMF structural adjustment, streamlining, deregulation and the delegitimation of anything that constrained the desires of global capital investment. The idea that we are all subject to the forces of a global market-place, and that any constraint on the freedom to invest will result in a deficit of “competitiveness,” is a powerful justification for destroying the institutions of the “Second Wave” (e.g. labor unions, welfare, agricultural subsidies, etc.).4 Under conditions of increased economic globalization the ability of national states to protect their citizens from world market forces decreases. This results increasing inequalities within countries, and increasing levels of dis-satisfaction compared to the relative harmony of national integration achieved under the Keynesian regimes. It is also produces political reactions, especially national-populist movements.5 Indeed, Philip McMichael (1996) attributes the anti-government movements now occurring in the U.S. West, including the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City, to the frustrations caused by the deregulation of U.S. agriculture. It would also be useful to investigate the temporal patterns of the other types of globalization: cultural,6 political, technological and ecological. Of interest too are the relationships between these and economic globalization. Much empirical work needs to be done to operationalize these concepts and to assemble the relevant information. Here, for now, I will hypothesize that all these types exhibit both long-run secular and cyclical features. I will also surmise that cultural and political globalization are lagged behind the secular upward trend of economic globalization. the politics of globalization This last hypothesis bears on the question of adjustments of political and social institutions to increases in economic and technological globalization. I would submit that the current period of economic globalization has occurred in part due to technological changes that are linked to Kondratieff waves, and in part because of the profit squeezes and declining hegemony of the U.S. economy in the larger world market. 7 The financial aspects of the current period of economic globalization began when President Nixon canceled the Bretton Woods agreement in response to pressures on the value of the U.S. dollar coming from the rapidly growing Eurodollar market (Harvey 1995). This occurred in 1967, and this date is used by many to mark the beginning of a K-wave downturn. The saturation of the world market demand for the products of the post-World War II upswing, the constraints on capital accumulation posed by business unionism and the political entitlements of the welfare states in core countries caused a profit squeeze that motivated large firms and investors and their political helpers to try to break out of these constraints. The possibilities for global investment opened up by new communications and information technology created new maneuverability for capital. The demise of the Soviet Union8 added legitimacy to the revitalized ideology of the free market and this ideology swept the Earth. Not only Reagan and Thatcher, but Eurocommunists and labor governments in both the core and the periphery, adopted the ideology of the “lean state,” deregulation, privatization and the notion that everything must be evaluated in terms of global efficiency and competitiveness. Cultural globalization has been a very long-term upward trend since the emergence of the world religions in which any person, regardless of ethnicity or kinship, could become a member of the moral community by confessing faith in the “universal” god. But moral and political cosmography has usually encompassed a smaller realm than the real dimensions of the objective trade and political/military networks in which people have been involved. What has occurred at the end of the twentieth century is a near convergence between subjective cosmography and objective networks. The main cause of this is probably the practical limitation of human habitation to the planet Earth. But the long-run declining costs of transportation and communications are also an important element. Whatever the causes, the emergent reality is one in which consciousness embraces (or goes beyond) the real systemic networks of interaction. This geographical feature of the global system is one of its uniquenesses, and it makes possible for the future a level of normative order that has not existed since human societies were very small and egalitarian (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997a). The ideology of globalization has undercut the support and the rationale behind all sorts of so-called Second Wave institutions—labor unions, socialist parties, welfare programs, and communist states. While these institutions have not been destroyed everywhere, the politicians of the right (e.g. Newt Gingrich in the U.S.) have explicitly argued for their elimination. At the same time, the very technologies that made capitalist economic globalization possible also have the potential to allow those who do not benefit from the free reign of capital to organize new forms of resistance, or to revitalize old forms. It is now widely agreed by many, even in the financial community, that the honeymoon of neo-liberalism will eventually end and that the rough edges of global capitalism will need to be buffed. Patrick Buchanan, a conservative candidate for the U.S. presidency in 1996, tried to capitalize on popular resentment of corporate downsizing. The Wall Street Journal has reported that stock analysts worry about the “lean and mean” philosophy becoming a fad that has the potential to delegitimate the business system and to create political backlashes. This was expressed in the context of a discussion of the announcement of huge bonuses for AT&T executives following another round of downsizing. I already mentioned the difficulties that states are having in controlling communications on the Internet. I do not believe the warnings of those who predict a massive disruption of civilization by hordes of sociopaths waging “cyberwar”9 But I do think that the new communications technologies provide new opportunities for the less powerful to organize themselves to respond should global capitalism run them over or leave them out. The important question is what are the most useful organizational forms for resistance? What we already see are all sorts of nutty localisms, nationalisms and a proliferation of identity politics. The militias of the U.S. West are ordering large amounts of fertilizer with which to resist the coming of the “Blue Helmets”—a fantasized world state that is going to take away their handguns and assualt rifles.10 Localisms and specialized identities are the postmodern political forms that are supposedly produced by information technology, flexible specialization, and global capitalism (Harvey 1989). I think that at least some of this trend is a result of desperation and the demise of plausible alternatives in the face of the ideological hegemony of neoliberalism and the much-touted triumph of efficiency over justice. Be that as it may, a historical perspective on the latest phase of globalization allows us to see the long-run patterns of interaction between capitalist expansion and the movements of opposition that have tried to protect people from the negative aspects of market forces and exploitation. And this perspective has implications for going beyond the impasse of the present to build a more cooperative and humane global system (Boswell and Chase-Dunn 1999). the spiral of capitalism and socialism The interaction between expansive commodification and resistance movements can be denoted as “the spiral of capitalism and socialism.” The world-systems perspective provides a view of the long-term interaction between the expansion and deepening of capitalism and the efforts of people to protect themselves from exploitation and domination. The historical development of the communist states is explained as part of a long-run spiraling interaction between expanding capitalism and socialist counter-responses. The history and developmental trajectory of the communist states can be explained as socialist movements in the semiperiphery that attempted to transform the basic logic of capitalism, but which ended up using socialist ideology to mobilize industrialization for the purpose of catching up with core capitalism. The spiraling interaction between capitalist development and socialist movements can be seen in the history of labor movements, socialist parties and communist states over the last 200 years. This long-run comparative perspective enables one to see recent events in China, Russia and Eastern Europe in a framework that has implications for the future of social democracy. The metaphor of the spiral means this: both capitalism and socialism affect one another’s growth and organizational forms. Capitalism spurs socialist responses by exploiting and dominating peoples, and socialism spurs capitalism to expand its scale of production and market integration and to revolutionize technology. Defined broadly, socialist movements are those political and organizational means by which people try to protect themselves from market forces, exploitation and domination, and to build more cooperative institutions. The sequence of industrial revolutions, by which capitalism has restructured production and taken control of labor, have stimulated a series of political organizations and institutions created by workers to protect their livelihoods. This happened differently under different political and economic conditions in different parts of the world-system. Skilled workers created guilds and craft unions. Less skilled workers created industrial unions. Sometimes these coalesced into labor parties that played important roles in supporting the development of political democracies, mass education and welfare states (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992). In other regions workers were less politically successful, but managed at least to protect access to rural areas or subsistence plots for a fall-back or hedge against the insecurities of employment in capitalist enterprises. To some extent the burgeoning contemporary “informal sector” in both core and peripheral societies provides such a fall-back. The mixed success of workers’ organizations also had an impact on the further development of capitalism. In some areas workers or communities were successful at raising the wage bill or protecting the environment in ways that raised the costs of production for capital. When this happened capitalists either displaced workers by automating them out of jobs or capital migrated to where fewer constraints allowed cheaper production. The process of capital flight is not a new feature of the world-system. It has been an important force behind the uneven development of capitalism and the spreading scale of market integration for centuries. Labor unions and socialist parties were able to obtain some power in certain states, but capitalism became yet more international. Firm size increased. International markets became more and more important to successful capitalist competition. Fordism, the employment of large numbers of easily-organizable workers in centralized production locations, has been supplanted by “flexible accumulation” (small firms producing small customized products) and global sourcing (the use of substitutable components from broadly dispersed competing producers), are all production strategies that make traditional labor organizing approaches much less viable. communist states in the world-system Socialists were able to gain state power in certain semiperipheral states and use this power to create political mechanisms of protection against competition with core capital. This was not a wholly new phenomenon. As discussed below, capitalist semiperipheral states had done and were doing similar things. But, the communist states claimed a fundamentally oppositional ideology in which socialism was allegedly a superior system that would eventually replace capitalism. Ideological opposition is a phenomenon which the capitalist world-economy has seen before. The geopolitical and economic battles of the Thirty Years War were fought in the name of Protestantism against Catholicism. The content of the ideology may make some difference for the internal organization of states and parties, but every contender must be able to legitimate itself in the eyes and hearts of its cadre. The claim to represent a qualitatively different and superior socio-economic system is not evidence that the communist states were indeed structurally autonomous from world capitalism. The communist states severely restricted the access of core capitalist firms to their internal markets and raw materials, and this constraint on the mobility of capital was an important force behind the post-World War II upsurge in the spatial scale of market integration and a new revolution of technology. In certain areas capitalism was driven to further revolutionize technology or to improve living conditions for workers and peasants because of the demonstration effect of propinquity to a communist state. U.S. support for state-led industrialization of Japan and Korea (in contrast to U.S. policy in Latin America) is only understandable as a geopolitical response to the Chinese revolution. The existence of “two superpowers”—one capitalist and one communist—in the period since World War II provided a fertile context for the success of international liberalism within the “capitalist” bloc. This was the political/military basis of the rapid growth of transnational corporations and the latest revolutionary “time-space compression” (Harvey 1989). This technological revolution has once again restructured the international division of labor and created a new regime of labor regulation called “flexible accumulation.” The process by which the communist states have become reintegrated into the capitalist world-system has been long, as described below. But, the final phase of reintegration was provoked by the inability to be competitive with the new form of capitalist regulation. Thus, capitalism spurs socialism, which spurs capitalism, which spurs socialism again in a wheel that turns and turns while getting larger. The economic reincorporation of the communist states into the capitalist world-economy did not occur recently and suddenly. It began with the mobilization toward autarchic industrialization using socialist ideology, an effort that was quite successful in terms of standard measures of economic development. Most of the communist states were increasing their percentage of world product and energy consumption up until the 1980s. The economic reincorporation of the communist states moved to a new stage of integration with the world market and foreign firms in the 1970s. Andre Gunder Frank (1980:chapter 4) documented a trend toward reintegration in which the communist states increased their exports for sale on the world market, increased imports from the avowedly capitalist countries, and made deals with transnational firms for investments within their borders. The economic crisis in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was not much worse than the economic crisis in the rest of the world during the global economic downturn that began in the late 1960s (see Boswell and Peters 1990, Table 1). Data presented by World Bank analysts indicates that GDP growth rates were positive in most of the “historically planned economies” in Europe until 1989 or 1990 (Marer et al, 1991: Table 7a). Put simply, the big transformations that occurred in the Soviet Union and China after 1989 were part of a process that had long been underway since the 1970s. The big socio-political changes were a matter of the superstructure catching up with the economic base. The democratization of these societies is, of course, a welcome trend, but democratic political forms do not automatically lead to a society without exploitation or domination. The outcomes of current political struggles are rather uncertain in most of the ex-communist countries. New types of authoritarian regimes seem at least as likely as real democratization. As trends in the last two decades have shown, austerity regimes, deregulation and marketization within nearly all of the communist states occurred during the same period as similar phenomena in non-communist states. The synchronicity and broad similarities between Reagan/Thatcher deregulation and attacks on the welfare state, austerity socialism in most of the rest of the world, and increasing pressures for marketization in the Soviet Union and China are all related to the B-phase downturn of the Kondratieff wave, as are the current moves toward austerity and privatization in many semiperipheral and peripheral states. The trend toward privatization, deregulation and market-based solutions among parties of the Left in almost every country is thoroughly documented by Lipset (1991). Nearly all socialists with access to political power have abandoned the idea of doing more than buffing off the rough edges of capitalism. The way in which the pressures of a stagnating world economy impact upon national policies certainly varies from country to country, but the ability of any single national society to construct collective rationality is limited by its interaction within the larger system. The most recent expansion of capitalist integration, termed “globalization of the economy,” has made autarchic national economic planning seem anachronistic. Yet, a political reaction against economic globalization is now under way in the form of revived ex-communist parties, economic nationalism (e.g., Pat Buchanan, the Brazilian military) and a coalition of oppositional forces who are critiquing the ideological hegemony of neo-liberalism (e.g., Ralph Nader, environmentalists, populists of the right, etc.). Political Implications of the World-System Perspective The age of U.S. hegemonic decline and the rise of post-modernist philosophy have cast the liberal ideology of the European Enlightenment (science, progress, rationality, liberty, democracy and equality) into the dustbin of totalizing universalisms. It is alleged that these values have been the basis of imperialism, domination and exploitation and, thus, they should be cast out in favor of each group asserting its own set of values. Note that self-determination and a considerable dose of multiculturalism (especially regarding religion) were already central elements in Enlightenment liberalism. The structuralist and historical materialist world-systems approach poses this problem of values in a different way. The problem with the capitalist world-system has not been with its values. The philosophy of liberalism is fine. It has quite often been an embarrassment to the pragmatics of imperial power and has frequently provided justifications for resistance to domination and exploitation. The philosophy of the enlightenment has never been a major cause of exploitation and domination. Rather, it was the military and economic power generated by capitalism that made European hegemony possible.

#### Approaching the best blueprint for change solves the case.

Olúfẹmi O. Táíwò 4/29/21. Assistant professor of philosophy at Georgetown University. "The Point is to Change the World". Blog of the APA. 4-29-2021. https://blog.apaonline.org/2021/04/29/the-point-is-to-change-the-world/

Towards a Practical Imagination

Confronted by these crises, Andaiye said, such countries turned where they had to: to the IMF, despite the fact that little had changed since the “structural adjustment policies” of the 70s (which Andaiye describes as having a destructive impact on the region). In this context, I see Andaiye as calling for imagination: to overcome the lack of new solutions that forced the region back to familiar non-solutions.

Not all kinds of imagination are up to the challenge of confronting crumbling structures. One kind of imagination is artistic: the kind that science fiction writers and poets employ. We use our imagination creatively, often as part of the construction of an aesthetic product. This allows us to be comparatively unfettered by convention – or considerations of practical efficacy. There is an important role for this kind of imagination: it breaks us out of self-imposed constraints on what kinds of worlds are possible, and as such is indispensable in the fight for justice, in the final analysis. And there is plenty of this kind of thinking in the academy, particularly in the humanities, where we build fancy descriptions of justice and injustice alike, judging our successes and failures on largely aesthetic terms.

The question is one of balance: the more of our resources, time, and energy go to ignoring, wishing away, or bracketing our problems, the less goes to tackling them. We need the imagination to set targets, but we also need the imagination to find out how to reach them.

Thus, this is the wrong sense of imagination to do what Andaiye calls us to do. To build things, we need an architectural imagination aimed at building a political product. This kind of imagination plays an ineliminably practical role. The blueprints are just another step in the constructive process of building a house, and building its rooms: that is, the social structures where moral principles are given practical and concrete expression: the places where fights for justice are won and lost.

There is nothing inherently good about this perspective: the colonizer, too, is an imaginer and a planner, one who sees possibilities that diverge from what is happening now – ways to reorganize society around their own aggrandizement. Our evaluation of constructive projects has to be keyed to what is imagined, who is imagining, and what relations of accountability exist in and between the rooms that we build.

Philosophy and wider history are full of examples about how we can get going, but get going we must: now, more than ever, the retreat into the ivory tower and its very local problems is a massive failure: a failure of responsibility, a failure of care, and also a failure of imagination. There are other ways to be here, other ways of pursuing philosophical questions, other questions to pursue.

Climate crisis asks us a number of questions: how will we secure ourselves and each other in an increasingly precarious world, and what are the implications for justice of different approaches? How will knowledge networks respond to our changing political environment – the actual ones that we have, not (just) the idealized ones we use to answer questions we find fascinating? What political structures relate universities and researchers to the communities within and around them, and how should they operate?

Philosophers could do more – and could do the many helpful things they are doing much differently. First and foremost, we could follow our colleagues at Rutgers’ lead and organize ourselves in solidarity with all of the colleagues who make our campuses work: faculty and graduate workers, administrative staff, health care professionals, dining and student services, and building maintenance and operations, and the broader community our campuses are located in. Senior colleagues could develop serious research programs supporting the incredible complexities of climate crisis and actions, and support junior colleagues doing the like by explicitly building such social contributions into how their work is evaluated. Philosophers who work on psychology and moral emotions likely have much to contribute to discussions of climate governance and cross-institutional collaboration. Philosophers working with or adjacent to natural and social sciences could add to systems dynamic modelling in the climate world, which practitioners claim demands a large scale, multinational collaboration with the “urgency of the space race”. Regardless of what we study, we can all contribute an environment in which we encourage each other to ask how we can contribute constructively to this work, and value such contributions.

The number of climate questions, their scale, and their complexity are daunting. But in times like these, it is always helpful that we are not starting from scratch – we would simply be making an institutional effort to join colleagues who have been doing this work for decades. Philosophy and wider history are full of examples about how we can get going in contributing to society’s practical use of the particular questions we ask: from the network of collaboration established by the dedicated organizers of Philosophers for Sustainability (who put together this very blog section!); to the applied (and translational) sections of our own field, to the storied history of intellectual contributions to movements that Andaiye and her comrades exemplify.

Now, more than ever, imagining and building new foundations should be more than an acceptable section of philosophy: it should be the point.

### Legalism DA---1NC

#### Technical discussions of antitrust law are good---they create a paradigm shift in how we address monopoly power, the 1ac tradesoff.

David Dayen 15, author of *Monopolized: Life in the Age of Corporate Power (2020)* and *Chain of Title: How Three Ordinary Americans Uncovered Wall Street's Great Foreclosure Fraud*, “Bring Back Antitrust,” The American Prospect, Vol. 26, No. 4, Fall 2015, lexis.

In 1964, historian Richard Hofstadter gave a speech at the University of California, Berkeley, titled "What Happened to the Antitrust Movement?" He wondered why anti-monopoly sentiment ceased to become the subject of public agitation. "Once the United States had an antitrust movement without antitrust prosecutions," Hofstadter said. "In our time, there have been antitrust prosecutions without an antitrust movement."

Now we have lost both the movement and the prosecutions. When we talk about banks that are too big to fail, we're talking about antitrust. When we talk about the high cost of health care, we're talking about antitrust. So many of our key domestic issues are fundamentally questions about whether we should tolerate monopolies, or dismantle them. But this formulation-a centerpiece of public debate in the last robberbaron era between the 1880s and 1910s-has all but disappeared from popular discourse.

Can anti-monopoly sentiment be revived? When New York's Working Families Party first recruited Zephyr Teachout to run for governor, she said she would only do it if she could talk about monopolies. "They polled it, and they were correct that nobody knew what I was talking about," Teachout says. But when she eventually ran an insurgent campaign against incumbent Andrew Cuomo, she was determined to talk about it anyway.

"The minute you got past the sound-bite level, people responded to the concentration of power," Teachout says. They did campaign events at places where people paid their cable bills, using the pending Comcast-Time Warner merger, eventually abandoned, as the hook. She engaged farmers in upstate New York about monopsony power, and discussed Amazon and big banks on the stump. And it resonated. After only one month of campaigning, Teachout won 35 percent of the vote, with particular strength in upstate counties where farming issues were prominent.

"The Tea Party talks to people and says, 'You're out of power because government is taking it away from you,"' Teachout says. "Far too often, Democrats say, 'You're wrong, you're not out of power.' That's dissonant with our lived experience. You're out of power ... because your priorities don't matter and JPMorgan's do."

Beyond Teachout, you can see through the haze the stirrings of a grassroots antitrust agenda. The greatest anti-monopoly victory of the modern age, the Federal Communications Commission's net-neutrality rules, owed much to a smart, tech-savvy movement that leveraged big protest platforms. Web-native activists fought for the decentralized power of the Internet, without gatekeepers collecting tolls along the way. And they made the connection to things like the Comcast-Time Warner merger, which failed amid public outcry.

"After this existential threat to the Web, you see the same groups becoming interested in the deep history of anti-monopoly laws," Teachout says. "It's kind of an exciting intellectual moment, a fusion between old-school farmers who have been complaining for 30 years and new net-neutrality dreamers."

Monopolists have long used technological advances to consolidate power, from Gilded Age tycoons leveraging control of railroads and telegraphs to Amazon using its first-mover status in e-commerce to squeeze book producers, or Google harvesting traffic to their market-leading search engine to serve ads. It's easy to translate the need for a neutral platform for websites into the same need for book sales or car ride-sharing.

The European Union, in fact, did file formal antitrust charges against Google, accusing it of forcing search engine users into its own shopping platforms, and bundling Android phones with their own apps, to prevent competitors from performing the same functions. The FTC shut down its own investigation into Google over the same concerns in 2013. But an inadvertent disclosure revealed that the agency's Bureau of Competition recommended bringing a lawsuit, arguing that Google's conduct "has resulted-and will result-in real harm to consumers and to innovation in the online search and advertising markets." The political leadership ignored the recommendation.

The next administration must show "leadership that has a certain intellectual curiosity," says Maurice Stucke, pointing to the Google case as a missed opportunity. An alteration in posture would make enforcement far more vigorous, and bringing more cases will give litigators more experience and confidence to negotiate the judicial barriers. The American Antitrust Institute plans to create a transition document for the incoming administration, as they did for the Obama transition.

But at a time of political disempowerment, teaching about the dangers of monopolies and how we have the laws on the books to fight them, and creating upward pressure to do it, offers great potential for a paradigm shift. Connecting Senator Elizabeth Warren's fight against a rigged financial system and Al Franken's fight against media concentration can spark broader political energy.

You could see this potential in Washington, D.C., where in August, the city's Public Service Commission rejected a merger between energy firms Exelon and Pepco, citing "more active participation by parties and interested persons than any other proceeding in the Commission's more than a century of operations." Activists argued a giant Exelon conglomerate would fail to devote resources to the city's clean-energy goals, connecting anti-monopolization with fighting climate change.

There are a lot of reasons for runaway monopolies: an intellectual hijacking by Chicago-school conservative economists, the over-financialization of the economy, a failure of federal antitrust enforcement. But perhaps the biggest reason is that antitrust policy has become divorced from politics, confined to specialized lawyers and mathematicians instead of citizens and activists. Without grassroots momentum, politicians and enforcement agencies can safely ignore the issue. That's the challenge for a small band of academics, think-tank fellows, and activists: to make monopolies a vital issue again, connecting with the severe economic anxiety Americans feel.

#### Only that paradigm shift can make antitrust law effective.

Kate Andrias and Benjamin I. Sachs 21, Kate Andrias is Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School. Benjamin I. Sachs is Kestnbaum Professor of Labor and Industry, Harvard Law School, “Constructing Countervailing Power: Law and Organizing in an Era of Political Inequality,” 130 Yale L.J. 546, January 2021, lexis.

[\*548] INTRODUCTION

Among the painful truths made evident by COVID-19 are the deep inequality of American society and the profound inadequacy of our social-welfare infrastructure. The nation's lack of comprehensive health care, 1Link to the text of the noteits underfunded and inefficient system of unemployment insurance, 2Link to the text of the noteand weak workplace safety and health guarantees, 3Link to the text of the notealong with nearly nonexistent paid sick leave, 4Link to the text of the notedebtor-forgiveness rules, 5Link to the text of the noteand tenant protections 6Link to the text of the noteleave poor and working-class communities--particularly communities of color--dangerously exposed to the ravages of this pandemic, both physical and economic. 7Link to the text of the noteAmerica's weak social safety net is, in turn, a product of a profound failure that has plagued American democracy for decades now: the wealthy exercising vastly disproportionate power over politics and government. 8Link to the text of the note

[\*549] Indeed, public faith in American democracy is at near-record lows, and increasing numbers of Americans report that they no longer feel confident in the health of their democratic institutions. When asked why, many say that money has too much of an influence on politics and that politicians are unresponsive to the concerns of regular Americans. 9Link to the text of the noteResearch supports these fears, showing both that wealthy individuals are spending record sums on electoral politics 10Link to the text of the noteand that elected officials are at best only weakly accountable to nonwealthy constituents. 11Link to the text of the note [\*550] As political scientist Martin Gilens has observed, "[W]hen preferences between the well-off and the poor diverge, government policy bears absolutely no relationship to the degree of support or opposition among the poor." 12Link to the text of the note

Of course, democracy does not require that policymaking always follow majority will or the median voter's preferences. But democracy, as well as the faith citizens have in their government, falters when lawmakers persistently disregard the priorities of nonwealthy citizens.

Much of the legal scholarship (and public commentary) concerned with this democracy deficit focuses on the increased flow of money into electoral politics and advocates for stemming that flow. 13Link to the text of the noteScholars writing in this vein criticize the Supreme Court's jurisprudence, exemplified by Citizens United v. FEC, that has enabled unfettered campaign spending. 14Link to the text of the noteThey offer a range of reforms designed to limit the flow of money into elections, many of which would require a change in the composition of the Supreme Court or the ratification of a constitutional amendment. 15Link to the text of the noteA related group of scholars advocates for shielding the legislative and administrative process from money's influence through, for example, lobbying restrictions and disclosure requirements. 16Link to the text of the note

[\*551] A second robust body of scholarship focuses not on insulating the political process from money but on trying to ensure equal rights of individuals to participate in the governance process through elections. These scholars criticize barriers to equal voting rights, including contemporary uses of gerrymandering and legislation that impose hurdles on individual voters' ability to exercise the franchise or minimize the effective voting power of particular constituents. 17Link to the text of the noteScholars urge both doctrinal and legislative reform that would ensure more equal rights of participation.

In the last few years, a third approach has begun to emerge in the legal scholarship. This approach begins by recognizing the difficulty--both practical and constitutional--of keeping money out of politics. It also recognizes that while equal voting and participation rights are critical to the goal of combatting political inequality, they are not enough to ensure political equality in a system where wealth functions so prominently as an independent source of political influence. Thus, this third approach moves beyond campaign finance and individual participation rights and focuses instead on what we will call countervailing power. In particular, this approach is concerned with the ability of mass-membership organizations to equalize the political voice of citizens who lack the political influence that comes from wealth. 18Link to the text of the note

The beneficial effects of countervailing, mass-membership organizations are well known to theorists and researchers of democracy. 19Link to the text of the notePut simply, such groups increase political equality by building and consolidating political power for the [\*552] nonwealthy, thus serving as counterweights to the political influence of the rich. Mass-membership organizations can serve in this capacity because, at bottom, they aggregate the political resources and political power of people who, acting as individuals, are disempowered relative to wealthy individuals and institutions. 20Link to the text of the noteMore particularly, mass-membership organizations enable pooling of politically relevant resources, including money, among individuals with fewsuch resources; they provide information to decisionmakers about ordinary citizens' views; they navigate opaque and fragmented government structures, thereby enabling citizens to monitor government behavior; and they allow citizens to hold decisionmakers accountable. And, in fact, when citizens are organized into mass-membership associations that are active in the political sphere, researchers find an exception to the general rule that policymakers are disproportionally responsive to the preferences and concerns of the wealthy. 21Link to the text of the note

Over recent decades, however, there has been a decline in broad-based, massmembership organizations of low- and middle-income Americans. 22Link to the text of the noteThis decline in countervailing organizations has exacerbated the political distortions caused by the increase in political spending by the wealthy. But the capacity for countervailing organizations to address the distorting effects of wealth raises a critical question for legal scholars: How can law facilitate the construction of countervailing organizations among the nonwealthy? Put differently, how can law facilitate political organizing among Americans whose voices are drowned out by the distorting effects of wealth? That is the question we address in this Article.

Recently, legal scholars have begun to address related topics. For example, K. Sabeel Rahman and Miriam Seifter have written about ways that participation in administrative processes can improve the organizational strength of citizen groups. Thus, Rahman argues for designing administrative processes in ways that enhance the countervailing power of ordinary citizens, 23Link to the text of the notewhile Seifter urges administrative-law scholars to pay attention to the characteristics of interest groups participating in the administrative process and to consider "looking [\*553] within interest groups," referencing the manner by which interest groups determine the views of their constituents, "to illuminate the quality and nature of participation in administrative governance." 24Link to the text of the noteTabatha Abu El-Haj has urged greater use of universal benefits and targeted philanthropy, to encourage the growth of mass-membership organizations, since both "create reasons to organize on the part of beneficiaries." 25Link to the text of the noteBoth of us have written about the countervailing role that labor organizations can play in politics. 26Link to the text of the noteAnd Daryl Levinson and one of us have written about the ways in which ordinary public policy often has the effect--and at times the intent--of mobilizing political organization around the policy. 27Link to the text of the note

Meanwhile, another group of legal scholars has highlighted the importance of social movements and their organizations in legal change, focusing on how movements shape decisionmaking by courts, legislatures, and administrative agencies. 28Link to the text of the noteIn particular, a rich literature has developed on the relationship between popular mobilization and evolving constitutional principles, 29Link to the text of the noteand on [\*554] how "cause lawyers" can best serve social movements. 30Link to the text of the noteMore recently, there has been a resurgence of scholarship that "cogenerates legal meaning alongside left social movements, their organizing, and their visions." 31Link to the text of the noteThis work builds on an older tradition of critical legal studies and critical race theory that interrogates the limits of traditional legal rights in bringing about progressive social change given the political, economic, and social conditions that systematically disadvantage poor people and people of color. 32Link to the text of the note

To date, however, no one has tackled directly the question that we pose here. 33Link to the text of the noteRather than asking how the enactment of substantive legislation or administrative-participation mechanisms might boost organizing, how social [\*555] movements can or hope to reshape law, or how a focus on traditional legal rights disables fundamental social change, we ask how law could be used explicitly and directly to enable low- and middle-income Americans to build their own socialmovement organizations for political power.

The question is particularly urgent today as the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated society's existing inequalities. Working-class communities, especially low- and middle-income people of color, have experienced hardships as a result of the disease to a far greater extent than the wealthy--from massive unemployment to dangerous working conditions, from food insecurity to rising debt and risk of eviction. 34Link to the text of the noteThe suffering wrought by the pandemic, as well as by the financial crisis of 2008, has led to an upsurge in protests by low- and middle-income Americans, particularly among workers, tenants, and debtors. 35Link to the text of the noteAt the same time, endemic violence against Black communities, including the recent killing of George Floyd, has led to widespread organizing around issues of racial justice. 36Link to the text of the noteThese movements demand that government respond to the [\*556] concerns of ordinary Americans and attempt to elicit better treatment from powerful actors. Yet, despite their promise, such movements face significant obstacles in translating their members' anger into robust and lasting political power. 37Link to the text of the noteA pressing task, therefore, is to ask how law can facilitate and protect these new and revived protest movements, helping to create durable organizations that can exercise sustained power in the political economy.

We start from the premise that the robustness of countervailing, mass-membership organizations should be understood as a problem both of and for law. The shape of civil society and organizational life is already a product of legal structures and rules. 38Link to the text of the noteAnd although law has frequently been a tool of oppression, rather than of empowerment, of poor and working-class people and movements, 39Link to the text of the notealternative legal regimes that encourage the growth of and the exercise of power by social-movement organizations of the poor and working class are possible. Indeed, for those who are committed to decreasing political inequality, alternative legal structures that encourage the growth of countervailing organizations are imperative.

In analyzing how legal and institutional reforms could facilitate a different picture of organizational and political life in the United States, we draw from the successes and failures of labor law--the area of U.S. law that most explicitly and directly creates a right to collective organization for working people--while also moving beyond that context to literature considering "how, in what forms, and under what conditions social movements become a force for social and political change." 40Link to the text of the noteWe do not attempt to adjudicate priority among factors that [\*557] contribute to successful organizing, nor do we attempt to build an exhaustive list of such factors. Instead, we consolidate factors that have two attributes: (1) they are likely to contribute to the successful building of membership organizations among poor and working-class people, and (2) their existence or development might be enabled by law.

We recognize that some factors, undoubtedly critical to successful organizing, are beyond the reach of our proposal. For example, sociologists and historians have demonstrated that several structural opportunities helped facilitate the growth of the Civil Rights movement, including the collapse of cotton; the increase in Black migration and electoral strength; and the advent of World War II and the Cold War. 41Link to the text of the noteThese kinds of objective structural conditions, exogenous to movements themselves, are frequently important to movement formation, but they cannot be directly affected by the kinds of legal reforms we suggest. Likewise, sociologists have shown that strategic leadership within organizations is critical to movement success, 42Link to the text of the notebut internal leadership dynamics are not easily affected through legal regulation. 43Link to the text of the note

Three additional principles guide our analysis. First, because small-scale, concrete victories are essential to successful organizing, and because organizing tends to be most successful among people with shared identities and existing relationships, we focus on reforms that enable organizing within particular structures of authority and resource relations. By way of examples, we consider organizing among workers, tenants, debtors, and recipients of public benefits. We pick these contexts in part because they are ones rife with exploitation and [\*558] power imbalances and populated by the relevant income groups, and in part because they are home to important organizing efforts, both historical and contemporary. 44Link to the text of the noteWe do not suggest that these are the only relevant contexts in which our suggestions might be explored, nor do we in any sense imply that broader organizational development encompassing poor and working-class people as a whole is impossible or ineffective. In fact, the context-specific organizing regimes we envision might well facilitate broader community-based and political organization. However, we leave for another day exploration of how the law might directly enable broad-based political organization--say, a political organization of all poor people or a political-party system that incentivizes grassroots participation among nonwealthy individuals. 45Link to the text of the note

Second, we focus on how law can build organization, as opposed to more amorphous configurations of insurgency. The organizations our reforms seek to facilitate are very much social-movement actors, in that they seek to change "elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society." 46Link to the text of the noteBut the goal is to encourage enduring organization that can wield sustained, [\*559] countervailing power. 47Link to the text of the noteThus, our approach rejects the idea that formal structures facilitated by law are necessarily deradicalizing and inimical to social change. 48Link to the text of the note

Finally, our focus is on how law can facilitate organizations of working-class and poor Americans--not on either of two other questions: one, how law could be designed specifically to enhance the political power of communities of color, or two, how law could encourage the formation of interest groups generally. The first question could not be more critical. Just as our government is disproportionately responsive to the wealthy, it is also disproportionately responsive to white people, 49Link to the text of the noteand the crisis of structural racism is perhaps the most acute we face as a nation. As such, a program for building political power among communities of color is just as necessary as a program for building power among workers and the poor. But it is also true that our focus on working and poor Americans ought, in practice, and in part due to the crisis of structural racism itself, to amount to a program for building power among and by communities of color. This is not the exclusive reach of our proposals, and continued attention must be paid to ensure that racial inequities do not infect the political organizing we aspire to enable. But because people of color are over-represented in the sectors of the population that we do address--low-income workers, tenants, government-benefits recipients, debtors--these communities would likely benefit from the success of our proposals. As to the second question, while a more expansive civil society may bring a host of benefits, including greater social cohesion and civic education, this Article's concern is with building organizations that can serve as a countervailing force to the extraordinary power of economic elites in our political economy. 50Link to the text of the note

[\*560] We argue that a legal regime designed to enable this kind of organizing should have several components. First, the law should grant collective rights in an explicit and direct way so as to create a "frame" that encourages organizing. Second, as importantly, though more prosaically, the law should provide for a reliable, administrable, and sustainable source of financial, informational, human, and other relevant resources. Third, the law should guarantee free spaces--both physical and digital--in which movement organization can occur, free from surveillance or control. Fourth, the law should remove barriers to participation, both by protecting all those involved from retaliation--no worker may be fired, no tenant evicted, no debtor penalized, and no welfare recipient deprived of benefits because they are active in or supportive of the movement's efforts--and by removing material obstacles that make it difficult for poor and working people to organize. Fifth, the law should provide the organizations with ways to make material change in their members' lives and should create mechanisms for the exercise of real political and economic power, for example by providing the right to "bargain" with the relevant set of private actors and by facilitating organizational participation in governmental processes. Finally, the law should enable contestation and disruption, offering protections for the right to protest and strike. 51Link to the text of the note

The particulars necessarily vary by context. For example, a law designed to generate organizing among tenants would start by affirmatively granting tenants the right to form and join tenant unions. It would grant such unions the right to access information and landlord property for organizational purposes. It would vest the organization with authority to collect dues payments through deductions from rent payments. It would mandate that landlords negotiate with tenants' organizations over rent and housing conditions. It would ensure that organizations have special rights of participation in administrative processes related to housing policy. And it would provide for the right of tenants to engage in rent strikes and protests, free from retaliation. A law designed to facilitate organizing among debtors would similarly create a collective frame, provide a mechanism for funding, protect against retaliation, mandate bargaining and [\*561] rights of participation in governance, and protect the right to protest and strike, but a debtor-organizing law might not provide for access to physical spaces, instead putting more emphasis on providing information and enabling online organizing.

Some of our proposals will generate resistance--theoretical, legal, and political. And, indeed, we concede that our approach has limitations. For example, we do not attempt to articulate the optimal level of political influence that the organizations in question ought to enjoy, nor a way of measuring when and whether they have become sufficiently strong. As Richard Pildes has written in a related context, we believe it is possible to "identify what is troublingly unfair, unequal, or wrong without a precise standard of what is optimally fair, equal, or right." 52Link to the text of the noteIn addition, the scope of our inquiry is limited to problems of economic inequality. Yet we do not mean in any way to minimize other aspects of inequality, including racial and gender discrimination and hierarchy, which are both inseparable from economic inequality and worthy of separate examination and intervention. To that end, we believe law ought to require inclusion and nondiscrimination among poor and working people's social-movement organizations. 53Link to the text of the note

Finally, we recognize both that our recommendations will not provide a panacea to the imbalance in power that characterizes our political economy and that our proposals will be difficult to enact. Indeed, although we suggest a range of possible reforms and explain how they could be achieved, the goal is to illuminate law's constitutive potential and to suggest a path for further work, not to provide a comprehensive blueprint. 54Link to the text of the noteIn short, analysis of what makes poor and working people's social-movement organizations succeed helps show that law [\*562] can make a difference--and that the absence of such law is a choice, one we believe our society cannot afford to make. 55Link to the text of the note

#### Turns case---causes excess wealth and inequality.

Katharina Pistor 21, Professor of law at Columbia law school and leading scholar and writer on corporate governance, money and finance, property rights, and comparative law and legal institutions, “The Code of Capital: How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality – Core Themes”, Accounting, Economics, and Law: A Convivium Volume 11 Issue 1, feb 12th, https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/ael-2020-0102/html

1 The Code of Capital: Core Themes

I would like to thank the editors of Convivium for putting together this special issue and for inviting me to write a reply to the critiques in this issue. My hope was to write a book about capital that would open fresh perspectives and also engage readers from different disciplinary backgrounds. Having the opportunity to engage scholars from philosophy, law, sociology and business/accounting is a wonderful reward for such an undertaking. Thanks also to the contributors who read the book and put their thoughts and their critiques in writing. In what follows, I will summarize the core themes of my book with only scant reference to their critiques, which I reserve for the reply at the end of this issue.

Capital is not a thing, but a social relation, as Marx taught us (Marx, 1974) according to Marxists, the relation between capital and labor as at the heart of this relation. Ownership over the means of production allows capitalists to extract surplus from labor, which they can feed back into the production and surplus creation process, or take out for consumption. Law figures in this story, but as part of the super-structure, not its basis. Only the “old” institutional economists, foremost among them John Commons, gave law a central role in explaining capitalism (Commons, 1924). This book owes much to their writings and to the legal realists, as it does do social theorists like Karl Polanyi who sought to understand the long arch of historical transformations by observing the details that link societies to markets, social to economic and ultimately political change (Polanyi, 1944).

Capital, I argue in my book, is indeed a social relation, but one that is organized around and mediated by the state and its coercive powers, which have been institutionalized as law. Law is often depicted as a vertical relation between a state and the subject it controls, the people and organizations that occupy its territory. For social and economic activities, there is, however, another dimension of law, namely private law. The distinction between public and private law belongs to the modern period and is more pronounced in some legal systems than in others. It reflects an increasing differentiation of governance tasks and mechanisms for ever more complex social organizations. Several contributors to this issue have criticized this book for not saying enough about public law, a point to which I will return in my reply. For now, suffice to say that the legal domain that in my view has remained largely hidden from view in the discussion of social change, has been private law. It has been naturalized and reified and the fact that it owes its power of social ordering ultimately to the state is often ignored.

Private law consists of legal arrangements that allow private parties to organize their horizontal relations while resting assured that these arrangements will (in all likelihood) be enforceable in a court of law. Private actors may trade, invest, or gamble without this assurance, but they would have to protect themselves against possible breach or interference by strangers to their transactions and the social groups within which they take place. They would have to carefully select and monitor their counterparties or middlemen, wall in their properties, hire private guards, and so forth (Kronman, 1985; Landa, 1981). To be sure, modern technologies have greatly reduced the cost of self-help. As a result, the relative importance of coercive law enforcement (and thus of states) may decline. In the book, I argue that the digital code is unlikely to replace the legal code any time soon; and moreover, that the decisions that digital coders make are not fundamentally different from legal coders. Still, while writing the book, I did not fully grasp the potential of digital coding and of data, an issue I have since taken up (Pistor, 2020a, 2020b).

Setting aside the promises and challenges of the digital code, a critical premise of my argument is that for social relations to scale beyond the size of social groups that can rely on self-monitoring, something else is needed: a powerful agent with the authority to verify the rules that can enforce promises and uphold property rights, if necessary with the help of coercive power (Hodgson, 2009; Weber, 1968). Private law enables private parties to avail themselves of the state’s coercive powers in organizing their social and economic relations well beyond tightly knit spheres of exchange, while enjoying considerable flexibility in doing so. This is key for turning simple objects, promises and ideas or knowhow (or assets) into capital, that is, into assets that create new and secure past wealth. Deciphering the role that private law plays in the making of capital is the book’s core mission.

The basic argument the book makes is fairly simple: With the right legal coding any object, promise or idea can be turned into a capital asset. The process of coding capital bestows its holders with legal attributes that greatly enhance the likelihood that they will produce and secure wealth. I identify four attributes, namely priority, durability, universality, and convertibility. Priority means that some asset holders enjoy stronger rights than others; these rights can be extended in time by protecting them against other claims, thereby lending them durability and allowing capital to grow. Holders of financial asset attain durability by way of convertibility, an option to swap privately into state issued legal tender that maintains its nominal value (Ricks, 2016), and thereby to lock in past gains. Last but not least, universality ensures that all have to yield to these legal rights, whether or not they knew about them. Coding capital then is the process of grafting priority, durability or convertibility, and universality on to different types of assets and thereby creating wealth for their holders and inequality for the rest.

Only a handful of institutions of private law are needed to turn a simple asset into capital. For priority, property and collateral law do most of the work; and for durability, trust and corporate law. Bankruptcy is in the mix, because, even though it is mandatory and as such less malleable, it sanctions priority rights that were created outside bankruptcy. Owners of assets that are in the possession of a defaulting debtor can retrieve them, and holders of collateral interests can enforce against them before any other creditors. Claimants at the end of the queue get only the leftovers. The legal modules that confer priority and durability operate by design against anybody; in contrast, contract law is a legal relationship that binds only two parties to the contract. Still, contract law occupies an important role in the coding of capital, because contractual relations enjoy legal protection against outside interference. Moreover, with the help of information technology, the costs of contracting can be reduced to a point that contractual relations can be universalized – simply by requiring millions of platform users to click “agree” and thereby sign on to the same contract that bind everybody else. To be clear, these six modules are not the only legal devices that can be used for coding capital, but they have been central for coding of capital over the past four hundred years or so. The book applies this framework to the coding of land, firms, debt, and knowhow. While land came first, the story unfolds not in chronological order. In other words, there is no explicit or implied argument about historical stages of the coding of capital.

To me, one of the most striking discoveries was the persistence and versatility of the modules of the code. Property rights, as Bernard Rudden reminds us, first emerged during the age of feudalism (Rudden, 1994). The same legal modules, property rights, collateral as well as trust law, which were used to code land are used today for coding securitized assets and complex financial derivative structures. The legal modules are not entirely static; they were adapted to changing circumstances. Property rights in land evolved from an integral part of the feudal socio-political order into a legal right held by individuals in principle irrespective of their social status. I say “in principle”, because endowment effects limited access to land and other assets long after legal restrictions had been lifted and gave the privileged landowners a head-start over everyone else. The importance of land as the primary source of wealth prior to the onset of industrialization, and indeed of capitalism, is also evident in the evolution of trust last. Well into the nineteenth century, land was the only asset that could be conveyed to a trust, with sovereign debt and shares in the English East Indian Company allowed only later. Today, virtually anything that can generate future cash flows can be thrown behind the veil of a trust thereby granting investors (the beneficiaries) privileged access to these cash flows. In addition, the fiduciary duties of trustees have been relaxed, leading one student of trust law to talk of the “stripping of the trust” (Hofri-Winogradow, 2015), and beneficiaries have turned their equitable interests against the trust into fixed income claims.

These modifications notwithstanding, I stress continuity of the legal modules over change, because their basic structure remained intact even as they were adapted to new assets and changing circumstances. Still, there might room for another book that tells the story of each module over time, and preferably, in comparative perspective. In fact, I first thought about organizing the book around the legal institutions (property, trust, corporate law etc.), rather than the assets (land, firms, debt, knowhow) they have coded as capital. It might have been a great book for legal historians, but probably would have not conveyed the power of the legal code and its impact on the creation of wealth and inequality for a broader readership. Yet, analyzing the patterns of legal change in greater detail will be an important aspect for further deepening the theoretical analysis and drawing out the implications of “The Code of Capital” for social and political theory (more on this in the reply).

Placing private law at the center of the analysis seems to disregard the rise of global capitalism. Private law is domestic law; only some aspects of private have been harmonized globally. Even the EU, which had aspired to creating a comprehensives set of common rules for a common market, eventually switched direction. In lieu of a common set of substantive rules, say for contract, corporate law, etc., member states have harmonized the rules that determine which country’s rules should apply in cross-border cases where more than one legal system is in play. In legal jargon, these are the “conflict-of-law rules” (or international private law), which are part of the domestic legal orders of every country. These rules stipulate separately for every legal domain the factors that should determine whose law applies: the location of an asset for property rights, a company’s headquarters or place of incorporation for corporate law, or simply party choice for contract law – and increasingly for other areas of the law as well.

They may look arcane or unassuming, but these rules have been instrumental for the integration of economic and financial systems globally. In the absence of a global state and a global law, conflict-of-law rules have been used to extend the reach of domestic law beyond the territorial borders of the states from which it originated. Creating a menu of legal systems for private agents to choose from when organizing their transnational relations required at least two things: Different rules with some legal systems offering greater advantages for the coding of capital than others; and the willingness of states with less desirable rules to enforce the selected rules within their territories. The first condition is easy to meet, as legal rules do in fact vary across countries and legal system. More interestingly, they do so fairly systematically, with the common law offering for the most part superior conditions than do most civil law systems. Comparing civil law and common law regimes has a long trajectory, including more recently the law and finance literature (La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer, & Vishny, 1998). I don’t add much to this debate other than suggesting that the organization of the legal profession, the role of private attorneys and courts in the legal system, has not received the attention it deserves.

The second condition, i.e. other states willing to enforce foreign law in their courts, requires a bit more explanation. Here, we have seen a shift over the past several decades towards allowing private parties to freely choose the law from among different legal systems that best suits their needs. Some states did so on their own behest; others were pushed by economic and legal integration projects, such as the European Union. Either way, the timing is conspicuous: it overlaps with the integration of financial markets globally since the late 1980s and early 1990s. Teasing out the interaction between decisions to remove capital controls, to privatize financial intermediaries and allow for the free movement of capital and changes in conflict-of-law rules certainly deserve further research.

When using the lens of the code of capital, global capitalism does not appear as some “supra-national” system that is detached from states or state law or that has diminished the role of states. Instead, global capitalism is rooted in select legal systems that have accommodated capital for centuries and that today are home to the major players in global finance, as well as the 100 top global law firms. English law has dominated international trade for centuries, with the direction of causality possible running from empire to legal dominance, but equally possible in the opposite direction. Today, English and New York state law dominate the coding of financial capital that is traded globally. These two jurisdictions are the rule makers for global capital. Most other jurisdictions will recognize and enforce the legal rights they create; they are rule takers. By recognizing and enforcing foreign law in their courts, they extend universality way beyond the territory of the country to provide the critical modules of the code.

Capital and the system to which it has given its name was not designed by anybody in a coherent fashion, but neither can it be described as the product of natural evolution. To turn a simple object, promise or idea into capital, somebody must decide, which and whose assets shall be coded as capital; others must accept the coding, even yield to it. And should the coding be challenged, someone must decide, whether a strategy should be upheld, struck down, or changed. These tasks are taken up by different agents: asset holders, lawyers, courts, regulators, and legislatures; and not just agents that all belong to the same state, but are dispersed among several. The de-centering and diffusion of state power through private law and conflict-of-law rules, the book suggests, is critical for understanding a system that is at once built from state law and difficult to constrain through collective governance mechanisms of states. This might help explain, why there is no simple reform strategy. In the book, I therefore propose a strategy of incremental change aimed at scaling back the mechanism that have contributed to the diffusion of state power and their concentration in private hands. To several critics this strategy is unsatisfactory. I don’t disagree and my own thinking has evolved since the book went to press, especially since the economic fallout from COVID-19 pandemic, which might create an opportunity for more radical change. Still, the measures I discuss in the book are in my mind and indispensable for creating the needed space for retooling state power.

## Case

### Turn---1NC

#### Calling for surrender precludes polyrhythm.

Moten, Harney, and Shukaitis 21 – Fred Moten and Stefano Harney. Interviewed by Stevphen Shukaitis (“Refusing Completion: A Conversation,” March 2021, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/116/379446/refusing-completion-a-conversation/)

So, there are some traditions that we’re in. The best way to put it is the way Baraka put it—you have to sound like something. You know, there’s writing that doesn’t sound like anything. It’s drone-ish. Rightly, Derrida teaches us not to think of writing as epiphenomenal to speech or parasitical on speech, and yet there is the kind of writing that appears to have no relation to speech whatsoever and to the way that speech is always irreducible to a single voice. We want to make sure our writing sounds like something where sounding like something is sounding like something broken or cracked or dubbed or overdubbed. And because we’re overdubbed—because, as Stefano says, we’re visitors, who are always visiting, and who are always being visited—we are always speaking names, always being spoken by them, always working in this unnaming and renaming, maybe both in but also against the grain of how poetry bears naming as a kind of power. Maybe there was no way for us not to sound like something, given the various places where we’re coming from. Maybe we can also tap into some kinda poetic force that sound bears against poetry’s nominating power. Maybe we can just hang with how folks hold something back of what they hold out to the poet’s lovingly extractive ear. We don’t know. Anyway, there’s that sense of a poetics in the writing that’s also a phonics of the writing. But then there’s this other question of rhythm that has to do with the fact that our writing is a form of correspondence. We like to think we’re involved in a kind of musical correspondence, like we’re trading fours. You know, Stefano takes four bars and I take four bars; or, probably it’s more like he takes four bars and I take forty-four. But also, there’s the problem that the normal rhythm of taking fours is predicated on proximate presence, on being there with the person with whom you’re trading. And most of the time we’re not there together in the same place and we’re not playing at the same time. There’s all these time lags and rhythmic irregularities that come into play—a sort of involuntary sync of patience. And for a while being in different places has meant being in different seasons. We’ve been learning how to negotiate that—not overcome it but actually ride it. We use the gaps and the pauses as ways to think more clearly and more effectively with one another and by way of one another and past the separation of one and another. There’s a rhythm. Definitely. But it’s an irregular rhythm. And not only irregular compared to some metronomic norm but irregular in being overpopulated. The beautiful thing about the polyrhythm is that even though it’s just the two of us, as Bill Withers and Grover Washington Jr. would say, it’s way more than that. Not only our parents, our families, our partners, and the various children in our lives, but also all these other people that we’re always working with and talking with and thinking with and reading with. There’s always a lot of sound in our head, and in our hands, too.

#### Surrender is a call for completeness, which link turns the majority of the 1AC’s discussion of debt and incompleteness.

Brady and Murillo 14 [Nicholas and John, “Black Imperative: A Forum on Solidarity in the Age of Coalition,” January 26, 2014, http://outofnowhereblog.wordpress.com/2014/01/26/black-imperative-a-forum-on-solidarity-in-the-age-of-coalition/]

“Surrender to blackness.” A grammatical imperative. Grammatical because syntactically it marks a command to or demand of a generalized addressee: “(Everyone) surrender to blackness.” Grammatical because the black flesh scarred and tattooed by these illegible hieroglyphics enunciates at the level of symbolic and ontological world orders: “Surrender to blackness” is a command at the level of the foundations of thought and being themselves; grammatical. Imperative because if there is any hope for a revolutionary praxis along any lines—race, class, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability—it must centralize, which is to say look in the face of, which is to say begin to the work of real love for, the blackness [preposition] which “an authentic upheaval might be born.”

#BlackPowerYellowPeril failed to recognize this imperative as legible, let alone heed and meet its command/demand. Created by Suey Park (@suey\_park), the hashtag sought to draw from and build upon the accomplishments of Black womyn activists on twitter and tumblr who have long mobilized to generate productive and revolutionary interjections into the world’s violently antiblack discourses (see, for example, #solidarityisforwhitewomen, and #blackmaleprivilege) through extended, communal commentary, usually in direct opposition to the censoring strictures of any kind of respectability politics. Discussions about and within the hashtag can be found here, here, here, here(though this is very hasty, a bit shortsighted, and still not doing much more than glancing at, as opposed to engaging blackness), and here. But broadly, the intentions of the hashtag are founded upon a belief in the possibility of solidarity/coalition politics between Blacks and Asians, seeking to challenge persistent “tensions” between the communities for the sake of a common struggle against ‘white supremacy.’

For those nonblack participants, the drive toward solidarity represents a purely innocent and unquestioned, unquestionable, desire. All critiques of Asian antiblackness are rendered as derailing the move toward solidarity, for they are to bring up the obvious – clearly we are all human, we make mistakes, but to continuously bring up the “mistakes” and never “move on” is to foreclose the possibility of solidarity. And what a wonderful thing the blacks of the conversation were foreclosing – this solidarity thing. What a wonderful thing others were offering to us and we simply would not take. And yet, the unthought question remains: have you truly earned the right to act in solidarity, to form solidarity, to even believe in solidarity? And what is this solidarity thing we all hold near and dear to our hearts? Have we ever experienced it or do we simply have images we have transformed into memories of a solidarity that never existed? I know Black people and Asian people have worked together in the past, but have we ever formed a solid whole? And who is to blame for the fact that we have never had solidarity? The hashtag implies that both “sides” play an equal part in the failure to form solidarity. In the face of this, confessing our sins to each other forms the moment where we can form emotional bonds: “see, you were as racist as I, and how unfortunate it is that we let old whitey come between us. Never again will whitey make us part.” This is the logic behind much of the Asian confessing – white supremacy duped us into being antiblack racists – and also fed into the backlash aimed at blacks – “stop playing oppression olympics, that’s what whitey wants.” It must be foregrounded here that antiblackness cannot be simplified as “anti-black racism” and it is a singularity with no equivalent force – “anti-Asian” racism is not the flipside of antiblackness nor is orientalism or islamophobia. Antiblackness predates white supremacy by at least 300 years (and much more than that depending on how we trace our history) and we can understand antiblackness as the general tethering of the very concept of life to the ontological and unspeakable, unthinkable force of black death. That statement is a place to begin to define antiblackness, it is not the end for this force weaves itself in infinite variety throughout all corners of the globe, forming globe into world. This is not simply about the little racist microaggressions that people listed in their tweets, this is about a global force that the world – not simply whites – bond over and form their lives inside of and through.

#### Their authors are endorsing a strategy of service, not surrender.

Moten, Harney, and Shukaitis 21 – Fred Moten and Stefano Harney. Interviewed by Stevphen Shukaitis (“Refusing Completion: A Conversation,” March 2021, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/116/379446/refusing-completion-a-conversation/)

SH: All Incomplete is also about the next town, about what we heard about the next town, about the next experiment already going on, continually as Fred says. And so, for instance, I’m very grateful to the current generation of Guyanese feminist, activist scholars such as Kamala Kempadoo and Alissa Trotz who have made more available the work of the great Guyanese feminist activist intellectual Andaiye.

We’ve been studying and teaching with Andaiye’s The Point Is to Change the World, and also with Lessons from the Damned by the Damned, the latter a collectively written book about a freedom school set up by black women in the late 1960s and early ’70s in Newark. Now, Andaiye talks about the research she did as part of Red Thread, an independent cross-racial organization of women in Guyana. She talks about how the poor and working class women who are keeping diaries on their social reproductive labor were doing research that she, Andaiye, could never do as well as them. Then, from the Damned, we hear the story of a key turning point in the freedom school. The women running the school have met some middle-class, teacher-qualified black women at a Vietnam protest and invited them back to the school. Much is gained by the encounter, but after a few weeks the women who run the school say something to the effect of, we loved them, but we had to send them away because they could not believe that we—in our position as black working-class women—were better placed to theorize this world. If we take these lessons from Andaiye and the Damned seriously, maybe we can get out of some of the metaphysical assumptions of our positions and roles. What Andaiye and the Damned are saying is that poor people, poor black and Indian and indigenous women, in these most vital instances were better researchers and better theorists than those of us who are traditionally and institutionally trained as such and rise through the “meritocracy.”

So, we have to find some other reason for doing what we are doing—cause it is not because we are the best at it—and so we have to find some other way, beyond this metaphysics of meritocracy we inhabit. And from there it becomes clear that we are not the ones to sit in judgment, and this means we can practice nothing but open admissions and open promotion in the places where we teach, whether elementary schools, universities, or art academies. And what we would do is support the primary theorists and researchers as they come through, should they wish to come through, and should they wish to stay.

And isn’t this serving the people? After all, serving the people never meant serving them breakfast. It meant being at the service of the people, because the people held what we all need, precariously, with only partial access sometimes themselves to this wealth, knowledge, and practice of how to learn about society and how to analyze it because it needs to be changed. That is why it was called a party of self-defense: to defend all this, not to imagine that the party was going to generate the wealth itself. Service becomes the answer to all the anxieties about allyship and class. And service is debt, partiality, incompleteness in action.

SS: Your use of incompleteness reminds me in certain ways of how before you talked about debt not as this crushing condition but as something that, in being unpayable, is the very principle of sociality. So debt not as IMF-backed austerity measures, but debt as all those things we owe to each other. The way you talk about incompleteness strikes me as similar in that it’s not incompleteness as a problem—like there’s something lacking in myself which is fulfilled through another person—but rather as a permanent state which is more of a blessing, or something to be preserved. It’s not something that needs to be dealt with as a problem. Is that a fair reading?

#### Uniqueness is totalizing---Brady & Murillo’s claim is a double turn with Moten since ontology frames disavow incompleteness – they fails apprehend failure in modernity and malleability of institutions, and forsake relationality for private satisfaction

Gordon 21 (Lewis R Gordon is Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Connecticut at Storrs; Honorary Professor in the Unit for Humanities at Rhodes University, South Africa, and Chairperson of the Awards Committee for the Caribbean Philosophical Association, of which he was the first president. Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization. “Thoughts on Afropessimism.” January 2021. Published by Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-367-63246-5. p 75-81//shree)

The first is that ‘‘an antiblack world’’ is not identical with ‘‘the world is antiblack.’’ My argument is that such a world is an antiblack racist project. It is not the historical achievement of such. Its limitations emerge from a basic fact. Black people and other opponents of such a project fought, and continue to fight against it. The same argument applies to the argument about social death. Such an achievement would have rendered even those authors’ and the reflections I am offering here stillborn. The basic premises of the antiblack world and social death arguments, are, then locked in performative contradictions. Yet, they have rhetorical force. This is evident through the continued growth of its proponents, literature, and forums devoted to it, in which all lay claim to stillborn status.

In Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism, I argued that there are forms of antiblack racism that are also offered under the guise of love. I was writing about whites who exoticize blacks while offering themselves as white sources of black salvation. It was a response to those who regard racism exclusively as acts of demonization. There are also racist forms of valorization. Analyzed in terms of bad faith, where one lies to oneself in an attempt to flee displeasing truths for pleasing falsehoods, exoticists romanticize blacks while affirming white normativity and themselves as principals of reality. These ironic, performative contradictions are features of all forms of racism, where one group is elevated to godlike status and another is pushed below that of human despite both claiming to be human.

Antiblack racism offers whites self-other relations (necessary for ethics) with each other but not so for groups forced in a ‘‘zone of nonbeing’’ below them. Although to be outside is not necessarily to be below, it is so in a system of hierarchy in which above is also interpreted as being within. There is asymmetry where whites and any designated racially superior group stand as others who look downward to those who are not their others or their analogs. Antiblack racism is thus not a problem of blacks being ‘‘others.’’ It’s a problem of their not-being-analogical-selves-and-not-even being-others.

Fanon, in Black Skin, White Masks (1952), reminds us that Blacks among each other live in a world of selves and others. It is in attempted relations with whites under circumstances where whites control the conditions that these problems of dehumanization and subordination occur. Reason in such contexts, as he observes, has a bad habit of walking out when Blacks enter. What are Blacks to do? As reason cannot be forced to recognize Blacks because that would be “violence,” they must ironically reason reasonably with such forms of unreasonable reason. Contradictions loom. Racism is, given these arguments, a project of imposing non-relations as the model of dealing with people designated ‘‘black.’’

In The Damend of the Earth, Fanon goes further and argues that colonialism is an attempt to impose a Manichean structure of contraries instead of a dialectical one of ongoing, human negotiation of contradictions. The former segregates the groups; the latter is produced from interaction. The police, he observes, is the primary mediator between the two models, as their role is the use of force/violence to maintain contraries instead of the human, discursive one of politics and civility requiring the elimination of separation through the interactive, ultimately intimate, dynamics of communication. Such societies draw legitimacy from Black non-existence or invisibility. Black appearance, in other words, would be a violation of those systems. Think of the continued blight of police, extra-judicial killings of blacks and Blacks in those countries. The ongoing model of fascist white rule as the daily condition of blacks is to prevent the emergency of Blacks.

An immediate observation of many postcolonies is that antiblack attitudes, practices, and institutions are not exclusively white. Black antiblack dispositions make this clear. In addition to black antiblackness taking the form of white hatred of black people, there is also the adoption of black exoticism. Where this exists, blacks simultaneously receive black love alongside black rejection of agency. Many problems follow. The absence of agency bars maturation, which would reinforce the racial logic of Blacks as in effect wards of whites. Without agency, ethics, liberation, maturation, politics, and responsibility could not be possible. This is because blacks would not actually be able to do anything outside of the sphere of white approbation and commands.

Afropessimism endorses the previous set of observations, but this agreement is supported by a hidden premise of white agency versus black and Black incapacity. They make much of Fanon’s remark that “the Black has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white.” Fanon’s rhetorical flare led many unfortunate souls to misread this remark. As he had already argued that racism is a socially produced phenomenon, his point was that those who produced it take it to be ontological. In other words, such people – in this case whites – do not take seriously that blacks have any ontological resistance to white points of view. Fanon was not arguing that blacks are ontologically beings, or even nonbeings, of that kind. If this were so, he would not have pointed out, in numerous sections of that book, black and Black experiences with each other. The whole point of the chapter in which that remark is made, “The Lived-Experience of the Black,” is to explore blacks’ and Blacks’ points of view. This is a patent rejection of ontological status while pointing to the presumed ontological status of a skewed perspective.

Proponents of Afropessimism might respond that their position on white agency and black incapacity comes from Fanon’s famous remark that though whites created le Negre – the French term for, depending on the context, “negro,” “nigger,” and “black” – it was les Negres who created Negritude. Whites clearly did not create Afropessimism, which Black liberationists should, in agreement celebrate. We should avoid the fallacy, however, of confusing source with outcome. History is not short of bad ideas from good or well-intentioned people. If intrinsically good, each person of African descent would become ethically and epistemologically a switching of the Manichean contraries, which means only changing players instead of the racist game. We come, then, to the crux of the matter. If the goal of Afropessimism is Afropessimism, its achievement would be attitudinal and, in the language of old, stoic – in short, a symptom of antiblack society.

At this point, there are several observations that follow. The first is a diagnosis of the implications of Afropessimism as symptom. The second examines the epistemological implications of Afropessimism. The third is whether a disposition counts as a political act and, if so, is it sufficient for its avowed aims. There are more, but for the sake of brevity, I’ll simply focus on these.

An ironic dimension of pessimism is that it is the other side of optimism. Oddly enough, both are connected to nihilism, which is, as Nietzsche showed, a decline of values during periods of social decay. It emerges when people no longer want to be responsible for their actions. The same problem surfaces in movements. When one such as the Black Liberation movement is suffering from decay, nihilism is symptomatic. Familiar tropes follow. Optimists expect intervention from beyond. Pessimists declare relief is not forthcoming. Neither takes responsibility for what is valued. The valuing is what leads to the second, epistemic point. The presumption that what is at stake is what can be known to determine what can be done is the problem. If such knowledge were possible, the debate would be about who is reading the evidence correctly. Such judgment would be a priori – that is, prior to events actually unfolding. The future, unlike transcendental conditions such as language, signs, and reality, is ex post facto; ot is yet to come. Facing the future, the question isn’t what will be or how do we know what will be but instead the realization that whatever is done will be that on which the future will depend. Rejecting optimism and pessimism, there is a supervening alternative, as we have seen throughout the reflections offered throughout this book – namely, political commitment.

The appeal to political commitment is not only in stream with what French existentialists call l’intellectuel engage´ (committed intellectual) but also reaches back through the history and existential situation of enslaved, racialized ancestors. Many were, in truth, an existential paradox: commitment to action without guarantees. The slave revolts, micro and macro acts of resistance, escapes, and returns help others do the same, the cultivated instability of plantations and other forms of enslavement, and countless other actions, were waged against a gauntlet of forces designed to eliminate any hope of success. The claim of colonialists and enslavers was that the future belonged to them, not to the enslaved and the indigenous. Such people were, in colonial eyes, incapable of ontological resistance. A result of more than 500 years of conquest and 300 years of enslavement was also a (white) rewriting of history in which African and First Nations’ agency was, at least at the level of scholarship, practically erased. Yet there was resistance even in that realm, as Africana and First Nation intellectual history and scholarship attest; what, after all, are Africana, Black, and Indigenous Studies? What, after all, are those many sites of intellectual production and activism outside of hegemonic academies? Such actions set the course for different kinds of struggle today.

Such reflections occasion meditations on the concept of failure. Afropessimism, the existential critique suggests, suffers from a failure to in their analysis of failure. Consider Fanon’s notion of constructive failure, where what doesn’t initially work transforms conditions for something new to emerge. To understand this argument, one must rethink the philosophical anthropology at the heart of a specific line of Euromodern thought on what it means to be human. Atomistic and individual-substance-based, this model, articulated by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and many others, is of a non-relational being that thinks, acts, and moves along a course in which continued movement depends on not colliding with others. Under that model, the human being is a thing that enters a system that facilitates or obstructs its movement. Under this model, the human being is actually a being. An alternative model, shared by many groups across southern Africa, Asia, South America, and even parts of Continental Europe, is a relational version of the human being as part of a larger system of meaning. Actions, from that perspective, are not about whether ‘‘I’’ succeed but instead about ‘‘our’’ unending story across time. Under this model, no human being is a being simpliciter or being-in-her-or-himself-or-themselves. As relational, it means that each human being is a constant negotiation of ongoing efforts to build relationships with others, which means no one actually enters a situation without establishing new situations of action and meaning. Instead of entering a game, their participation requires a different kind of project – especially where the ‘‘game’’ was premised on their exclusion. Thus, where the system or game repels initial participation, such repulsion is a shift in the grammar of how the system functions, especially its dependence on obsequious subjects. Shifted and shifting energy affords emergence of alternatives. Participation, understood in these terms, is never in games but acts of changing them.

Abstract as this sounds, it has much historical support. For example, Evelyn Simien, in her insightful political study Historic Firsts, examines the new set of relations established by Shirley Chisholm’s and Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaigns. There would have been no President Barack Obama without such important predecessors affecting the demographics of voter participation. Simien intentionally focused on the most mainstream example of political life to illustrate this point. Although no exemplar of radicalism, Obama’s ‘‘success’’ emerged from Chisholm and Jackson’s (and many others’) so-called ‘‘failure.” Despite the appalling reactionary response of a right-wing majority in the 114th Congress during the second term of Obama’s presidency and the election of Donald Trump, whose obsession with erasing Obama’s legacy exemplified a form of psychoanalytical little man’s trauma, the historic fact remains that Obama took the helm of a mismanaged executive branch and gave it a level of dignity and intelligence matched by few of its white exemplars. His successors claim for a restored greatness only reveals the joke that is, in fact, any project on which the term “supremacy” is built: the naked racism and mediocrity that followed – there is an amusing photograph of a Klansman holding up a sign declaring his race’s “superior jeans!” – reveal the folly and terror of white megalomania. Beyond presidential electoral politics, there are numerous examples of how prior, radical so-called ‘‘failures’’ transformed relationships that facilitated other kinds of outcome. The trail goes back to the Haitian Revolution, which offered a vision of Black sovereignty that garnered the full force of Euromodern colonial racial alliances to stall, and back to every act of resistance from Nat Turner’s Rebellion in the USA, Sharpe’s in Jamaica, or Tula’s in Curacao and so many other efforts for social transformation to come.

In existential terms, then, many ancestors of the African diaspora embodied what Søren Kierkegaard (1983) calls an existential paradox. All the evidence around them suggested failure and the futility of hope. They first had to make a movement of infinite resignation – that is, resigning themselves to their situation. Yet they must simultaneously act against that situation. Kierkegaard, as we have seen called this seemingly contradictory phenomenon ‘‘faith,’’ but that concept relates more to a relationship with a transcendent, absolute being, which could only be established by a ‘‘leap,’’ as there are no mediations or bridge to the Absolute whose distant is, as Kierkegaard put it, absolutely absolute. Ironically, if the Afropessimist’s argument rejects transcendental intervention and focused on committed political action, of taking responsibility for a future that offers no guarantees, then the movement from infinite resignation becomes existential political action.

At this point, the crucial meditation would be on politics and political action. An attitude of infinite resignation to the world without the leap of committed action would simply be pessimistic or nihilistic. Similarly, an attitude of hope or optimism about the future would lack infinite resignation. We see here the underlying failure of the two approaches. Yet ironically, there is a form of failure at failing in the pessimistic turn versus the optimistic one, since if focused exclusively on resignation as the goal, then the ‘‘act’’ of resignation would have been achieved, which, paradoxically, would be a success; it would be a successful failing of failure. For politics to emerge, however, there are two missing elements in inward pessimistic resignation to consider.

The first is that politics is a social phenomenon, which means it requires the expanding options of a social world. It must transcend the self. Turning away from the social world, though a statement about politics, is not, however, in and of itself political. As we have seen, The ancients from whom much western political theory or philosophy claimed affinity had a disparaging term for individuals who resigned themselves from political life: idiotes, a private person, one not concerned with public affairs, in a word – an idiot. I mention western political theory because that is the hegemonic intellectual context of Afropessimism; I have not come across Afropessimistic writings on thought outside of that framework. We do not have to end our etymological journey in ancient Greek. Recall that extending our linguistic archaeology back a few thousand years we could examine the Middle Kingdom Egyptian word idi (deaf). The presumption, later taken on by the ancient Athenians and other Greek-speaking peoples, was that a lack of hearing entailed isolation, at least in terms of audio speech. The contemporary inward resignation of seeking a form of purity from the loathsome historical reality of racial oppression, in this reading, retreats ultimately into a form of moralism (private, normative satisfaction) instead of public responsibility born of and borne by action. The nonbeing to which Afropessimist refer is also a form of inaudibility.

The second is the importance of power. Politics makes no sense without it. As we have sene throughout our earlier reflections of power, Eurocentric etymology points to the Latin word potis as its source, from which came the word ‘‘potent’’ as in an omnipotent god. If we again look back further, we will notice the Middle Kingdom (2000 BCE–1700 BCE) KMT/ Egyptian word pHty, which refers to godlike strength. Yet for those ancient Northeast Africans, even the gods’ abilities came from a source: In the Coffin Texts, HqAw or heka activates the ka (sometimes translated as soul, spirit, or, in a word ‘‘magic’’), which makes reality. All this amounts to a straightforward thesis on power as the ability with the means to make things happen.

There is an alchemical quality to power. The human world, premised on symbolic communication, brings many forms of meaning into being, and those new meanings afford relationships that build institutions through a world of culture, a phenomenon that Freud (1989) rightly described as ‘‘a prosthetic god.’’ It is godlike because it addresses what humanity historically sought from the gods – protection from the elements, physical maledictions, and social forms of misery. Such power clearly can be abused. It is where those enabling capacities (empowerment) are pushed to the wayside in the hording of social resources into propping up some people as gods that the legitimating practices of cultural cum political institutions decline and stimulate pessimism and nihilism. The institutions in Abya Yala and in Northern countries, such as the United States and Canada, very rarely attempt to establish positive relations to blacks, and Blacks the subtext of Afropessimism and this entire meditation.

### Ballot Bad---1NC

#### Ballots as validating are bad.

Karlberg 3 (Michael, Assistant Professor of Communication at Western Washington University, PEACE & CHANGE, v28, n3, July, p. 339-41)

Granted, social activists do "win" occasional “battles” in these adversarial arenas, but the root causes of their concerns largely remain unaddressed and the larger "wars" arguably are not going well. Consider the case of environmental activism. Countless environmental protests, lobbies, and lawsuits mounted in recent generations throughout the Western world. Many small victories have been won. Yet environmental degradation continues to accelerate at a rate that far outpaces the highly circumscribed advances made in these limited battles the most committed environmentalists acknowledge things are not going well. In addition, adversarial strategies of social change embody assumptions that have internal consequences for social movements, such as internal factionalization. For instance, virtually all of the social projects of the "left” throughout the 20th century have suffered from recurrent internal factionalization. The opening decades of the century were marked by political infighting among vanguard communist revolutionaries. The middle decades of the century were marked by theoretical disputes among leftist intellectuals. The century's closing decades have been marked by the fracturing of the a new left\*\* under the centrifugal pressures of identity politics. Underlying this pattern of infighting and factionalization is the tendency to interpret differences—of class, race, gender, perspective, or strategy—as sources of antagonism and conflict. In this regard, the political "left" and "right" both define themselves in terms at a common adversary—the "other"—defined by political differences. Not surprisingly, advocates of both the left and right frequently invoke the need for internal unity in order to prevail over their adversaries on the other side of the alleged political spectrum. However, because the terms left and right axe both artificial and reified categories that do not reflect the complexity of actual social relations, values, or beliefs, there is no way to achieve lasting unity within either camp because there are no actual boundaries between them. In reality, social relations, values, and beliefs are infinitely complex and variable. Yet once an adversarial posture is adopted by assuming that differences are sources at conflict, initial distinctions between the left and the right inevitably are followed by subsequent distinctions within the left and the right. Once this centrifugal process is set in motion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to restrain. For all of these reasons, adversarial strategies have reached a point of diminishing returns even if such strategies were necessary and viable in the past when human populations were less socially and ecologically interdependent those conditions no longer exist. Our reproductive and technological success as a species has led to conditions of unprecedented interdependence, and no group on the planet is isolated any longer. Under these new conditions, new strategies not only are possible but are essential. Humanity has become a single interdependent social body. In order to meet the complex social and environmental challenges now facng us, we must learn to coordinate our collective actions. Yet a body cannot coordinate its actions as long as its "left" and is "right," or its "north" and its "south," or its "east" and its "west" are locked in adversarial relationships.

### AT: “Surrender to Blackness”

#### Ballot doesn’t remedy – surrender misapprehends racism as interpersonal rather than structural, white altruism replicates hierarchies

Myerson 18, Jesse A. an Indiana-based community organizer with Hoosier Action [“White Anti-Racism Must Be Based in Solidarity, Not Altruism,” The Nation, February 5 18, <https://www.thenation.com/article/white-anti-racism-must-be-based-in-solidarity-not-altruism/>]

The dominant liberal conception of white anti-racism emphasizes altruism. In this mode, white people must set aside our own self-interest in order to extend kindness to those less fortunate. Humanitarian assistance is rewarded, and those who practice it are hailed for their self-sacrifice and generosity.

White people are encouraged to defer, shrink, and assist. It is not our fight, the white-altruism mode says, so we must strive to decenter ourselves and support black people’s “advancement” as peripheral allies, doing what kindnesses we can to compensate them for the privileges we enjoy. We must reliably articulate non-racist positions using suitably non-racist terminology, correct white people who fail to do these, and under no circumstances use racist language out in the open.

Not that people shouldn’t interrupt racist personal acts or respect the expertise of people of color regarding how racism plays out in their lives and communities, but that alone does not constitute a strategy. At best, these interruptions and this deference are a woefully inadequate response to systemic racism. At worst, white altruism is a recipe for disaster. Not only does it treat racism as personal flaw rather than a system of power; it also insists that white people have an obligation to help black communities “advance,” a construction that is vulnerable to white people’s misconceptions of what constitutes “advancement.” Without being anchored to a goal of redistributing power, altruism is often carried along by the prevailing currents of racist capitalism.

#### Discourse of “surrender” is jurispathic – war metaphors preclude “intimacies of entangled relationality” in favor of carceral condemnation

Foucault & Rabinow 84 [Michel Foucault, Co-Founder of the Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons. “Polemics, Politics and Problematizations: An interview” conducted by Paul Rabinow in May 1984. In “Essential Works of Foucault Vol. 1.” The New Press, 1998. <https://foucault.info/documents/foucault.interview/> //shree]. Gendered language modified in [brackets]

In the serious play of questions and answers, in the work of reciprocal elucidation, the rights of each person are in some sense immanent in the discussion. They depend only on the dialogue situation. The person asking the questions is merely exercising the right that has been given him: to remain unconvinced, to perceive a contradiction, to require more information, to emphasize different postulates, to point out faulty reasoning, and so on. As for the person answering the questions, he too exercises a right that does not go beyond the discussion itself; by the logic of his own discourse, he is tied to what he has said earlier, and by the acceptance of dialogue he is tied to the questioning of other. Questions and answers depend on a game — a game that is at once pleasant and difﬁcult — in which each of the two partners takes pains to use only the rights given him by the other and by the accepted form of dialogue.

The polemicist, on the other hand, proceeds encased in privileges that he possesses in advance and will never agree to question. On principle, he possesses rights authorizing him to wage war and making that struggle a just undertaking; the person he [they] confronts is not a partner in search for the truth but an adversary, an enemy who is wrong, who is armful, and whose very existence constitutes a threat. For him [them], then the game consists not of recognizing this person as a subject having the right to speak but of abolishing him as interlocutor, from any possible dialogue; and his ﬁnal objective will be not to come as close as possible to a difﬁcult truth but to bring about the triumph of the just cause he [they] has been manifestly upholding from the beginning. The polemicist relies on a legitimacy that his [their] adversary is by deﬁnition denied.

Perhaps, someday, a long history will have to be written of polemics, polemics as a parasitic ﬁgure on discussion and an obstacle to the search for the truth. Very schematically, it seems to me that today we can recognize the presence in polemics of three models: the religious model, the judiciary model, and the political model. As in heresiology, polemics sets itself the task of determining the intangible point of dogma, the fundamental and necessary principle that the adversary has neglected, ignored or transgressed; and it denounces this negligence as a moral failing; at the root of the error, it ﬁnds passion, desire, interest, a whole series of weaknesses and inadmissible attachments that establish it as culpable. As in judiciary practice, polemics allows for no possibility of an equal discussion: it examines a case; it isn’t dealing with an interlocutor, it is processing a suspect; it collects the proofs of his guilt, designates the infraction he has committed, and pronounces the verdict and sentences him. In any case, what we have here is not on the order of a shared investigation; the polemicist tells the truth in the form of his judgment and by virtue of the authority he has conferred on himself. But it is the political model that is the most powerful today. Polemics deﬁnes alliances, recruits partisans, unites interests or opinions, represents a party; it establishes the other as an enemy, an upholder of opposed interests against which one must ﬁght until the moment this enemy is defeated and either surrenders or disappears.

Of course, the reactivation, in polemics, of these political, judiciary, or religious practices is nothing more than theater. One gesticulates: anathemas, excommunications, condemnations, battles, victories, and defeats are no more than ways of speaking, after all. And yet, in the order of discourse, they are also ways of acting which are not without consequence. There are the sterilizing effects. Has anyone ever seen a new idea come out of a polemic? And how could it be otherwise, given that here the interlocutors are incited not to advance, not to take more and more risks in what they say, but to fall back continually on the rights that they claim, on their legitimacy, which they must defend, and on the afﬁrmation of their innocence? There is something even more serious here: in this comedy, one mimics war, battles, annihilations, or unconditional surrenders, putting forward as much of one’s killer instinct as possible. But it is really dangerous to make anyone believe that he can gain access to the truth by such paths and thus to validate, even if in a merely symbolic form, the real political practices that could be warranted by it. Let us imagine, for a moment, that a magic wand is waved and one of the two adversaries in a polemic is given the ability to exercise all the power he likes over the other. One doesn’t even have to imagine it: one has only to look at what happened during the debate in the USSR over linguistics or genetics not long ago. Were these merely aberrant deviations from what was supposed to be the correct discussion? Not at all — they were the real consequences of a polemic attitude whose effects ordinarily remain suspended.

#### Calls for surrender lead to elite capture.

Táíwò, 20—assistant professor of philosophy at Georgetown University (Olúfémi, “Being-in-the-Room Privilege: Elite Capture and Epistemic Deference,” The Philosopher, vol. 108, no. 4, dml)

I think it’s less about the core ideas and more about the prevailing norms that convert them into practice. The call to “listen to the most affected” or “centre the most marginalized” is ubiquitous in many academic and activist circles. But it’s never sat well with me. In my experience, when people say they need to “listen to the most affected”, it isn’t because they intend to set up Skype calls to refugee camps or to collaborate with houseless people. Instead, it has more often meant handing conversational authority and attentional goods to those who most snugly fit into the social categories associated with these ills – regardless of what they actually do or do not know, or what they have or have not personally experienced. In the case of my conversation with Helen, my racial category tied me more “authentically” to an experience that neither of us had had. She was called to defer to me by the rules of the game as we understood it. Even where stakes are high – where potential researchers are discussing how to understand a social phenomenon, where activists are deciding what to target – these rules often prevail.

The trap wasn’t that standpoint epistemology was affecting the conversation, but how. Broadly, the norms of putting standpoint epistemology into practice call for practices of deference: giving offerings, passing the mic, believing. These are good ideas in many cases, and the norms that ask us to be ready to do them stem from admirable motivations: a desire to increase the social power of marginalized people identified as sources of knowledge and rightful targets of deferential behaviour. But deferring in this way as a rule or default political orientation can actually work counter to marginalized groups’ interests, especially in elite spaces.

Some rooms have outsize power and influence: the Situation Room, the newsroom, the bargaining table, the conference room. Being in these rooms means being in a position to affect institutions and broader social dynamics by way of deciding what one is to say and do. Access to these rooms is itself a kind of social advantage, and one often gained through some prior social advantage. From a societal standpoint, the “most affected” by the social injustices we associate with politically important identities like gender, class, race, and nationality are disproportionately likely to be incarcerated, underemployed, or part of the 44 percent of the world’s population without internet access – and thus both left out of the rooms of power and largely ignored by the people in the rooms of power. Individuals who make it past the various social selection pressures that filter out those social identities associated with these negative outcomes are most likely to be in the room. That is, they are most likely to be in the room precisely because of ways in which they are systematically different from (and thus potentially unrepresentative of) the very people they are then asked to represent in the room.

I suspected that Helen’s offer was a trap. She was not the one who set it, but it threatened to ensnare us both all the same. Broader cultural norms – the sort set in motion by prefacing statements with “As a Black man…” – cued up a set of standpoint-respecting practices that many of us know consciously or unconsciously by rote. However, the forms of deference that often follow are ultimately self-undermining and only reliably serve “elite capture”: the control over political agendas and resources by a group’s most advantaged people. If we want to use standpoint epistemology to challenge unjust power arrangements, it’s hard to imagine how we could do worse.

To say what’s wrong with the popular, deferential applications of standpoint epistemology, we need to understand what makes it popular. A number of cynical answers present themselves: some (especially the more socially advantaged) don’t genuinely want social change – they just want the appearance of it. Alternatively, deference to figures from oppressed communities is a performance that sanitizes, apologizes for, or simply distracts from the fact that the deferrer has enough “in the room” privilege for their “lifting up” of a perspective to be of consequence.

I suspect there is some truth to these views, but I am unsatisfied. Many of the people who support and enact these deferential norms are rather like Helen: motivated by the right reasons, but trusting people they share such rooms with to help them find the proper practical expression of their joint moral commitments. We don’t need to attribute bad faith to all or even most of those who interpret standpoint epistemology deferentially to explain the phenomenon, and it’s not even clear it would help. Bad “roommates” aren’t the problem for the same reason that Helen being a good roommate wasn’t the solution: the problem emerges from how the rooms themselves are constructed and managed.

To return to the initial example with Helen, the issue wasn’t merely that I hadn’t grown up in the kind of low-income, redlined community she was imagining. The epistemic situation was much worse than this. Many of the facts about me that made my life chances different from those of the people she was imagining were the very same facts that made me likely to be offered things on their behalf. If I had grown up in such a community, we probably wouldn’t have been on the phone together.

Many aspects of our social system serve as filtering mechanisms, determining which interactions happen and between whom, and thus which social patterns people are in a position to observe. For the majority of the 20th century, the U.S. quota system of immigration made legal immigration with a path to citizenship almost exclusively available to Europeans (earning Hitler’s regard as the obvious “leader in developing explicitly racist policies of nationality and immigration”). But the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act opened up immigration possibilities, with a preference for “skilled labour”.

My parents’ qualification as skilled labourers does much to explain their entry into the country and the subsequent class advantages and monetary resources (such as wealth) that I was born into. We are not atypical: the Nigerian-American population is one of the country’s most successful immigrant populations (what no one mentions, of course, is that the 112,000 or so Nigerian-Americans with advanced degrees is utterly dwarfed by the 82 million Nigerians who live on less than a dollar a day, or how the former fact intersects with the latter). The selectivity of immigration law helps explain the rates of educational attainment of the Nigerian diasporic community that raised me, which in turn helps explain my entry into the exclusive Advanced Placement and Honours classes in high school, which in turn helps explain my access to higher education...and so on, and so on.

It is easy, then, to see how this deferential form of standpoint epistemology contributes to elite capture at scale. The rooms of power and influence are at the end of causal chains that have selection effects. As you get higher and higher forms of education, social experiences narrow – some students are pipelined to PhDs and others to prisons. Deferential ways of dealing with identity can inherit the distortions caused by these selection processes.

​But it’s equally easy to see locally – in this room, in this academic literature or field, in this conversation – why this deference seems to make sense. It is often an improvement on the epistemic procedure that preceded it: the person deferred to may well be better epistemically positioned than the others in the room. It may well be the best we can do while holding fixed most of the facts about the rooms themselves: what power resides in them, who is admitted.

But these are the last facts we should want to hold fixed. Doing better than the epistemic norms we’ve inherited from a history of explicit global apartheid is an awfully low bar to set. The facts that explain who ends up in which room shape our world much more powerfully than the squabbles for comparative prestige between people who have already made it into the rooms. And when the conversation is about social justice, the mechanisms of the social system that determine who gets into which room often just are the parts of society we aim to address. For example, the fact that incarcerated people cannot participate in academic discussions about freedom that physically take place on campus is intimately related to the fact that they are locked in cages.

Deference epistemology marks itself as a solution to an epistemic and political problem. But not only does it fail to solve these problems, it adds new ones. One might think questions of justice ought to be primarily concerned with fixing disparities around health care, working conditions, and basic material and interpersonal security. Yet conversations about justice have come to be shaped by people who have ever more specific practical advice about fixing the distribution of attention and conversational power. Deference practices that serve attention-focused campaigns (e.g. we’ve read too many white men, let’s now read some people of colour) can fail on their own highly questionable terms: attention to spokespeople from marginalized groups could, for example, direct attention away from the need to change the social system that marginalizes them.

Elites from marginalized groups can benefit from this arrangement in ways that are compatible with social progress. But treating group elites’ interests as necessarily or even presumptively aligned with full group interests involves a political naiveté we cannot afford. Such treatment of elite interests functions as a racial Reaganomics: a strategy reliant on fantasies about the exchange rate between the attention economy and the material economy.

Perhaps the lucky few who get jobs finding the most culturally authentic and cosmetically radical description of the continuing carnage are really winning one for the culture. Then, after we in the chattering class get the clout we deserve and secure the bag, its contents will eventually trickle down to the workers who clean up after our conferences, to slums of the Global South’s megacities, to its countryside.

But probably not.

A fuller and fairer assessment of what is going on with deference and standpoint epistemology would go beyond technical argument, and contend with the emotional appeals of this strategy of deference. Those in powerful rooms may be “elites” relative to the larger group they represent, but this guarantees nothing about how they are treated in the rooms they are in. After all, a person privileged in an absolute sense (a person belonging to, say, the half of the world that has secure access to “basic needs”) may nevertheless feel themselves to be consistently on the low end of the power dynamics they actually experience. Deference epistemology responds to real, morally weighty experiences of being put down, ignored, sidelined, or silenced. It thus has an important non-epistemic appeal to members of stigmatized or marginalized groups: it intervenes directly in morally consequential practices of giving attention and respect.

The social dynamics we experience have an outsize role in developing and refining our political subjectivity, and our sense of ourselves. But this very strength of standpoint epistemology – its recognition of the importance of perspective – becomes its weakness when combined with deferential practical norms. Emphasis on the ways we are marginalized often matches the world as we have experienced it. But, from a structural perspective, the rooms we never needed to enter (and the explanations of why we can avoid these rooms) might have more to teach us about the world and our place in it. If so, the deferential approach to standpoint epistemology actually prevents “centring” or even hearing from the most marginalized; it focuses us on the interaction of the rooms we occupy, rather than calling us to account for the interactions we don’t experience. This fact about who is in the room, combined with the fact that speaking for others generates its own set of important problems (particularly when they are not there to advocate for themselves), eliminates pressures that might otherwise trouble the centrality of our own suffering – and of the suffering of the marginalized people that do happen to make it into rooms with us.

The dangers with this feature of deference politics are grave, as are the risks for those outside of the most powerful rooms. For those who are deferred to, it can supercharge group-undermining norms. In Conflict is Not Abuse, Sarah Schulman makes a provocative observation about the psychological effects of both trauma and felt superiority: while these often come about for different reasons and have very different moral statuses, they result in similar behavioural patterns. Chief among these are misrepresenting the stakes of conflict (often by overstating harm) or representing others’ independence as a hostile threat (such as failures to “centre” the right topics or people). These behaviours, whatever their causal history, have corrosive effects on individuals who perform them as well as the groups around them, especially when a community’s norms magnify or multiply these behaviours rather than constraining or metabolizing them.

For those who defer, the habit can supercharge moral cowardice. The norms provide social cover for the abdication of responsibility: it displaces onto individual heroes, a hero class, or a mythicized past the work that is ours to do now in the present. Their perspective may be clearer on this or that specific matter, but their overall point of view isn’t any less particular or constrained by history than ours. More importantly, deference places the accountability that is all of ours to bear onto select people – and, more often than not, a hyper-sanitized and thoroughly fictional caricature of them.

The same tactics of deference that insulate us from criticism also insulate us from connection and transformation. They prevent us from engaging empathetically and authentically with the struggles of other people – prerequisites of coalitional politics. As identities become more and more fine-grained and disagreements sharper, we come to realize that “coalitional politics” (understood as struggle across difference) is, simply, politics. Thus, the deferential orientation, like that fragmentation of political collectivity it enables, is ultimately anti-political.

Deference rather than interdependence may soothe short-term psychological wounds. But it does so at a steep cost: it can undermine the epistemic goals that motivate the project, and it entrenches a politics unbefitting of anyone fighting for freedom rather than for privilege, for collective liberation rather than mere parochial advantage.

How would a constructive approach to putting standpoint epistemology into practice differ from a deferential approach? A constructive approach would focus on the pursuit of specific goals or end results rather than avoiding “complicity” in injustice or adhering to moral principles. It would be concerned primarily with building institutions and cultivating practices of information-gathering rather than helping. It would focus on accountability rather than conformity. It would calibrate itself directly to the task of redistributing social resources and power rather than to intermediary goals cashed out in terms of pedestals or symbolism. It would focus on building and rebuilding rooms, not regulating traffic within and between them – it would be a world-making project: aimed at building and rebuilding actual structures of social connection and movement, rather than mere critique of the ones we already have.

The water crisis in Flint, Michigan presents a clear example of both the possibilities and limitations of refining our epistemic politics in this way. Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), a government body tasked with the support of “healthy communities”, with a team of fifty trained scientists at its disposal, was complicit in covering up the scale and gravity of the public health crisis from the beginning of the crisis in 2014 until it garnered national attention in 2015.

The MDEQ, speaking from a position of epistemic and political authority, defended the status quo in Flint. They claimed that “Flint water is safe to drink”, and were cited in Flint Mayor Dayne Walling’s statement aiming to “dispel myths and promote the truth about the Flint River” during the April 2014 transition to the Flint River water source. That transition was spearheaded under the tenure of the city’s emergency manager Darnell Earley (an African-American, like many of the city residents he helped to poison). After the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) circulated a leaked internal memo from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in July of 2014 expressing concern about lead in Flint water, the MDEQ produced a doctored report that put the overall measure of lead levels within federally mandated levels by mysteriously failing to count two contaminated samples.

The reaction from residents was immediate. The month after the switch in water source, residents reported that their tap water was discoloured and gave off an alarming odour. They didn’t need their oppression to be “celebrated”, “centred”, or narrated in the newest academic parlance. They didn’t need someone to understand what it felt like to be poisoned. What they needed was the lead out of their water. So they got to work.

The first step was to develop epistemic authority. To achieve this they built a new room: one that put Flint residents and activists in active collaboration with scientists who had the laboratories that could run the relevant tests and prove the MDEQ’s report to be fraudulent. Flint residents’ outcry recruited scientists to their cause and led a “citizen science” campaign, further raising the alarm about the water quality and distributing sample kits to neighbours to submit for testing. In this stage, the alliance of residents and scientists won, and the poisoning of the children of Flint emerged as a national scandal.

But this was not enough. The second step – cleaning the water – required more than state acknowledgement: it required apportioning labour and resources to fix the water and address the continuing health concerns. What Flint residents received, initially, was a mix of platitudes and mockery from the ruling elite (some of this personally committed by a President that shared a racial identity with many of them). This year, however, it looks as though the tireless activism of Flint residents and their expanding list of teammates has won additional and more meaningful victories: the ongoing campaign is pushing the replacements of the problematic service lines to their final stage and is forcing the state of Michigan to agree to a settlement of $600 million for affected families.

This outcome is in no way a wholesale victory: not only will attorney fees cut a substantial portion of payouts, but the settlement cannot undo the damage that was caused to the residents. A constructive epistemology cannot guarantee full victory over an oppressive system by itself. No epistemic orientation can by itself undo the various power asymmetries between the people and the imperial state system. But it can help make the game a little more competitive – and deference epistemology isn’t even playing.

The biggest threats to social justice attention and informational economies are not the absence of yet more jargon to describe, ever more precisely or incisively, the epistemic, attentional, or interpersonal afflictions of the disempowered. The biggest threats are the erosion of the practical and material bases for popular power over knowledge production and distribution, particularly that which could aid effective political action and constrain or eliminate predation by elites. The capture and corruption of these bases by well-positioned elites, especially tech corporations, goes on unabated and largely unchallenged, including: the corporate monopolization of local news, the ongoing destruction and looting of the journalistic profession, the interference of corporations and governments in key democratic processes, and the domination of elite interests in the production of knowledge by research universities and the circulation of the output of these distorted processes by established media organizations.

Confronting these threats requires leaving some rooms – and building new ones.

The constructive approach to standpoint epistemology is demanding. It asks that we swim upstream: to be accountable and responsive to people who aren’t yet in the room, to build the kinds of rooms we could sit in together, rather than merely judiciously navigating the rooms history has built for us. But this weighty demand is par for the course when it comes to the politics of knowledge: the American philosopher Sandra Harding famously pointed out that standpoint epistemology, properly understood, demands more rigour from science and knowledge production processes generally, not less.

But one important topic stands unaddressed. The deferential approach to standpoint epistemology often comes packaged with concern and attention to the importance of lived experience. Among these, traumatic experiences are especially foregrounded.

At this juncture, scholarly analysis and argument fail me. The remainder of what I have to say skews more towards conviction than contention. But the life of books has taught me that conviction has just as much to teach, however differently posed or processed, and so I press on.

I take concerns about trauma especially seriously. I grew up in the United States, a nation structured by settler colonialism, racial slavery, and their aftermath, with enough collective and historical trauma to go round. I also grew up in a Nigerian diasporic community, populated by many who had genocide in living memory. At the national and community level, I have seen a lot of traits of norms, personality, quirks of habit and action that I’ve suspected were downstream of these facts. At the level of individual experience, I’ve watched and felt myself change in reaction to fearing for my dignity or life, to crushing pain and humiliation. I reflect on these traumatic moments often, and very seldom think: “That was educational”.

These experiences can be, if we are very fortunate, building blocks. What comes of them depends on how the blocks are put together: what standpoint epistemologists call the “achievement thesis”. Briana Toole clarifies that, by itself, one’s social location only puts a person in a position to know. “Epistemic privilege” or advantage is achieved only through deliberate, concerted struggle from that position.

I concede outright that this is certainly one possible result of the experience of oppression: have no doubt that humiliation, deprivation, and suffering can build (especially in the context of the deliberate, structured effort of “consciousness raising”, as Toole specifically highlights). But these same experiences can also destroy, and if I had to bet on which effect would win most often, it would be the latter. As Agnes Callard rightly notes, trauma (and even the righteous, well-deserved anger that often accompanies it) can corrupt as readily as it can ennoble. Perhaps more so.

Contra the old expression, pain – whether borne of oppression or not – is a poor teacher. Suffering is partial, short-sighted, and self-absorbed. We shouldn’t have a politics that expects different: oppression is not a prep school.

When it comes down to it, the thing I believe most deeply about deference epistemology is that it asks something of trauma that it cannot give. Demanding as the constructive approach may be, the deferential approach is far more demanding and in a far more unfair way: it asks the traumatized to shoulder burdens alone that we ought to share collectively. When I think about my trauma, I don’t think about grand lessons. I think about the quiet nobility of survival. The very fact that those chapters weren’t the final ones of my story is powerful enough writing all on its own. It is enough to ask of those experiences that I am still here to remember them.

Deference epistemology asks us to be less than we are – and not even for our own benefit. As Nick Estes explains in the context of Indigenous politics: “The cunning of trauma politics is that it turns actual people and struggles, whether racial or Indigenous citizenship and belonging, into matters of injury. It defines an entire people mostly on their trauma and not by their aspirations or sheer humanity”. This performance is not for the benefit of Indigenous people, but “for white audiences or institutions of power”.

I also think about James Baldwin’s realization that the things that tormented him the most were “the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive”. That I have survived abuse of various kinds, have faced near-death from both accidental circumstance and violence (different as the particulars of these may be from those around me) is not a card to play in gamified social interaction or a weapon to wield in battles over prestige. It is not what gives me a special right to speak, to evaluate, or to decide for a group. It is a concrete, experiential manifestation of the vulnerability that connects me to most of the people on this Earth. It comes between me and other people not as a wall, but as a bridge.

## 2NC

### Link/Turns Case

#### It turns the case---“Surrender” is a symbolic gesture to prevent material change.

Nicholas Whittaker 9/17/21. Doctoral student in the philosophy department at the City University of New York graduate center. “Case Sensitive​ | Why We Shouldn't Capitalize "Black"”. Issue 5. September 17, 2021. https://www.thedriftmag.com/case-sensitive/

Tharps’s New York Times op-ed was published six years before the paper heeded her arguments (without, of course, acknowledging her in doing so). Were the periodicals that altered their style guides last summer really motivated by the earnest realization of their own complacency, one made possible by murder and unrest? Perhaps. That is a question only editors, diversity committees, and boards of directors can answer. But I am skeptical. The abrupt reactivity of the capitalization shift, the scramble for a symbolic gesture of solidarity, can also be read as a manipulative sabotage of a radical and dangerous black politics.

Perhaps The New York Times and The Associated Press acted not from genuine conviction — after all, these arguments have been circulating for quite some time— but from a desire to appease the black voices they had previously ignored. The philosopher Olúfẹmi Táíwò has warned against the “deference” he sees in calls to “center marginalized voices,” like those of the employees of major newspapers who apparently advocated for capitalization. Táíwò warns of many dangers inherent in this practice, including the risk that making deference the primary goal diverts a pragmatic politics away from actually transforming material conditions and into a sentimental fawning over appointed tokens of “marginalized identities.” Deferring to members of the social category associated with the oppression in question, irrespective of their actual knowledge or political commitments regarding the subject matter, is a strategy primarily aimed at making them feel “heard” and “respected” simply on the basis of their identity. If capitalization is a pat on the head, the decision to embrace it does not reflect any kind of substantive politics or constitute a step towards radical social transformation. To reduce black politics to deference and appeasement is to turn away from a radicalism concerned with eradicating material, ideological, and spiritual evil.

We are all too familiar with the ability of guilty institutions to stave off real change by signalling faux solidarity and symbolic progress. In point of fact, maneuvers like that of the Times serve primarily to mischaracterize the demands of black radicals — these being calls for the abolition of the police, and the literal protection of black life from a state bent on its extermination — as mere pleas for acknowledgement and respect. Yet what work has The New York Times (or The Atlantic, or Fox News) truly done to excise the deep rot of antiblackness, even from its own organizing structure and principles? Symbolic changes like “B” may cover up those questions, or distract us from posing them.

### Moten & Harney = Neg

#### Moten and Harney vote neg---surrender reproduces the “critical academic” that precludes the “social physics of sharing” and “love” in favor of privatizing the individual.

Moten & Harney 13 (Fred and Stefano, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*, p.38)

The critical academic questions the university, questions the state, questions art, politics, culture. But in the undercommons it is “no questions asked.” It is unconditional – the door swings open for refuge even though it may let in police agents and destruction. The questions are superfluous in the undercommons. If you don’t know, why ask? The only question left on the surface is what can it mean to be critical when the professional defines himself or herself as one who is critical of negligence, while negligence defines professionalization? Would it not mean that to be critical of the university would make one the professional par excellence, more negligent than any other? To distance oneself professionally through critique, is this not the most active consent to privatize the social individual? The undercommons might by contrast be understood as wary of critique, weary of it, and at the same time dedicated to the collectivity of its future, the collectivity that may come to be its future. The undercommons in some ways tries to escape from critique and its degradation as university-consciousness and self-consciousness about university-consciousness, retreating, as Adrian Piper says, into the external world.

### Ballot

#### Ballot doesn’t remedy survival, which is threatened by structural, material conditions rather than performed – mediating personal survival thru a judge is dangerous – makes us cruelly optimistic debate as survival which is violent

Berlant 11 (Lauren, prof at U Chicago, Cruel Optimism, 174-8)

So even if, in these two films, the promise of familial love is the convey­ ance for the incitement to misrecognize the bad life as a good one, this is also a story about the conditions under which fantasy takes the most conservative shape on the bottom of so many class structures. The adults want to pass the promise of the promise on to their children.14 That may be the children's only sure inheritance-fantasy as the only capital assuredly pass­ able from one contingent space to another. And of course here, as every­ where, the gendered division of labor mediates the attritions of capital and the intimate spaces in which the labor of living is imagined beyond the urgencies of necessity. As Gayatri Spivak writes of another example, "This is not the old particularism/universalism debate. It is the emergence of the generalized value form, global commensurability in the field of gender. All the diversity of daily life escapes this, yet it is inescapable." ts Rosetta and La Promesse are training differently gendered children to take up a position not within normative institutions of intimacy but within something proximate to them. The hypervigilance required to maintain this proximity is the main visceral scene of post-Fordist affect. The fantasy of intimacy that will make one feel normal (as opposed to making one able to secure the conditions of dependable reciprocal life) provides a false logic of commensurateness and continuity between everyday appearance and a whole set of abstract value­ generating relations. The aesthetic of the potentially good enough love enables crisis to feel ordinary and less of a threat than the affective bounty that makes it worth risking being amid capitalist social life. ¶ But in the Dardennes' mise en scene, normative intimacy has been worn down to the nub of the formal and the gestural. The emotions associated with intimacy, like tenderness, are most easily assumed as scavenging strate­ gies that the children are compelled to develop to get by. Igor acts genuinely sweet to the old woman whose wallet he steals in the opening scene; Rosetta ¶ [175]¶ acts in loving and protective ways toward her mother, whom she also beats for manifesting nonnormative appetites. Roger appeals to Igor for loyalty, although he has also lied to him, beat him, and destroyed his opportunity to be a kid and to cultivate a different life (also involving building things: but go-carts that move, not houses that require property). Yet Roger can still say, "The house, this whole thing, it's all for you!" To which Igor can only say, "Shut up! Shut up!" because there is no story to counter Roger with, no proof that it wasn't love, or that love was a bad idea. Apparently, the register of love is what there is to work with, when you are managing belonging to worlds that have no obligation to you. ¶ But this is why optimism for belonging in a scene ofp otential reciprocity amid tragic impediments is, in these films, not merely cruel, even in its repe­ titions. The endings of these films tie the audience in identificatory knots of vicarious reciprocity that extend in affective and formal ways beyond the actual episode. Rosetta approaches her final shots having just had to quit her hard-won job in order to take care of her degenerating mother. She is miser­ able and defeated by her daughterly love and her commitment to not living outside the loop of a reciprocity whose feeling feels legitimate to her. ¶ At the end, we see her dragging a big canister of gas. It is unclear whether she is about to commit suicide by asphyxiation, or to make a go of things the way she always does, and it doesn't matter: her body collapses in exhaus­ tion as Riquet arrives. Riquet-whom she has previously beaten up, left to drown, turned in as a thief, and had a strange, unsteady, asexual night with, a night that ends with her sleeping, not alone, but whispering intimately with herself.16 Riquet-who is stalking her in revenge for taking his job. He is the only resource for potential reciprocity she has. As the film closes, Rosetta weeps, looking off-screen toward he who is only a proximate friend, in the hope of stimulating his compassionate impulse to rescue her. And the film cuts to darkness. ¶ Likewise, the close of La Promesse involves a scene of wishful gallantry. In the train station, just as Assita is about to escape Belgium, Igor's father, Igor, and the whole shoddy mess, Igor confesses one part of his secret. Perversely fullfilling and breaking "the promise" after which the picture is named, he gambles that revealing Amidou's death will keep Assita there, and indeed it binds her and her child to him and to the local scene of danger, violence, and poverty for the indefinite future. In the final shot, they walk away from the camera, together and not together, and as they become smaller the film cuts sharply to black. Both of these works thus end engendering in the audience [176]a kind of normativity hangover, a residue of the optimism of their advocacy for achieving whatever it was for which the protagonists were scavenging. Because Rosetta and Igor are cut off from the normal, the spectators become holders of the promise. ¶ In classic Hollywood cinema and much of queer theory, such expectant "families we choose" endings would make these films, generically, come­ dies, and the anxieties we feel on the way would be just the effects of the conventional obstacles genres put out there that threaten the genre's fail­ ure.17 In Foucault's rendering, such scenes of communicative tears and confession would mark the children's ascension into sexuality, that is, into the place where desiring acts evince the youths' subjugation to the clarifying taxonomic machinery of familial and social discipline. In La Promesse and Rosetta it is where they become sexual, but such evocations of the two clari­ fying institutions of social intelligibility, genre and gender, would mishear the tonalities of these particular episodes. In these scenarios, sexuality is not only an accession to being intelligible, but also a performance of affective avarice, a demand for a feeling fix that would inject a sense of normality.¶ What does it mean to want a sense of something rather than something? In the emergent regime of privatization that provokes aggressive fantasies of affective social confirmation in proximity to the political often without being in its register, genre shifts can point to new ways of apprehending improvisations within the ordinary. In the Dardennes' films, the formal achievement of genre and gender suggests not success but survival, a survival reeking of something that partakes of the new generic hybrid, situation tragedy: the marriage between tragedy and situation comedy where people are fated to express their flaws episodically, over and over, without learning, changing, being relieved, becoming better, or dying.18 In the situation comedy, personality is figured as a limited set of repetitions that will inevitably [177] appear in new situations-but what makes them comic and not tragic is that in this genre's imaginary, the world has the kind of room for us that enables us to endure. In contrast, in the situation tragedy, one moves between having a little and being ejected from the social, where life is lived on the outside of value, in terrifying nonp laces where one is a squatter, trying to make an event in which one will matter to something or someone, even as a famil­ iar joke (in the situation tragedy, protagonists often try heart-wrenchingly to live as though they are in a situation comedy).19 In reinventing some ver­ sion of the couple, the family, or the love link, at the end, Rosetta and Igor are repeating a desire they have fancied and longed for throughout: a desire simply and minimally to be in the game. Not controlling the conditions of labor, they take up positions within sexuality that at least enable a feeling of vague normalcy that can be derived on the fly, in a do-it-yourself (DIY) fash­ ion. They do this in gestures that try to force a sense of obligation in someone, which will just have to stand in as the achievement of their desire for acknowledgment and a way of life. ¶ Thus, we see forming here submission to necessity in the guise of desire; a passionate attachment to a world in which they have no controlling share; and aggression, an insistence on being proximate to the thing. If these motives stand as the promise of the scene that will provide them that holding feeling they want, the proof that it's worth investing in these forms is not too demanding. There is a very low evidentiary bar. The key here is proximity; ownership has been relinquished as the children's fantasy. The geopolitical space of fantasy is not a nation or a plot of land secured by a deed but a neighborhood. And just as both films feature careers involving soldering and sewing, techniques that bind parts to bigger wholes, they restage at the close our protagonists' coercive appeal to a relative stranger for rescue and reciprocity, and all the stranger has to do is to be near, to stick around. [178]¶ That this is an appeal to a proximate normativity is signified by their spatial placement outside the home (in a terminal, on the ground) but never very far afield at all; they are all in proximity to the natal and fantasmatic home, in the end. And, affectively speaking, is Riquet not a man on whom the silent Rosetta must depend; and is Assita not a motherfsisterfloverffriend forced by Igor, by his sweet downcast eyes and aphonia, to submit? ¶ Normalcy's embrace can only flicker, therefore, in the Dardennes' ren­ dering of the contemporary historical moment. Each time it looks as though a reciprocal relation has been forged, the temporal and monetary economy in which the experience of belonging can be enjoyed is interrupted by other needs, the needs of others that seem always to take priority. Nonetheless, in the context of material and parental deprivation, Rosetta and Igor crowd the cramped space of any potentially transitional moment to maintain, for one more minute, their optimism about having a thing, a life, a scene of practices of belonging and dignity that can be iterated, repeated, and depended on without much being looked forward to. ¶ So, what does it mean that the endings of these films solicit audience desire one more time for the protagonists to receive, finally, the help they seek because it feels like their last chance to experience, through openness to another, a good change amid the violence and numbing everywhere present? Since "at all costs" is no metaphor from this perch on the bottom of the class structure, here fantasy and survival are indistinguishable effects of the affects' own informal economy. To be made to desire a normativity hangover trains the audience in cruel optimism.

### Performativity

#### Turns case---declaring “surrender” is performative whiteness, reinforces hierarchy

Ahmed 4 (Sara Ahmed The University of Lancaster “Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism” borderlands Vol. 3 no. 2, 2004)

11. My commentary on the risks of whiteness studies will involve an analysis of how **whiteness gets reproduced through being declared**, within academic texts, as well public culture. I will hence be reading Whiteness Studies as part of a broader shift towards what we could call a **politics of declaration**, in which institutions as well as individuals ‘admit’ to forms of bad practice, and in which **the ‘admission’ itself becomes seen as good practice**. By reading Whiteness Studies in this way, I am not suggesting that it is a symptom of bad practice: rather, I think it is useful to consider ‘turns’ within the academy as having something to do with other cultural turns. The examples are drawn from the UK and Australia, as the two places in which my own anti-racist politics have taken shape. My argument is simple: anti-racism is not performative. I use performative in Austin’s (1975) sense as referring to a particular class of speech. An utterance is performative when it does what it says: ‘the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action’ (1975, 6).

12. I will suggest that declaring whiteness, or even ‘admitting’ to one’s own racism, when the declaration is assumed to be ‘evidence’ of an anti-racist commitment, **does not do what it says**. In other words, **putting whiteness into speech, as an object to be spoken about**, however critically, **is not an anti-racist action, and nor does it necessarily commit a state, institution or person to a form of action that we could describe as anti-racist**. To put this more strongly, I will show how declaring one’s whiteness, **even as part of a** project of social **critique, can reproduce white privilege in ways that are ‘unforeseen’**. Of course, this is not to reduce whiteness studies to the reproduction of whiteness, even if that is what it can do. As Mike Hill suggests: ‘I cannot know in advance whether white critique will prove politically worthwhile, whether in the end it will be a friendlier ghost than before or will display the same stealth narcissism that feminists of color labeled a white problem in the late 1970s’ (1997, 10)

#### That alone causes a range of external impacts that outweigh the case.

Mitchell Dean and Daniel Zamora 6-15-21. Authors of The Last Man Takes LSD: Foucault and the End of Revolution, "Today, the self is the battlefield of politics. Blame Michel Foucault," No Publication, https://amp.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jun/15/michel-foucault-self-individual-politics

In this new definition of politics – in which “everything is political” and “the personal is political” – the self was thought to have become the battlefield of contemporary politics. At that time, many intellectuals, including Foucault, announced the “end of the age of revolution”, opening an era where transforming oneself became the most popular conception of social change. With the collapse of collective “grand narratives”, they argued, we had now to look *inwards*. Beginning in the late 60s, political change would be reframed as a struggle against oneself, against our “inner enemy”. One had to confront the “fascist within”. This shift made the self just another market to conquer, with self-help coaches, new age gurus, energy healers, food counsellors, alternative therapists and lifestyle brands all trying to profit off of this turn inwards. Politics, as Christopher Lasch would write, would “degenerate into a struggle not for social change but for self-realization”. But, contrary to what Lasch thought, the rising “therapeutic sensibility” he observed didn’t become an “anti-religion”, based on “rational explanation” and “scientific methods of healing”, but would deploy its own confessional techniques, endlessly re-presenting social questions as personal ones. Much like with Christianity’s focus on the soul, this new politics of the self produced a confessional culture, in which the battles and struggles playing out within, had to be discussed, confessed and shared with those outside. “Consciousness raising”, “self-examination” or “self-empowerment” became key techniques. This trend was accelerated by self-help literature and consultants, who helped bring confessional culture come to the fore in our contemporary political practice. Today, this shift has been notably visible in the confessional tone of many forms of contemporary anti-racism. Discussing racism in America in one of her training courses on “white fragility”, the diversity consultant Robin DiAngelo avowed to her audience that she had been herself “colluding” with it “every moment of [her] life”. “I try, as hard as I can, to counter it,” she added, “but we can never be free of it.” In a similar vein, the bestselling anti-racist educator Ibram X Kendi argued that “being an anti-racist” is “always ongoing”; it “requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination”. Anti-racism becomes, then, a practice of endless work on the self, made of constant self-examination whether on the streets or the training spaces of corporations and universities. A visual representation of what this kind of politics looks like was captured in the viral photo of senior Democratic leaders, including Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, kneeling on the floor in Ghanaian kente silk stoles after the police murder of George Floyd, and the subsequent passing of the Justice in Policing bill. Similar ceremonies have been undertaken by professional sports teams, celebrities or wealthy chief executives such as Jamie Dimon taking a knee in front of his Chase bank vault. Similarly, it is reflected in the pledges against racism posted by several Hollywood stars on social media. In an openly confessional tone they filmed themselves “taking responsibility” for “every unchecked moment”, every “stereotype”, every time they “remain silent” or “turn a blind eye”. Rather than simply looking inward, however, this confessional politics is played out in public. Unlike either the private confessional booth or the sanctity of the ballot box, confession today is performed in the street, in art galleries, in workplaces and on social media. Despite what Foucault had hoped for, we have not seen a retreat from confession but an intensification and multiplication of it in the public domain. Today’s secular confessionals increasingly resemble the loud and public forms of penitence of the early Christian communities where the penitents had to “publish themselves” (publicatio sui, as the church father Tertullian put it) through rituals of humiliation to choose the path to purity. This new kind of confessional politics takes today shape through posts and challenges on social media, viral hashtags made by influencers, companies such as Coca-Cola or Disney training their staff to “be less white” and “work through feelings of guilt, shame, and defensiveness” or CIA running ads of operatives speaking out against “internalized patriarchy”. This phenomenon is reinforced by corporations and self-help industries that march ever deeper into our psyches It is a confession taken not under the priestly “vow of silence” but in the full gaze of publicity. It inaugurates a “lifelong work”, as DiAngelo put it, fighting the evil within and joining with other penitents. It is a world in which the abandonment of the struggle against social and economic exploitation shifted politics towards a contest between competing confessional groups each publicly affirming the righteousness of their own true path to salvation. This political phenomenon is echoed and reinforced by corporations and self-help industries that march ever deeper into our psyches, encouraging us to practise “mindfulness techniques” at work, for example. It’s mirrored in everything from the management guru Peter Drucker’s call to “manage oneself” to the best sellers of the billion dollars industry of personal development or the Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson’s “rules for life”. Despite the ever-growing presence of this politics, its shortcomings are growing clear. “White guilt and black outrage,” as Cedric Johnson, professor of African American studies, has recently pointed out, “have limited political currency, and neither has ever been a sustainable basis for building the kind of popular and legislative majorities needed to actually contest entrenched power in any meaningful way.” In fact, he added, this “militant expression of racial liberalism” will “continue to defer the kind of public goods that might actually help” all those who are “routinely surveilled, harassed, arrested, convicted, incarcerated and condemned as failures”. With material stakes of politics growing ever more urgent many in the liberal center would much prefer us to busy ourselves with loud rituals announcing our inner battles. In this way, they reveal the failure of a politics based on the thesis, advanced by Foucault 40 years ago, that struggles around the self are becoming more and more important in our world relative to those of exploitation and inequality.

### Link/Turns Case

#### Turns the case---turning “ongoing conversations” to battles prevents a “Polyrhythmic praxis” where knowledge can diverge and return by requiring absolute victory.

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Think About it. A conversation between two people who share an interest in understanding one another will always be unique. It will follow its own course and rhythm, it will touch upon various things, diverge, return to the subject at hand, and be colored by each person’s knowledge, experiences, desires, resistances, etc. Most of all, a conversation between two particular people will be absolutely unique: it cannot be had when one of the two people is swapped out for someone else, it cannot be replicated, and it cannot be predicted in its outcomes. I am quite invested in and fascinated by the uniqueness of a conversation, which everyone knows just from observing two people talking in confidence and out of earshot: we know that what they are talking about is more than the mere exchange of information but the creation on new knowledge, or something of a ‘third’ nature that could not be produced by either of them alone.

This is the driving impulse behind Think About It: to lift the curtain on such conversations and to share with others the utterly unique and normally unrepeatable experience that unfolds when two people truly engage. I’m also motivated to model conversations, debate and dialogue as a mode of engaging with the other that is sorely lacking in today’s culture for several reasons (time, media, and politics are interlocking yet separate obstacles, as is social media’s designed preference for polemics). The other impulse is my desire to understand complicated things better with the help of people who’ve thought long and hard about them, and sometimes have lived through them. So if you like ideas, if you like conversations, and if you like to learn new and unexpected things, Think About It is for you.

Constructive conversations. Difficult dialogues. Honest exchanges. Informed opinions.

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What is the Aim of a Conversation? What are its Rules? How does Dialogue Occur?

While preparing for a forthcoming episode with Professor Ann Stoler about the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault, I came upon Foucault’s sharp distinction between polemics and conversation. The long quote below contains Foucault’s description of “the serious play of questions and answers…where a whole morality is at stake, the morality that concerns the search for the truth and the relation to the other,” and his reasons for not engaging in polemics which aim not to bring out a difficult truth but the triumph of a just cause that has been upheld from the beginning. In discussion, change occurs; in polemics, battles are won or lost.

Here’s the quote from Michel Foucault, given shortly before his untimely death in 1984:

Question [by Paul Rabinow]: Why is it that you don’t engage in polemics?

Michel Foucault: “I like discussions, and when I am asked questions, I try to answer them. It’s true that I don’t like to get involved in polemics. If I open a book and see that the author is accusing an adversary of ‘infantile leftism,’ I shut it again right away. That’s not my way of doing things; I don’t belong to the world of people who do things that way. I insist on this difference as something essential: a whole morality is at stake, the morality that concerns the search for the truth and the relation to the other.

In this serious play of questions and answers, in the work of reciprocal elucidation, the rights of each person are in some sense immanent in the discussion. They depend only on the dialogue situation. The person asking the questions is merely exercising the right that has been given him: to remain unconvinced, to perceive a contradiction, to require more information, to emphasize different postulates, to point out faulty reasoning, etc. As for the person answering the questions, he too exercise is a right that does not go beyond the discussion itself; by the logic of his own discourse is he is tied to what he has said earlier, and by the acceptance of dialogue he is tied to the questioning of the other. Questions and answers depend on a game – a game that is at once pleasant and difficult – in which each of the two partners takes pains to use only the rights given him by the other and by the accepted form of the dialogue.

The polemicist, on the other hand, proceeds encased in privileges that he possesses in advance and will never agree to question. On principle, he possesses rights authorizing him to wage war and making that struggle a just undertaking; the person he confronts is not a partner in the search for the truth, but an adversary, an enemy who is wrong, who is harmful and whose very existence constitutes a threat. For him, then, the game does not consist of recognizing this person as a subject having the right to speak, but of abolishing him, as interlocutor, from any possible dialogue; and his final objective will be, not to come as close as possible to a difficult truth, but to bring about the triumph of the just cause he has been manifestly upholding from the beginning. The polemicist relies on the legitimacy that his adversary is by definition denied.

[...]

Of course, the reactivation, and polemics, of these political, judiciary, or religious practices is nothing more than theater. One gesticulates: anathemas, excommunications, condemnations, battles, victories, and defeats are no more than ways of speaking, after all. And yet, in the order of discourse, they are also ways of acting which are not without consequence. They are the sterilizing effects: has anyone ever see a new idea come out of a polemic? And how could it be otherwise, given that here the interlocutors are incited, not to advance, not to take more and more risks in what they say, but to fall back continually on the rights that they claim, on their legitimacy, which they must defend, and on the affirmation of their innocence? There is something even more serious here: in this comedy, one mimics war, battles, annihilation‘s, or unconditional surrenders, putting forward as much of one’s killer instinct as possible. But it is really dangerous to make anyone believe that he can gain access to the truth by such paths, and thus to validate, even if in a merely symbolic form, the real political practices that could be warranted by it. Let us imagine, for a moment, that a magic wand is waved and one of the two adversaries in a polemic is given the ability to exercise all the power he likes over the other. One doesn’t even have to imagine it: one has only to look at what happened during the debates in the USSR over linguistics or genetics not long ago. Were these merely operant deviations from what was supposed to be the correct discussion? Not at all: they were the real consequences of a polemic attitude whose effects ordinarily remain suspended.”

### Doesn’t Solve

#### Demands for specific performances of surrender are not proof of safety. Treating a performance, such as surrendering, as inherently worthy of endorsement merely makes new forms of oppression that much harder to detect.

Berthold BRECHT 67, German poet, playwright [“Against Georg Lukacs” in *Aesthetics and Politics* [1977]Trans. Ed. Ronald Taylor p.81-83]

Now we come to the concept of realism. This concept, too, must first be cleansed before use, for it is an old concept, much used by many people and for many ends. This is necessary because the people can only take over their cultural heritage by an act of expropriation. Literary works cannot be taken over like factories: literary forms of expression cannot be taken over like patents. Even the realistic mode of writing, of which literature provides many very different examples, bears the stamp of the way it was employed, when and by which class, down to its smallest details. With the people struggling and changing reality before our eyes we must not cling to ‘tried’ rules of narrative, venerable literary models, eternal aesthetic laws. We must not derive realism as such from particular existing works, but we shall use every means, old and new, tired and untried, derived from art and derived from other sources to render reality to men in a form they can master. We shall take care not to describe one particular, historical form of novel of a particular, epoch as realistic—say that of Balzac or Tolstoy—and thereby erect merely formal, literary criteria for realism. We shall not speak of a realistic manner of writing only when, for example, we can smell, taste and feel everything, when there is ‘atmosphere’ and when plots are so contrived that they lead to psychological analysis of character. Our concept of realism must be wide and political, sovereign over all conventions.

Realistic means: discovering the causal complexes of society / unmasking the prevailing view of things as the view of those who are in power / writing from the standpoint of the class which offers the broadest solutions for the pressing difficulties in which human society is caught up / emphasizing the element of development / making possible the concrete, and making possible abstraction from it.

These are vast precepts and they can be extended. Moreover we shall allow the artist to employ his fantasy, his originality, his humour, his invention in following them. We shall not stick to too detailed literary models; we shall not bind the artist to too rigidly defined modes of narrative.

We shall establish that the so-called sensuous mode of writing—where one can smell, taste and feel everything—is not automatically to be identified with a realistic mode of writing; we shall acknowledge that there are works which are sensuously written and which are not realistic and realistic works which are not written in a sensuous style. We shall have to examine carefully the question whether we really develop a plot best when our ultimate objective is to reveal the spiritual life of the characters. Our readers will perhaps find that they have not been given the key to the meaning of events if, led astray by various artistic devices, they experience only the spiritual agitation of the heroes. By adopting the forms of Balzac and Tolstoy without testing them thoroughly, we might weary our readers—the people—as much as these writers often do themselves. Realism is not a mere question of form. Were we to copy the style of these realists, we would no longer be realists.

For time flows on, and if it did not, it would be a bad prospect for those who do not sit at golden tables. Methods become exhausted; stimuli no longer work. New problems appear and demand new methods. Reality changes; in order to represent it, modes of representation must also change. Nothing comes from nothing; the new comes from the old, but that is why it is new.

The oppressors do not work in the same way in every epoch. They cannot be defined in the same fashion at all times. There are so many means for them to avoid being spotted. They call their military roads motorways; their tanks are painted so that they look like MacDuff’s woods. Their agents show blitsters on their hands, as if they were workers. No: to turn the hunter into the quarry is something that demands invention. What was popular yesterday is not today, for the people today are not what they were yesterday.

### Legibility

#### This ensures that the aff will remain about the gesture without acknowledging the work the polyrhythm is supposed to generate. Vote negative for a service-based praxis.

Moten, Harney, and Shukaitis 21 – Fred Moten and Stefano Harney. Interviewed by Stevphen Shukaitis (“Refusing Completion: A Conversation,” March 2021, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/116/379446/refusing-completion-a-conversation/)

SS: I was trying to think what would be a fitting heroic, or anti-heroic, figure out of this moment, and I keep coming back to the buddy character from Get Out, the one that’s the TSA officer. What’s his name? Rod, I think. And I’m thinking about towards the end of the film when he manages to find and rescue the main character from his predicament. And then he gets asked how did you find me. And his answer is that he’s TSA, we handle shit, and that Chris can now consider this situation handled.

FM: It’s a classic fable of how the working class comes to save the asses of the black bourgeoisie yet again. When will the black bourgeoisie ever get over its embarrassment? That’s a question for black studies that black study will have to answer.

SH: It’s perfect to bring him up right now because if you look at the United States, what’s very clear is that whatever conversation they have about this pandemic, the one conversation they cannot have is about actually creating a government workforce at the level that would be able to do all this tracing and tracking that needs to be done, or vaccination, to say nothing of fulfilling ongoing community health and healing roles. They can’t even conceive of a true government workforce that wears uniforms and has benefits. And yet, lo and behold, they did that overnight with the TSA. They created an army of tens of thousands of people for this thing. And those people went through training (of a kind) and became federal employees. And yet in the realm of social welfare it’s clear that it’s never even been contemplated that you would create a force for this pandemic. Instead they just keep talking over and over about hospital capacity. What the fuck is hospital capacity?

But of course, I have drifted into distributional politics here. And that is dangerous territory even if it’s hard to resist. So, take defunding the police—the idea that resources should be going to mental health professionals or community centers instead of to the police who are asked to do everything (and let’s leave aside where policing ends for a minute or even what it is). It seems to me we have to support defunding the police and facing down police brutality—and Dylan Rodriguez reminds us that the phrase is redundant: brutality is what the police do. We have to support this call because it emanates from the generalized generosity of this movement, the most generative and also the must vulnerable kind of generosity. It’s a stray generosity that makes things possible for anyone who would take it up.

And at the same time, we have to study together against the premise behind defunding the police. It’s contradictory to say this of course, but absolutely necessary. I say this because all (re)distributional politics are based on the premise of scarcity. And the way the premise of scarcity is imposed is through meritocracy. Meritocracy is the imposition of scarcity masquerading as the management of scarcity. And it is the worst kind of imposed scarcity. We would be better off with hoarding! Because this kind of scarcity is always based on an implicit bell curve. Meritocracy is always racist. Meritocracy does not reward the talented or the deserving. It invents them on a curve precisely in order to restrict our access to socially generated wealth. So, the question is, can we learn that meritocracy has no merit? Are we willing to be taught? How can we be of service?

#### Reducing the 1AC turns the polyrhythm into a culture of self-affirmation. This denatures any revolutionary potential of the affirmative.

Ella **MYERS** Poli Sci & Gender Studies @ Utah **’13** *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World* p. 46-49

The therapeutic ethics advanced by Foucault and Connolly resonate strongly with dominant features of American culture. In particular, therapeutic ethics echoes a widely held popular belief, captured in this chapter's second epigraph, that **working on oneself** is the path to **broader social change**. This view is expressed quite clearly today in the doctrine of ethical consumerism, which holds that individuals should critically reflect on their consumption practices, making changes in themselves and in their personal conduct (namely, in what they buy) in order to generate collective change. In addition to expressing the striking and disturbing conviction that a primary way of shaping the self and becoming a better person is through purchasing commodities, this orientation rests on the belief that each individual's action will additively amount to something greater, producing transformation on a large scale. This is a more simplistic model than Connolly's in that it recognizes no difference between micropolitics and macropolitics, treating the latter as simply the cumulative result of the former. There are, nonetheless, real similarities between Foucauldian inspired ethics and the more generalized conviction that transforming oneself is the most important and even the most politically significant project a person can undertake. Even though Foucault's and Connolly's accounts of ethics may not intend to further the prevalent popular belief that you change the world by changing yourself, conceptualizing ethics primarily in terms of self intervention is dangerous in the context of an American cultural environment that can fairly be described as **narcissistic**.1l5 There is no doubt that the Foucauldian-inspired arts of the self Connolly advocates are **meant to challenge reigning ways of being** and to transform individuals in ways that enable them to engage more effectively in collective projects, including critical and oppositional endeavors that aim to alter status quo arrangements. Yet the massive popularity of self-help programs disseminating the view that worldly events are the direct result of one's personal thoughts, in conjunction with capitalist ideologies that tend to reduce the aesthetics of existence to the acquisition of a lifestyle through shopping, along with many other cultural influences that promote questionable techniques of the self, should make one hesitate before embracing an ethics that focuses so heavily on concern with oneself.1l6 Even Connolly's version of therapeutic ethics, which he wants to demarcate from unappealing forms of self-indulgence, runs the risk of being captured by prevailing habits and beliefs that can render arts of the self nondemocratic, even **antidemocratic**. Some of Connolly's own formulations bring this danger into relief. For example, Connolly sometimes uses the term micropolitics to refer not only to the self's reflexive tactics but also to small-scale intersubjective relations and projects that might not typically be recognized as political in nature but which Connolly maintains can support and enhance macropoliticsP7 Micropolitics of this sort are already "ubiquitous," but they can be developed, readers are told, in ways that are "more or less conducive to democratic politics."1l8 This dimension of micropolitics is sometimes depicted by Connolly as a **bridge** connecting concentrated work on the self to organized forms of collective citizen action. But the concrete examples of micropolitical activity that he gives, even those that extend beyond the self's relation to itself, raise new doubts about how resistant or transformative such activity really is. Indeed, some of what Connolly has in mind seems **depressingly adaptive** to contemporary arrangements, considering how focused his examples are on individual lifestyle choices rather than on the admittedly more difficult problem of how to mobilize energies for more collaborative, oppositional, and inventive endeavors. Writing of micropolitics, Connolly counsels, "If you are in the middle class, buy a Prius or a Volt and explain to your friends and neighbors why you did; write in a blog; attend a pivotal rally; ride your bike to work more often; consider solar panels; introduce new topics at your church." While these things may be worth doing, it is not clear why one should believe they will foster an urge to "participate in larger political assemblages in more robust ways," as Connolly wagers.ll9 Indeed, these recommendations seem to reinforce the belief that political change is a **happy by-product** of **small decisions** made by **each individual**. Despite Connolly's best intentions and his ambitious calls for broad transformation in the direction of deepening pluralization, greater economic equality, and less vengeful foreign policy-the therapeutic ethics he endorses is too easily absorbed, even **co-opted**, by a dominant culture that **rewards** forms of **preoccupation** **with the self** that do little to facilitate associative democracy. This point seems to be unwittingly made, in a slightly different context, by Cressida Heyes's Self-Transformations: Foucault, Ethics, and Normalized Bodies. Heyes's stated objective is to rescue Foucault's work on ethics from misreadings that liken self-care to self-indulgence, in order to defend the importance of "somaesthetics," in which the self strives to cultivate a body in ways that are resistant to normalization. Yet although Heyes is devoted to the idea that ethical self-diSCipline, performed by the self on the self, can be an "art of living with greater embodied freedom," the vast majority of the book is spent investigating, in great detail, case studies involving contemporary practices of askesis (sex reassignment surgery, Weight Watchers, and cosmetic surgery), which, Heyes convinc-. inglyargues, help to produce "docile bodies."12o So although Heyes continues to hold out the hope that concentrated work on the self, and specifically on **one's body**, can serve as a site of resistance against normalizing power, the **overwhelming** sense conveyed by her research is how readily and thoroughly care for the self is promoted and practiced in **conformist, "self-absorbed" ways**.l21 There is little acknowledgment of the difficulty her examples pose to her celebration of a transgressive, liberating somaes- thetics. What does it mean to endorse an ethics focused on rapport asoi and on "somatic askesis" in particular, in the context of a society that, by Heyes's own account, obsessively and successfully markets forms of selfcare that produce **compliant** and often **solipsistic selves**? Why should one believe that Heyes's preferred example of good somatic self-discipline, yoga, is somehow safe from the normalizing influences so well documented in her treatments of sex reassignment surgery, organized weight loss, and cosmetic surgery? Like Connolly, Heyes seems to neglect the way in which even the best-intentioned calls for care of the self may still be too complicit with an American culture that celebrates and aggressively markets depoliticizing modes of self-care. Still, the appeal of therapeutic ethics is undeniable. It **soothes** with the **promise** that one need not get **tangled up in the messy**, **fraught world** of **intersubjective** **political struggle** in order to **engage** in **politically meaningful action**. Whether tending to the self is seen as synonymous with politics, as in the popularized version of therapeutic ethics, or whether it is understood as a **precursor** to collective endeavors, as in Connolly's view, the suggestion that one ought to begin with focused attention on oneself is comforting. It spares one the challenges of attempting to address a public problem by acting in solidarity with and in opposition to other citizens, where there may be no assurance of success and when fatigue, disappointment, and frustration are likely. When the political landscape looks bleak-because there are few opportunities for ordinary citizens to govern themselves, because of growing corporate influence over politics at all levels, or because of any number of other depressing facts-**therapeutic ethics reassures** with the idea that one can be an **engaged citizen all by oneself**.

## 1NR

### Cap K

#### Cap is the origin of the plantation – theft of labor predates anti-black racism and is explained by econ, not racial motivations

Selfa 10 – Editor of and contributor to International Socialist Review; quoting Eric Williams, D. Phil from Oxford, first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago; and quoting Howard University Professor of Classics Frank Snowden [Lance, “The roots of racism,” http://socialistworker.org/2010/10/21/the-roots-of-racism, accessed 20 Jun 2016]

Fortunately, racism isn't part of human nature. The best evidence for this assertion is the fact that racism has not always existed. Racism is a particular form of oppression. It stems from discrimination against a group of people based on the idea that some inherited characteristic, such as skin color, makes them inferior to their oppressors. Yet the concepts of "race" and "racism" are modern inventions. They arose and became part of the dominant ideology of society in the context of the African slave trade at the dawn of capitalism in the 1500s and 1600s. Although it is a commonplace for academics and opponents of socialism to claim that Karl Marx ignored racism, Marx in fact described the processes that created modern racism. His explanation of the rise of capitalism placed the African slave trade, the European extermination of indigenous people in the Americas and colonialism at its heart. In Capital, Marx writes: The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of the continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of black skins are all things that characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production. Marx connected his explanation of the role of the slave trade in the rise of capitalism to the social relations that produced racism against Africans. In Wage Labor and Capital, written 12 years before the American Civil War, he explains: What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. The one explanation is as good as the other. A Negro is a Negro. He only becomes a slave in certain relations. A cotton spinning jenny is a machine for spinning cotton. It only becomes capital in certain relations. Torn away from these conditions, it is as little capital as gold by itself is money, or as sugar is the price of sugar. In this passage, Marx shows no prejudice to Blacks ("a man of the black race," "a Negro is a Negro"), but he mocks society's equation of "Black" and "slave" ("one explanation is as good as another"). He shows how the economic and social relations of emerging capitalism thrust Blacks into slavery ("he only becomes a slave in certain relations"), which produce the dominant ideology that equates being African with being a slave. These fragments of Marx's writing give us a good start in understanding the Marxist explanation of the origins of racism. As the Trinidadian historian of slavery Eric Williams put it: "Slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery." And, one should add, the consequence of modern slavery at the dawn of capitalism. While slavery existed as an economic system for thousands of years before the conquest of America, racism as we understand it today did not exist. From time immemorial? The classical empires of Greece and Rome were based on slave labor. But ancient slavery was not viewed in racial terms. Slaves were most often captives in wars or conquered peoples. If we understand white people as originating in what is today Europe, then most slaves in ancient Greece and Rome were white. Roman law made slaves the property of their owners, while maintaining a "formal lack of interest in the slave's ethnic or racial provenance," wrote Robin Blackburn in The Making of New World Slavery. Over the years, slave manumission produced a mixed population of slave and free in Roman-ruled areas, in which all came to be seen as "Romans." The Greeks drew a sharper line between Greeks and "barbarians," those subject to slavery. Again, this was not viewed in racial or ethnic terms, as the socialist historian of the Haitian Revolution, C.L.R. James, explained: [H]istorically, it is pretty well proved now that the ancient Greeks and Romans knew nothing about race. They had another standard--civilized and barbarian--and you could have white skin and be a barbarian, and you could be black and civilized. More importantly, encounters in the ancient world between the Mediterranean world and Black Africans did not produce an upsurge of racism against Africans. In Before Color Prejudice, Howard University classics professor Frank Snowden documented innumerable accounts of interaction between the Greco-Roman and Egyptian civilizations and the Kush, Nubian, and Ethiopian kingdoms of Africa. He found substantial evidence of integration of Black Africans in the occupational hierarchies of the ancient Mediterranean empires and Black-white intermarriage. Black and mixed race gods appeared in Mediterranean art, and at least one Roman emperor, Septimius Severus, was an African. Between the 10th and 16th centuries, the chief source of slaves in Western Europe was Eastern Europe. In fact, the word "slave" comes from the word "Slav," the people of Eastern Europe. This outline doesn't mean to suggest a "pre-capitalist" Golden Age of racial tolerance, least of all in the slave societies of antiquity. Empires viewed themselves as centers of the universe and looked on foreigners as inferiors. Ancient Greece and Rome fought wars of conquest against peoples they presumed to be less advanced. Religious scholars interpreted the Hebrew Bible's "curse of Ham" from the story of Noah to condemn Africans to slavery. Cultural and religious associations of the color white with light and angels and the color black with darkness and evil persisted. But none of these cultural or ideological factors explain the rise of New World slavery or the "modern" notions of racism that developed from it. The African slave trade The slave trade lasted for a little more than 400 years, from the mid-1400s, when the Portuguese made their first voyages down the African coast, to the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888. Slave traders took as many as 12 million Africans by force to work on the plantations in South America, the Caribbean and North America. About 13 percent of slaves (1.5 million) died during the Middle Passage--the trip by boat from Africa to the New World. The African slave trade--involving African slave merchants, European slavers and New World planters in the traffic in human cargo--represented the greatest forced population transfer ever. The charge that Africans "sold their own people" into slavery has become a standard canard against "politically correct" history that condemns the European role in the African slave trade. The first encounters of the Spanish and Portuguese, and later the English, with African kingdoms revolved around trade in goods. Only after the Europeans established New World plantations requiring huge labor gangs did the slave trade begin. African kings and chiefs did indeed sell into slavery captives in wars or members of other communities. Sometimes, they concluded alliances with Europeans to support them in wars, with captives from their enemies being handed over to the Europeans as booty. The demands of the plantation economies pushed "demand" for slaves. Supply did not create its own demand. In any event, it remains unseemly to attempt to absolve the European slavers by reference to their African partners in crime. As historian Basil Davidson rightly argues about African chiefs' complicity in the slave trade: "In this, they were no less 'moral' than the Europeans who had instigated the trade and bought the captives." Onboard, Africans were restricted in their movements so that they wouldn't combine to mutiny on the ship. In many slave ships, slaves were chained down, stacked like firewood with less than a foot between them. On the plantations, slaves were subjected to a regimen of 18-hour workdays. All members of slave families were set to work. Since the New World tobacco and sugar plantations operated nearly like factories, men, women and children were assigned tasks, from the fields to the processing mills. Slaves were denied any rights. Throughout the colonies in the Caribbean to North America, laws were passed establishing a variety of common practices: Slaves were forbidden to carry weapons, they could marry only with the owner's permission, and their families could be broken up. They were forbidden to own property. Masters allowed slaves to cultivate vegetables and chickens, so the master wouldn't have to attend to their food needs. But they were forbidden even to sell for profit the products of their own gardens. Some colonies encouraged religious instruction among slaves, but all of them made clear that a slave's conversion to Christianity didn't change their status as slaves. Other colonies discouraged religious instruction, especially when it became clear to the planters that church meetings were one of the chief ways that slaves planned conspiracies and revolts. It goes without saying that slaves had no political or civil rights, with no right to an education, to serve on juries, to vote or to run for public office. The planters instituted barbaric regimes of repression to prevent any slave revolts. Slave catchers using tracker dogs would hunt down any slaves who tried to escape the plantation. The penalties for any form of slave resistance were extreme and deadly. One description of the penalties slaves faced in Barbados reports that rebellious slaves would be punished by "nailing them down on the ground with crooked sticks on every Limb, and then applying the Fire by degrees from Feet and Hands, burning them gradually up to the Head, whereby their pains are extravagant." Barbados planters could claim a reimbursement from the government of 25 pounds per slave executed. The African slave trade helped to shape a wide variety of societies from modern Argentina to Canada. These differed in their use of slaves, the harshness of the regime imposed on slaves, and the degree of mixing of the races that custom and law permitted. But none of these became as virulently racist--insisting on racial separation and a strict color bar--as the English North American colonies that became the United States. Unfree labor in the North American colonies Notwithstanding the horrible conditions that African slaves endured, it is important to underscore that when European powers began carving up the New World between them, African slaves were not part of their calculations. When we think of slavery today, we think of it primarily from the point of view of its relationship to racism. But planters in the 17th and 18th centuries looked at it primarily as a means to produce profits. Slavery was a method of organizing labor to produce sugar, tobacco and cotton. It was not, first and foremost, a system for producing white supremacy. How did slavery in the U.S. (and the rest of the New World) become the breeding ground for racism? For much of the first century of colonization in what became the United States, the majority of slaves and other "unfree laborers" were white. The term "unfree" draws the distinction between slavery and servitude and "free wage labor" that is the norm in capitalism. One of the historic gains of capitalism for workers is that workers are "free" to sell their ability to labor to whatever employer will give them the best deal. Of course, this kind of freedom is limited at best. Unless they are independently wealthy, workers aren't free to decide not to work. They're free to work or starve. Once they do work, they can quit one employer and go to work for another. But the hallmark of systems like slavery and indentured servitude was that slaves or servants were "bound over" to a particular employer for a period of time, or for life in the case of slaves. The decision to work for another master wasn't the slave's or the servant's. It was the master's, who could sell slaves for money or other commodities like livestock, lumber or machinery. The North American colonies started predominantly as private business enterprises in the early 1600s. Unlike the Spanish, whose conquests of Mexico and Peru in the 1500s produced fabulous gold and silver riches for Spain, settlers in places like the colonies that became Maryland, Rhode Island, and Virginia made money through agriculture. In addition to sheer survival, the settlers' chief aim was to obtain a labor force that could produce the large amounts of indigo, tobacco, sugar and other crops that would be sold back to England. From 1607, when Jamestown was founded in Virginia to about 1685, the primary source of agricultural labor in English North America came from white indentured servants. The colonists first attempted to press the indigenous population into labor. But the Indians refused to be become servants to the English. Indians resisted being forced to work, and they escaped into the surrounding area, which, after all, they knew far better than the English. One after another, the English colonies turned to a policy of driving out the Indians. The colonists then turned to white servants. Indentured servants were predominantly young white men--usually English or Irish--who were required to work for a planter master for some fixed term of four to seven years. The servants received room and board on the plantation but no pay. And they could not quit and work for another planter. They had to serve their term, after which they might be able to acquire some land and to start a farm for themselves. They became servants in several ways. Some were prisoners, convicted of petty crimes in Britain, or convicted of being troublemakers in Britain's first colony, Ireland. Many were kidnapped off the streets of Liverpool or Manchester, and put on ships to the New World. Some voluntarily became servants, hoping to start farms after they fulfilled their obligations to their masters. For most of the 1600s, the planters tried to get by with a predominantly white, but multiracial workforce. But as the 17th century wore on, colonial leaders became increasingly frustrated with white servant labor. For one thing, they faced the problem of constantly having to recruit labor as servants' terms expired. Second, after servants finished their contracts and decided to set up their farms, they could become competitors to their former masters. And finally, the planters didn't like the servants' "insolence." The mid-1600s were a time of revolution in England, when ideas of individual freedom were challenging the old hierarchies based on royalty. The colonial planters tended to be royalists, but their servants tended to assert their "rights as Englishmen" to better food, clothing and time off. Most laborers in the colonies supported the servants. As the century progressed, the costs of servant labor increased. Planters started to petition the colonial boards and assemblies to allow the large-scale importation of African slaves. Black slaves worked on plantations in small numbers throughout the 1600s. But until the end of the 1600s, it cost planters more to buy slaves than to buy white servants. Blacks lived in the colonies in a variety of statuses--some were free, some were slaves, some were servants. The law in Virginia didn't establish the condition of lifetime, perpetual slavery or even recognize African servants as a group different from white servants until 1661. Blacks could serve on juries, own property and exercise other rights. Northampton County, Virginia, recognized interracial marriages and, in one case, assigned a free Black couple to act as foster parents for an abandoned white child. There were even a few examples of Black freemen who owned white servants. Free Blacks in North Carolina had voting rights. In the 1600s, the Chesapeake society of eastern Virginia had a multiracial character, according to historian Betty Wood: There is persuasive evidence dating from the 1620s through the 1680s that there were those of European descent in the Chesapeake who were prepared to identify and cooperate with people of African descent. These affinities were forged in the world of plantation work. On many plantations, Europeans and West Africans labored side by side in the tobacco fields, performing exactly the same types and amounts of work; they lived and ate together in shared housing; they socialized together; and sometimes they slept together. The planters' economic calculations played a part in the colonies' decision to move toward full-scale slave labor. By the end of the 17th century, the price of white indentured servants outstripped the price of African slaves. A planter could buy an African slave for life for the same price that he could purchase a white servant for 10 years. As Eric Williams explained: Here, then, is the origin of Negro slavery. The reason was economic, not racial; it had to do not with the color of the laborer, but the cheapness of the labor. [The planter] would have gone to the moon, if necessary, for labor. Africa was nearer than the moon, nearer too than the more populous countries of India and China. But their turn would soon come. Planters' fear of a multiracial uprising also pushed them towards racial slavery. Because a rigid racial division of labor didn't exist in the 17th century colonies, many conspiracies involving Black slaves and white indentured servants were hatched and foiled. We know about them today because of court proceedings that punished the runaways after their capture. As historians T.H. Breen and Stephen Innes point out, "These cases reveal only extreme actions, desperate attempts to escape, but for every group of runaways who came before the courts, there were doubtless many more poor whites and blacks who cooperated in smaller, less daring ways on the plantation." The largest of these conspiracies developed into Bacon's Rebellion, an uprising that threw terror into the hearts of the Virginia Tidewater planters in 1676. Several hundred farmers, servants and slaves initiated a protest to press the colonial government to seize Indian land for distribution. The conflict spilled over into demands for tax relief and resentment of the Jamestown establishment. Planter Nathaniel Bacon helped organize an army of whites and Blacks that sacked Jamestown and forced the governor to flee. The rebel army held out for eight months before the Crown managed to defeat and disarm it. Bacon's Rebellion was a turning point. After it ended, the Tidewater planters moved in two directions: first, they offered concessions to the white freemen, lifting taxes and extending to them the vote; and second, they moved to full-scale racial slavery. Fifteen years earlier, the Burgesses had recognized the condition of slavery for life and placed Africans in a different category as white servants. But the law had little practical effect. "Until slavery became systematic, there was no need for a systematic slave code. And slavery could not become systematic so long as an African slave for life cost twice as much as an English servant for a five-year term," wrote historian Barbara Jeanne Fields. Both of those circumstances changed in the immediate aftermath of Bacon's Rebellion. In the entire 17th century, the planters imported about 20,000 African slaves. The majority of them were brought to North American colonies in the 24 years after Bacon's Rebellion. In 1664, the Maryland legislature passed a law determining who would be considered slaves on the basis of the condition of their father--whether their father was slave or free. It soon became clear, however, that establishing paternity was difficult, but that establishing who was a person's mother was definite. So the planters changed the law to establish slave status on the basis of the mother's condition. Now white slaveholders who fathered children by slave women would be guaranteed their offspring as slaves. And the law included penalties for "free" women who slept with slaves. But what's most interesting about this law is that it doesn't really speak in racial terms. It attempts to preserve the property rights of slaveholders and establish barriers between slave and free which were to become hardened into racial divisions over the next few years. Taking the Maryland law as an example, Fields made this important point: Historians can actually observe colonial Americans in the act of preparing the ground for race without foreknowledge of what would later arise on the foundation they were laying. [T]he purpose of the experiment is clear: to prevent the erosion of slaveowners' property rights that would result if the offspring of free white women impregnated by slave men were entitled to freedom. The language of the preamble to the law makes clear that the point was not yet race. Race does not explain the law. Rather, the law shows society in the act of inventing race. After establishing that African slaves would cultivate major cash crops of the North American colonies, the planters then moved to establish the institutions and ideas that would uphold white supremacy. Most unfree labor became Black labor. Laws and ideas intended to underscore the subhuman status of Black people--in a word, the ideology of racism and white supremacy--emerged full-blown over the next generation. "All men are created equal" Within a few decades, the ideology of white supremacy was fully developed. Some of the greatest minds of the day--such as Scottish philosopher David Hume and Thomas Jefferson, the man who wrote the Declaration of Independence--wrote treatises alleging Black inferiority. The ideology of white supremacy based on the natural inferiority of Blacks, even allegations that Blacks were subhuman, strengthened throughout the 18th century. This was the way that the leading intellectual figures of the time reconciled the ideals of the 1776 American Revolution with slavery. The American Revolution of 1776 and later the French Revolution of 1789 popularized the ideas of liberty and the rights of all human beings. The Declaration of Independence asserts that "all men are created equal" and possess certain "unalienable rights"--rights that can't be taken away--of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." As the first major bourgeois revolution, the American Revolution sought to establish the rights of the new capitalist class against the old feudal monarchy. It started with the resentment of the American merchant class that wanted to break free from British restrictions on its trade. But its challenge to British tyranny also gave expression to a whole range of ideas that expanded the concept of "liberty" from being just about trade to include ideas of human rights, democracy, and civil liberties. It legitimized an assault on slavery as an offense to liberty. Some of the leading American revolutionaries, such as Thomas Paine and Benjamin Franklin, endorsed abolition. Slaves and free Blacks also pointed to the ideals of the revolution to call for abolishing slavery. But because the revolution aimed to establish the rule of capital in America, and because a lot of capitalists and planters made a lot of money from slavery, the revolution compromised with slavery. The Declaration initially contained a condemnation of King George for allowing the slave trade, but Jefferson dropped it following protests from representatives from Georgia and the Carolinas. How could the founding fathers of the U.S.--most of whom owned slaves themselves--reconcile the ideals of liberty for which they were fighting with the existence of a system that represented the exact negation of liberty? The ideology of white supremacy fit the bill. We know today that "all men" didn't include women, Indians or most whites. But to rule Black slaves out of the blessings of liberty, the leading head-fixers of the time argued that Blacks weren't really "men," they were a lower order of being. Jefferson's Notes from Virginia, meant to be a scientific catalogue of the flora and fauna of Virginia, uses arguments that anticipate the "scientific racism" of the 1800s and 1900s. With few exceptions, no major institution--such as the universities, the churches or the newspapers of the time--raised criticisms of white supremacy or of slavery. In fact, they helped pioneer religious and academic justifications for slavery and Black inferiority. As C.L.R. James put it, "[T]he conception of dividing people by race begins with the slave trade. This thing was so shocking, so opposed to all the conceptions of society which religion and philosophers had, that the only justification by which humanity could face it was to divide people into races and decide that the Africans were an inferior race." White supremacy wasn't only used to justify slavery. It was also used to keep in line the two-thirds of Southern whites who weren't slaveholders. Unlike the French colony of St. Domingue or the British colony of Barbados, where Blacks vastly outnumbered whites, Blacks were a minority in the slave South. A tiny minority of slave-holding whites, who controlled the governments and economies of the Deep South states, ruled over a population that was roughly two-thirds white farmers and workers and one-third Black slaves. The slaveholders' ideology of racism and white supremacy helped to divide the working population, tying poor whites to the slaveholders. Slavery afforded poor white farmers what Fields called a "social space" whereby they preserved an illusory "independence" based on debt and subsistence farming, while the rich planters continued to dominate Southern politics and society. "A caste system as well as a form of labor," historian James M. McPherson wrote, "slavery elevated all whites to the ruling caste and thereby reduced the potential for class conflict." The great abolitionist Frederick Douglass understood this dynamic: The hostility between the whites and blacks of the South is easily explained. It has its root and sap in the relation of slavery, and was incited on both sides by the cunning of the slave masters. Those masters secured their ascendancy over both the poor whites and the Blacks by putting enmity between them. They divided both to conquer each. [Slaveholders denounced emancipation as] tending to put the white working man on an equality with Blacks, and by this means, they succeed in drawing off the minds of the poor whites from the real fact, that by the rich slave-master, they are already regarded as but a single remove from equality with the slave. Slavery and capitalism Slavery in the colonies helped produce a boom in the 18th century economy that provided the launching pad for the industrial revolution in Europe. From the start, colonial slavery and capitalism were linked. While it is not correct to say that slavery created capitalism, it is correct to say that slavery provided one of the chief sources for the initial accumulations of wealth that helped to propel capitalism forward in Europe and North America. The clearest example of the connection between plantation slavery and the rise of industrial capitalism was the connection between the cotton South, Britain and, to a lesser extent, the Northern industrial states. Here, we can see the direct link between slavery in the U.S. and the development of the most advanced capitalist production methods in the world. Cotton textiles accounted for 75 percent of British industrial employment in 1840, and, at its height, three-fourths of that cotton came from the slave plantations of the Deep South. And Northern ships and ports transported the cotton. To meet the boom in the 1840s and 1850s, the planters became even more vicious. On the one hand, they tried to expand slavery into the West and Central America. The fight over the extension of slavery into the territories eventually precipitated the Civil War in 1861. On the other hand, they drove slaves harder--selling more cotton to buy more slaves just to keep up. On the eve of the Civil War, the South was petitioning to lift the ban on the importation of slaves that had existed officially since 1808. Karl Marx clearly understood the connection between plantation slavery in the cotton South and the development of capitalism in England. He wrote in Capital: While the cotton industry introduced child-slavery into England, in the United States, it gave the impulse for the transformation of the more or less patriarchal slavery into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact, the veiled slavery of the wage-laborers in Europe needed the unqualified slavery of the New World as its pedestal. Capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt. The close connection between slavery and capitalism, and thus, between racism and capitalism, gives the lie to those who insist that slavery would have just died out. In fact, the South was more dependent on slavery right before the Civil War than it was 50 or 100 years earlier. Slavery lasted as long as it did because it was profitable. And it was profitable to the richest and most "well-bred" people in the world. The Civil War abolished slavery and struck a great blow against racism. But racism itself wasn't abolished. On the contrary, just as racism was created to justify colonial slavery, racism as an ideology was refashioned. It now no longer justified the enslavement of Blacks, but it justified second-class status for Blacks as wage laborers and sharecroppers. Racist ideology was also refashioned to justify imperialist conquest at the turn of the last century. As a handful of competing world powers vied to carve up the globe into colonial preserves for cheap raw materials and labor, racism served as a convenient justification. The vast majority of the world's people were now portrayed as inferior races, incapable of determining their own future. Slavery disappeared, but racism remained as a means to justify the domination of millions of people by the U.S., various European powers, and later by Japan. Because racism is woven right into the fabric of capitalism, new forms of racism arose with changes in capitalism. As the U.S. economy expanded and underpinned U.S. imperial expansion, imperialist racism--which asserted that the U.S. had a right to dominate other peoples, such as Mexicans and Filipinos--developed. As the U.S. economy grew and sucked in millions of immigrant laborers, anti-immigrant racism developed. But these are both different forms of the same ideology--of white supremacy and division of the world into "superior" and "inferior" races--that had their origins in slavery. Racism and capitalism have been intertwined since the beginning of capitalism. You can't have capitalism without racism. Therefore, the final triumph over racism will only come when we abolish racism's chief source--capitalism--and build a new socialist society.

#### No Link. Alt doesn’t assume everyone’s role in resistance is the same or complete. World systems theory emphasizes complex intersections of antiblackness but says the unit of analysis should be global not local or domestic – their K applies to older versions of Orthodox Marxism the alt isn’t defending

Engel-Di Mauro 9 – Associate Professor of Geography at SUNY New Paltz (Salvatore, “Seeing the local in the global: Political ecologies, world-systems, and the question of scale”, Geoforum (2009):116-125)

The above-described developments in world-systems theories have largely gone unnoticed within political ecology, perhaps due partially to Blaikie’s early abandonment. Probably more effective has been the treatment (and caricaturing) of world-systems perspectives as a single theory. As shown above, world-systems ‘‘theory” involves multiple theoretical perspectives and it is really a paradigm, perhaps less internally variegated than political ecology. The few political ecologists that have considered world- systems approaches typically charge a fictitiously unified world- systems ‘‘theory” with functionalism/tautology or economic/ structural determinism (Cole, 1999, p. 197; Forsyth, 2003, pp. 117–120). Forsyth, engaging in synechdoche, first collapses all world-systems theories into Wallerstein’s original ideas and re- duces world-systems approaches to all other (neo)Marxist perspectives. Then he claims that all such approaches unhelpfully reduce environmental problems to the destructive nature of capi- talism. Besides evincing internal reasoning problems, such critiques reflect earlier debates in sociology and anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s that have been incorporated and surpassed with the refinement and multiplication of world-systems perspectives9 or that had entirely misidentified the problems and characteristics of world-systems analysis (Peet, 1991, pp. 49–53). The critique of functionalism really confuses analytical categories used in world-systems theories for explanatory statements. Core, semiperiphery, and periphery and accumulation processes are analytical categories used not to explain, but to describe the specifically capitalist world-system. The content of these analytical categories has recently been challenged for their social reduction- ism, but they have not been abandoned. They remain useful if understood through context-specific spatio-material mechanisms (Bunker, 2003, pp. 238–239). As stated above, world-systems theories attempt to explain the evolving characteristics of and rise and fall of different world-systems, requiring careful and detailed historical analysis at many scales, including micro-social. This theory is also contested in that some maintain that such a global world- system emerged much earlier and/or is not as Europe-centred as once thought (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1998; Frank and Gills, 1993). However, in all these perspectives, the starting unit of analysis remains at the world-system scale (a historically variable unit in terms of Earth surface area and time period covered). The imputation of determinism is similarly misplaced. Wallerstein (1974), for instance, made it very clear from the begin- ning that world- and mini-systems develop and change as a result of shifts within and between their components. The characteristics described and explained in world-systems research involve the understanding of co-determination of all forms of social relations, including cultural, political, and economic aspects of ethnic, class, and gender relations (Hall, 2000). World- and mini-systems are also open systems, tending to be thereby dynamic, complex, and unpredictable (Straussfogel, 1997, 2000). The world-systems paradigm emphasis on the complex and mutual constitution of components and systems stands in contrast to the above-described mischaracterisations within political ecology.

#### 2. Debate about Debate Link – Impacts about debate and the assumption that surrendering ballots has political force to remedy antiblackness is bourgeois ideology – to think that ballots in Round 1 of the Kentucky Round Robin can change material conditions of anti-blackness is inseparable from magical voluntarism

Cloud and Gunn 10 (Joshua Gunn & Dana L. Cloud, Department of Communication, University of Texas at Austin, "Agentic Orientation as Magical Voluntarism" Communication Theory 20 (2010) 50–78 © 2010 International Communication Association//shree)

Over a decade ago anthropologists Jean and John L. Comaroff (1999) advanced the provocative thesis that globalization in late capitalism has led to ‘‘a dramatic intensification . . . of appeals to enchantment,’’ often most discernable in industrializing countries such as South Africa (p. 282). From ‘‘get rich quick’’ pyramid schemes to e-mail promises from millionaire widows in Nigeria, ‘‘capitalism has an effervescent new spirit—a magical, neo-Protestant zeitgeist—welling up close to its core’’ (p. 281). Of course, over a half-century ago Theodor Adorno (1994) inveighed against astrology and soothsaying as indices of economic magic, underscoring the ability of capitalism to promote the ‘‘doctrine of the existence of spirit’’ so central to bourgeois consciousness. ‘‘In the concept of mind-in-itself,’’ argued Adorno, ‘‘consciousness has ontologically justified and perpetuated privilege by making it independent of the social principle by which it is constituted. Such ideology explodes in occultism: It is Idealism come full circle’’ (p. 133).What the Comaroffs point to is not the arrival of a new form of magical thinking, then, but the intensification and proliferation of postenlightenment gullibility via globalization—ironically in what is presumably the age of cynical reason (e.g., Sloterdijk, 1987). As human beings, academics are just as susceptible to magical thinking and narcissistic fantasies of omnipotence as everyone else. Perhaps because at some level of communication scholars tend to entertain a sense of the magical in the idea of communication (see Peters, 1999), we have been particularly prone to a philosophical belief in what we term ‘‘magical voluntarism,’’ the notion that human agency is better understood as the ability to control a given phenomenon through the proper manipulation of thoughts and symbols (e.g., language). Going well beyond the straightforward idea that our thoughts necessarily influence our actions in transforming the world around us, what we are calling magical voluntarism fosters a deliberate misrecognition of material recalcitrance, an inability to recognize the structural, political, economic, cultural, and psychical limits of an individual’s ability to act in her own interests. Furthermore, magical voluntarism refuses to acknowledge that there is a limit to the efficacy of symbolic action, beyond which persuasion and thought alone fail to shift existing social relations. In popular culture, magical voluntarism is typified by the bestselling book and DVD The Secret (Byrne, 2006; Heriot, 2006), which teach the reader/viewer that ‘‘[y]our life right now is a reflection of your thoughts. That includes all great things, and all the things you consider not so great. Since you attract to you what you think about most, it is easy to see what your dominant thoughts have been on every subject of your life, because that is what you experienced’’ (Byrne, 2006, p. 9). The ‘‘magical, neo-Protestant zeitgeist’’ typified by the raging success of The Secret (see McGee, 2007) indicates that enchantment is not limited to developing countries, but is also a crowning achievement of late capitalism in the postindustrial world. Nor is magical thinking limited to popular culture. As a recent essay in this journal by Sonja K. Foss, William J. Waters, and Bernard J. Armada (2007) demonstrates, magical thinking has some purchase in the field of communication studies (see also Geisler, 2005; Villadsen, 2008).1 According to Foss, Waters, and Armada, human agency is simply a matter of consciously choosing among differing interpretations of reality. We argue that the understanding of agency advanced by Foss, Waters, and Armada is informed by the same voluntarist ideology that has enchanted The Secret’s millions of readers. Below we advance a conception of agency as an open question in order to combat magical thinking in contemporary communication theory. Although we approach the concept of agency from different theoretical standpoints (one of us from the perspective of psychoanalysis, the other, classical Marxism), we are mutually opposed to the (bourgeois) idealism of magical voluntarism in recent work in communication and rhetorical studies on agency.2 Our primary vehicle of argument is a critique of Foss, Waters, and Armada’s essay, ‘‘Toward a Theory of Agentic Orientation: Rhetoric and Agency in Run Lola Run,’’ which represents a magical-voluntaristic brand of practical reason (phronesis) that is increasingly discredited among a number rhetorical scholars. We are particularly alarmed by the suggestion that even in ‘‘situations’’ such as ‘‘imprisonment or genocide . . . agents have choices about how to perceive their conditions and their agency . . . [which] opens up opportunities for innovating . . . in ways unavailable to those who construct themselves as victims’’ (p. 33). The idea that one can choose an ‘‘agentic orientation’’ regardless of context and despite material limitation not only ignores two decades of research within the field of communication studies on agency and its limitations (and is thus ‘‘regressive’’ in more than one sense), but tacitly promotes a belief in wish-fulfillment through visualization and the imagination, as well as a commitment to radical individualism and autonomy. As a consequence, embracing magical voluntarism leads to narcissistic complacency, regressive infantilism, and elitist arrogance.

#### Turns Case – over-investing in the ballot’s “political force” renders challenges to antiblackness into local self help.

Cloud and Gunn 10 (Joshua Gunn & Dana L. Cloud, Department of Communication, University of Texas at Austin, "Agentic Orientation as Magical Voluntarism" Communication Theory 20 (2010) 50–78 © 2010 International Communication Association//shree)

Constructivism and the Malleable World.Presumably drawing on the work of Judith Butler (1993, p. 28),5 **Foss, Waters, and Armada argue that orienting oneself as the ‘‘director’’ of one’s life is in tune with a tenet acknowledged by a number of diverse perspectives, ranging from social constructionism to quantum physics. Simply put, it is that symbols create reality*. . . .* Symbolic choices *. . .* can and do affect the structural world*. . . .*** Although the reality of everyday life appears prearranged, ordered, and objective, and therefore outside of agents’ sphere of influence *. . .* the structural world not only ‘‘bears cultural constructions’’ but is itself a construction. (p. 220) **Because the structural world is itself a construction, individuals are capable of changing that world by thinking and making choices about it.** Although the authors acknowledge that ‘‘agents cannot *. . .* lay out precisely the routes through which their desires will be fulfilled,’’ they nevertheless believe that ‘‘desires are realized in outcomes that align with agents’ choices’’ because of the ontological status of the structural world as a construction (p. 220). The key to understanding the ideal of agentic orientation is *full consciousness*: In order to change the construction of the world, one must understand what options are available and put faith in unforeseen possibilities yet to come (pp. 220–221). **Such a position is entirely in keeping with the ‘‘core concept’’ of magic: ‘‘that mind affects matter, and that *. . .* the trained imagination can alter the physical world’’** (Luhrman, p. 7).6 Not surprisingly, Rhonda Byrne also aligns ‘‘The Secret’’ with quantum physics (p. 156); however, constructivism appears in *The Secret* most conspicuously in the guise of ‘‘the law of attraction,’’ which Bob Doyle, ‘‘author and law of attraction specialist,’’ defines simply as ‘‘like attracts like’’ at ‘‘a level of thought.’’ Byrne elaborates: The law of attraction says *like attracts like*, and so as you think a thought, you are also attracting *like* thoughts to you*. . . .* Your life right now is a reflection of your past thoughts. That includes all the great things, and all the things you consider not so great. Since you attract to you what you think about most, it is easy to see what your dominant thoughts have been on every subject of your life . . . Until now! Now you are learning The Secret, and with this knowledge, you can change everything. (pp. 8–9) Changing everything depends on understanding the ontological primacy of attraction, which is best grasped as a form of magnetism (even though magnetism is, in physics, the attraction of *opposites*): ‘‘Thoughts are magnetic, and thoughts have a frequency,’’ explains Byrne. ‘‘As you think, those thoughts are sent out into the Universe, and they magnetically attract all *like* things that are on the same frequency’’ (p. 10). Nevertheless, as with Foss, Waters, and Armada, Byrne and her army of specialists insist on the constructedness of reality and the mutability of structure. ‘‘Time,’’ for example, is just an illusion: Einstein told us that. If this is the first time you have heard it, you may find it a hard concept to get your head around*. . . .* What quantum physicists and Einstein tell us is that everything is happening simultaneously*. . . .* It takes no time for the Universe to manifest what you want. Any time delay you experience is due to your delay in getting to the place of believing, knowing, and feeling that you already have it. (p. 63) The concept of temporality is used here to teach readers a certain version of constructivism, which is similar to the version Foss, Waters, and Armada advance in their reading of *Run Lola Run*: all three runs in the film happen at the same time, but reflect different levels of believing, knowing, and feeling. Once Lola understood the mutability of reality and the power of her manipulation of symbols, she could magically bend the laws of the Universe for money**. Similarly, Byrne writes, ‘‘[i]t’s as easy to manifest one dollar as it is to manifest one million dollars’’ if you simply have the right mindset (p. 68). Although we do not dismiss certain forms of constructivist thought, it is important to detail the consequence or ‘‘outcome’’ of choosing magical voluntarism. Both *The Secret* and Foss, Waters, and Armada invoke physics to argue that structural change is possible for *anything you desire* through conscious thought and choice.** Hence, magical voluntarism denies that some material and social conditions are not changeable: Agentic orientations *. . .* are achieved within, rather than simply given by, the conditions of individuals’ lives. Thus, individuals may be in a dominant position as defined by economic and other structural conditions or in a subordinate position as defined by a lack of access to such resources, *but they may choose any agentic orientation and produce any outcome they desire*. We acknowledge that such a view may be difficult to accept in extreme cases such as imprisonment or genocide; even in these situations, however, agents have choices about how to perceive their conditions and their agency. Even in these situations, adoption of the agentic orientation of director opens up opportunities for innovating in ways unavailable to those who construct *themselves* as victims. (p. 223, emphasis added) In other words, the starving prisoner in a concentration camp should choose the director orientation and dream-up the possibility of her liberation or escape.7 Aside from the offensiveness of such a perspective on imprisonment and genocide, what is **the *outcome* of adopting this ontological view about ‘‘structural’’ conditions? *The Secret* is quite clear on the answer:** narcissistic complacency**. ‘‘Anything we focus on we do create,’’ explains Hale Dwoskin, ‘‘so if we’re** really angry**, for instance, at a war that’s going on, or strife or suffering, we’re adding our energy to it’’ (pp. 141–142). So although the rhetoric of magic exemplified by *The Secret* acknowledges structural injustice, it gets explained away in mystical terms that urge the reader to turn her back to the world and seek within.** The video and book openly discourage social protest, invoking Carl Jung’s phrase, ‘‘what you resist persists’’ (p. 142). ‘‘Don’t give energy to what you don’t want,’’ intones one of the video’s ‘‘teachers.’’ For example, the DVD segment on wealth begins with black-and-white footage of sweatshop laborers in dreary factories, but sweatshops are a mere blip on the screen. Immediately, the text explains that today one can be free from such exploitation and drudgery simply by wishing for money.8 The real world outcome of the constructivism that supports magical voluntarism is ultimately selfish inaction. ‘‘You cannot help the world by focusing on the negative things,’’ says Byrne. ‘‘When I discovered The Secret I made a decision that I would not watch the news or read newspapers anymore, because it did not make me feel good’’ (pp. 144–145). Although professional scholars in the United States may be buffered from some of the vagaries of economic crisis and barriers to achievement, there are, in fact—as opposed to the fantasy of a filmic game or magnetizing your desires into reality—millions of people around the world who cannot wish away the ‘‘conditions, people, or events external to them’’ (p. 209). Nongovernmental organizations, grassroots banks and crafts projects, and other forms of localized ‘‘self-help’’ can do little to curtail the broader abuses of capitalist globalization. But Foss, Waters, and Armada chastise critical postcolonial scholars Radha Hegde and Raka Shome, as if the (magical) options available to a fictional Lola actually apply to sweatshop workers in India (p. 223). Similarly, The Secret encourages readers to turn on to the law of attraction and stop resisting injustice: ‘‘The antiwar movement creates more war,’’ explains Jack Canfield (quoted in Byrne, p. 142). Shockingly, however, Foss, Waters, and Armada carry their magical voluntarism beyond the fuzzy magnetism of The Secret to a most extreme conclusion: Symbolic choices, Run Lola Run argues, can and do affect the structural world. We acknowledge that a belief in this tenet is disputable in the presence of certain kinds of conditions, but **we ask our readers to consider seriously** for a moment . . .**the possibility that it might be true under all conditions.** (p. 220) **Even in the contexts of *famine and genocide***, Foss, Waters, and Armada believe that **changing one’s interpretation of events is the correct strategy**, especially because ‘‘what you resist, persists.’’ While demonstrably different, both their article and ***The Secret* counsel passivity**—implicitly and explicitly respectively—in the face of the most brutal exploitation and oppression, letting the purveyors of inequality off the hook for **their actions, urging millions to think positively in the face of their immiseration.9**

#### 3. Poetry Link – Moten and Harney’s fascination with the “poetry of everyday speech” operates on a register of local creation that becomes a cover for economic exploitation at the level of subjectivity

Gräbner and Wood 10 (Cornelia – Lecturer of European Languages and Cultures at Lancester University, and David – Researcher at the Institute for Aesthetic Research of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, “Poetics of Resistance: Introduction,” Cosmos & History 6(2):2-19, accessed 2-5-15 //Bosley)

The title of this special issue, poetics of Resistance, is also the name of a network of scholars and cultural producers. The network was founded in 2007 with the purpose of developing new analytical approaches for an understanding of the relationship between creativity, culture, and political resistance, in the context of neoliberal globalization, and from a perspective of committed scholarship. The founding members of the network felt that global neoliberal politics had created a situation in which the relationship between these three categories—creativity, the impact of neoliberalism, a committed position—became increasingly difficult to translate into practices of committed research and cultural production. This difficulty seemed to derive from a variety of reasons. one was that the term ‘cultural resistance’ seemed to hold rhetorical rather than analytical or descriptive power. In his introduction to the Cultural Resistance Reader, stephen Duncombe unravels some of the diverse meanings that the term can take on. he suggests that we think of cultural resistance in terms of ‘scales of resistance’, which he equates with ‘political engagement’. Duncombe suggests the existence of three scale measures: political self-consciousness, the social unit engaged in cultural resistance, and the results of cultural resistance.2 While Duncombe’s model of scales can be a productive approach if one wishes to analyse a great variety of practices in light of their resistant function(s), it does raise the question of which cultural practices are not at least potentially acts of political resistance, and what descriptive power the term ‘resistance’ still holds if it can be equally applied to shopping and to anti-consumerist culture jamming, for example. as Duncombe himself points out, the concept ‘culture’ is partially the source of such an excess of meaning:3 here i’m referring to culture as a thing, there as a set of norms, behaviors and ways to make sense of the world, and in still other places, i’m describing culture as a process. … The term ‘cultural resistance’ is no firmer. in the following pages i use it to describe culture that is used, consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not, to resist and/or change the dominant political, economic and/or social structure. but cultural resistance, too, can mean many things and take on many forms. Combining ‘resistance’ with ‘poetics’ limits the scope of the practices under discussion. ‘poetics’—as distinct from ‘culture’—encourages a focus on individual creativity rather than on the wider category of cultural practices. Those are still discussed; however, in the contexts discussed here this is usually done in relation to poetic practices. The register of individuality and subjectivity that is linked with the term poetics, and the evocation of collectivity and community through the term resistance, places the practices and works under discussion in a tension between these categories. it encourages an analytical approach that considers the relationship between the work of art, the subjectivities of its creator(s) and of its recipients, and the social movements or political ideologies with which it is linked. The place of the work of art in the tension field between the subjective and the collective, and the relationality that the existence of this tension field necessarily entails, has emerged as one of the most important foci of the work of members of the network. The term ‘resistance’, in the way it is used by the network, needs further explanation. We use it with specific reference to neoliberalism, as one recent form of capitalism, while also maintaining an interest in practices of creative resistance to pre-neoliberal regimes of capital. This focus was chosen to facilitate the response to a very particular situation which is characterized by the implementation of a specific set of ideologically based policies while, at the same time, the existence of the ideological dimension is disavowed by policy makers. as eagleton points out, proponents of conservatism (we may apply this more concretely to neoliberalism) are wary of acknowledging its own ideological status, since ‘to dub their own beliefs ideological would be to risk turning them into objects of contestation’.4 neoliberalism thus pretends to be pragmatic rather than ideological; interested in policy rather than ideology. This pretence is made easier by neoliberalism having originally emerged as an economic theory. David harvey writes:5 neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. … but beyond these tasks the state should not venture. This ‘theory of political economic practices’ does, however, have ideological underpinnings which are crucially important to an understanding of neoliberalism’s impact on the arts, and also on scholarship. Those ideological underpinnings have become ever more obvious as the economic theory proves to be flawed, inadequate, and destructive. since the crisis of 2008, it has become ever more necessary for neoliberalism’s proponents to maintain the appearance of its overall coherence and effectiveness. ideology is indispensable for this. Other actors—not politicians—have to step in and provide the justification for the continuity of neoliberal politics. This justification draws on the previous ‘construction of consent’, as harvey calls it, and this draws increasingly on the pretension that ‘there is no alternative’. Culture in the widest sense plays a part in translating the ideological points outlined by harvey into more generalized assumptions, discursive figures, and commonly held beliefs. Thus, neoliberalism creates imaginaries that can then inform the creative imagination or that, conversely, are projected through works of art without this necessarily being the intention of the artist. The potentially complicit functions of art and scholarship and their co-optation, are important areas of interest of the members of the network. at the same time—and this interest is more prominently represented in the articles collected in this issue—the members of the network explore how works of art can effectively resist the imposition of neoliberal ideology and the absorption of art by neoliberal politics, either by creating alternative imaginaries or by contributing to and interacting with political projects that stand in opposition to the neoliberal model. This sometimes implies seeking spaces of artistic praxis ‘outside’ neoliberalism, but frequently involves entering into discursive, and sometimes financial, negotiation with neoliberallyinformed social, cultural and educational structures. for those of us working in higher education, as we will see below, such negotiation is an everyday reality. ConCepTualizinG ResisTanCe The decision to focus specifically on neoliberalism, and on poetics rather than culture, requires a re-conceptualization of resistance and, with reference to scholarship, a re- thinking of the critical approaches to the relationship between creativity and resistance. a brief discussion of influential theoretical works on poetry as a practice of resistance highlights why it is difficult to use these approaches to understand the work of art in times of neoliberalism. John beverley and Marc zimmerman’s analysis of poetry in the Central american revolutions was able to draw on a revolutionary and ideological practice that informed literature; barbara harlow in Resistance Literature establishes a connection between resistance in literature and anti-colonial liberation struggles; and Carolyn forché in Against Forgetting argues that the act of witnessing as an act of resistance against enforced oblivion translates into an act of political resistance. however, the insidious and gradual insertion of a supposedly non-ideological neoliberal imaginary into cultural imaginaries is not as easily identifiable as an act of oppression or persecution. The neoliberal imaginary does not explicitly endorse or justify violence, and therefore is more complex to resist or to contest. hardt and negri’s concepts of the global state of war and the global state of exception capture this elastic presence of violence and oppression. 6 The conceptualization of resistance is tied in with two further complexities: the place of the work of art in relation to resistance struggles, and the effectiveness of resistant works of art. both points are addressed in most essays in this issue, though authors come to different resolutions. The bearers of resistance struggles in the political sphere are some governments—for instance, those that form part of the bolivarian alternative for the americas (alba)—and a great variety of social movements. The emergence of new social movements as bearers of resistance struggles has opened up the question about the place of art and culture in relation to these movements. hardt and negri’s approach has been influential in this respect, and it is also exemplary of an approach with which members of the network struggle. in Empire, hardt and negri argue for an approach to culture that emphasizes its economic power:7 The various analyses of ‘new social movements’ have done a great service in insisting on the political importance of cultural movements against narrowly economic perspectives that minimize their significance. These analyses, however, are extremely limited themselves because … they perpetuate narrow understandings of the economic and the cultural. Most important, they fail to recognize the profound economic power of the cultural movements, or really the increasing indistinguishability of economic and cultural phenomena. on the one hand, capitalist relations were expanding to subsume all aspects of social production and reproduction, the entire realm of life; and on the other hand, cultural relations were redefining the production processes and economic structures of value. A regime of production, and above all a regime of the production of subjectivity, was being destroyed and another invented by the enormous accumulation of struggles.

#### Neoliberalism turns polyrhythms

Leitch 12 – Professor of English at the University of Oklahoma (Vincent, “Cultural Studies and Poetry” in The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics edited by Roland Greene, Stephen Cushman, Clare Cavanagh, Jahan Ramazani, Paul F. Rouzer, Harris Feinsod, David Marno, and Alexandra Slessarev, p327, accessed 2-5-15 //Bosley)

During more recent decades under the sign of neoliberalism, the postmod. poet has been pictured as a member of the so-called creative class, a historically new social rule fashioned esp. by chambers of commerce and city planners. Cultural studies registers this transformation with dismay but not surprise. Social architects today seek to redesign urban downtowns complete with loft, art galleries, coffee shops, and bookstores lit for bourgeois bohemians (engineers, doctors. and professionals with money). Holders of fine-arts degrees and professors of creative writing belong to the creative class, academic poets included. (Between 2000 and 2009. U.$. colleges and universities awarded more than 40,000 university degrees in creative writing.) The main point here is not simply that the social roles of poets and poetry change through hist. but that today the poet belongs to and is often co-opted by higher education, entertainment, and business interests. This turn of events is unusual within the long historical sequence of poetry’: patrons from city-states, churches, monarchies, and aristocracies to book-reading publics, universities, and media conglomerates (see PATIIONAGE). Not surprisingly, there is among cultural-studies scholars some nostalgia for earlier times and much glumness about poetry’s current incorporation. The poet as social outsider and independent critic survives as an ideal, as in Damon's The Dark End of the Street. In this context, popular and minority poetries serve compensatory roles: they keep alive for large audiences not only the socially critical and outsider missions of poetry but also its appeals to emotion, musicality, representation, and ethical judgment.

#### 3. Alt doesn’t erase black history or push out black people talking about race---United Auto Workers strike that included 500K black members against global industry proves---our only argument is that focus on vertical organizing and global focus is vital for solutions to international challenges.

DE Boer 14 <http://fredrikdeboer.com/2014/06/26/i-dont-recognize-the-world-peter-frase-is-critiquing/> I’m a doctoral student in the Rhetoric and Composition at Purdue University. Rhetoric and composition is a subfield within English, dedicated to the study of writing and argument.

Peter Frase is ordinarily a writer of great clarity, which makes his latest piece for Jacobin even harder to understand. It’s a meandering, directionless complaint that seems to me to be addressing a strawman left. For all its digressions and myriad targets, it can be boiled down to saying, “Class is real and important but it’s not the same as gender and race and those are important to.” To which I would say… well, yeah! Is there a stereotype of socialists who say “it’s not about race” or similar nonsense? Sure. Such people are stupid and should be told so. Race and gender are separate from class, women and people of color face types of discrimination and oppression that are separate from class oppressions, and it’s our responsibility to address those issues head-on. But it’s quite strange to me to see the suggestion that this is somehow a major problem in the current world of left-wing publishing. Left-wing thought has become utterly dominated by intersectionality. (Or, really, a vague and loose concept that has taken the name of the more rigorous and specific theory of intersectionality.) Marxist and socialist journals publish tons and tons of work on race and gender, far more than they do on class as an overarching phenomenon. Left-wing publishing, for good and bad, is defined in large measure by a particular social and cultural group. And that group has little use for issues of class that aren’t ancillary to issues of race and gender. Just check the publishing records of the popular left. Find how many of them concern, say, the destitute white underclass of the Appalachian mountains. You won’t find many! There are many reasons for why discussions of race and gender move the needle with the young left in a way that class analysis doesn’t. Obviously, a genuine desire to address racial and gender injustice is a very large part. But less helpfully, there’s a powerful lack of familiarity with poor white people among many young leftists. Many or most of them grew up in economic security or affluence and went to elite colleges. In such environments, they had little or no opportunity to experience white poverty as a lived phenomenon. In contrast, their experiences of black and Hispanic people stem largely from media portrayals of such people as poor, criminal, and generally dysfunctional. White poverty plays outside of the narrative that they have developed from this limited perspective. Another major reason is implicit racism. They talk endlessly about their high regard for “POC.” But their tendency to see poverty and hopelessness as inherently associated with people of color ultimately reveals a condescension, a quiet belief that black and Hispanic people can’t help but be poor. Though they direct apathy at best towards the white poor and concern for poor people of color, ultimately they belittle both, in that their lack of concern for white poverty implies that they think white people deserve it while black and Hispanic people can’t be expected to do better. It’s the soft bigotry of low expectations for people of color and high expectations for white people. The truth is that in both cases, there are systemic inequalities that contribute to the immisseration of both groups, though surely they are different for each. The ultimate point, for me, is that while race and gender injustice are inherently separate from class injustice, the best solutions to race and gender injustice are class solutions. For decades, we’ve tried to fight racism by being nice about race, by not saying bad words. It’s utterly failed. Instead, we should advance structural, economic solutions to structural, economic problems. Like reparations!

#### 3. Cap turns intracommunal connection---reduces rhythmic emotion into a commodity through alienation----1AC gets reincorporated as a new item on the market

Robinson 14 – Professor of sociology at UC Santa Barbara [William, *Global capitalism and the crisis of humanity*, Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 222-4]

How viable are transformative strategies based on the notion that local communities can withdraw from global capitalism? The attempt to create alter- native communities at the local level, to set up cooperatives, to decentralize circuits of food supply, to withdraw from the global agro-industrial regime, to decentralize energy distribution and consumption, and to construct cooperative enterprises and local solidarity economies are necessary and important. Yet they do not in themselves resolve the problem of power. In the absence of a strategy to confront the state and to transform the system from within we are left with the dangerous illusion that the world can be changed without resolving this matter of power. Global capitalism is now internal to practically all communities on the planet. It has spun webs of worldwide interdependency that link us all to a larger totality. Global capitalism is indeed totalizing. The notion that one can escape from global capitalism not by defeating it but by creating alternative spaces or islands of utopia ignores the unpleasant fact that no matter how one wills it to be so, these spaces cannot disengage from capitalism, if for no other reason than that capital and the state will penetrate – often forcibly – and continuously reincorporate these spaces.

Localized solutions are too piecemeal to confront the power of global capitalism – to change the global balance of class and social forces. There is no way to get around the fact that the TCC holds class power over humanity, and the TNS exercises multiple forms of direct, coercive power. The state exercises power over us. This fact will not go away by ignoring this power. It is illusory to suppose that it can be countered by constructing autonomous communities, which in fact are not autonomous because such communities cannot extricate themselves from the webs of global capitalism, and even if they could, in theory, the state would not allow them to; it would use the force of its law to reincorporate such communities. There is no getting around confrontation with the state, no avoiding a struggle to wrest state power away from capital, its agents and allies. The struggle to withdraw from global capitalism, no matter how important, must be coupled with a struggle to overthrow global capitalism, to destroy the transnational capitalist state.

#### 4. Leftist movements as antiblack doesn’t apply to our kritik---it’s historically disproven by Marxists in black America, Africa, Asia, and South America like the Mississippi Freedom Movement spearheaded by Fannie Lou, or sex worker unions at Stonewall demanding material fixes by raced, gender nonconforming, disabled activists – this argument is a neoliberal ruse to portray the local as inescapable to mystify the extra-local relations that structure inequality

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Commodity fetishism becomes represented in consciousness when we look at the price of a commodity and do not recognize the processes that create value and their relation to socially necessary labor time. Furthermore, as Marx demonstrated in Capital, this concealment is a necessary outcome of the contradictions within the social relations of production of capitalism. In this way, what is locally, experientially accessible comes to stand in as the reality of something whose production is organized trans-locally. This disjuncture between what is immediately and locally available and its trans-local organization is the fissure that I want to explore through the use of the concept of fetish. Often the concept of fetishism is interpreted in a paradoxically fetishized way, meaning that we believe the commodity itself to be the source of this mode of consciousness rather than the social relations and forms of consciousness that produce the commodity. Allman (2007) argued that fetishism within Marx's conceptual universe is the ultimate form of reification, ‘a form of distortion where the attributes and powers, the essence, of the person or social relation appear as natural, intrinsic, attributes of powers of the “thing”’ (p. 37). By utilizing the concept of fetish, we can see that within the ‘local trap’, the local becomes a place represented through various domains of space, time, and identity; it becomes objectified or ‘fixed’ in our thinking rather than remaining as processes and relations that shift in time and space. This construction of the local not only sees the ‘extra-local’ as inaccessible, it conceives of the local as inescapable. The local somehow becomes apart from and opposite to the extra-local and the only domain upon which social change may be pursued. Allman (2001) argued that this construction is intimately tied to the organization of political and economic life under capitalism as separate spheres. Certainly, we can tease out the relationships between this ‘local’ sphere of participation and its manifestation in the conservative communitarian ideology that has characterized articulations of the ‘Third Way’. By fetishizing the local we erase, diminish, misinterpret, and/or confound its relation to the extra-local. The most important point in which this relation is rendered invisible occurs when we do not acknowledge that local relations are not only organized at the local level. The local is not just the local; it is also the global. It is the site where global relations become enacted in specific ways, organized through local social relations (Ng & Mirchandani, 2008). This relation, however, has to be understood as a historical materialist dialectic in order to transcend notions such as ‘glocalization’, which invents the global–local dialectic as product of late capitalism and not, as Allman argued, as part of the inner relations of capitalism (Allman, 2001; Arnove, Torres, & Franz, 2013; Bauman, 1998). In this articulation, the local is not solely determined by the global, read as ‘the base’, but rather is ‘fighting’ for its sovereignty within the expanding global market (Jarvis, 2006). Here the local and the global are conceptualized as separate spheres acting upon one another. Like boxers in the ring, they engage, but return to their separate corners. This connection of the local–global/particular–universal relation obscures some very important pieces of the puzzle, which are fundamental to the radical theorization of democratic learning.

#### Conflating the local or domestic with global is analytic myopia that hinders anti-neoliberal praxis against both eco-degradation and social inequality

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These latest turns have yet to lead to an alternative comparative framework that would overcome the limitation created by a micro-scale oriented analysis. Walker’s proposal to employ an amended concept of region that entails analysing larger-scale structuring factors would helpfully direct political ecology towards such a framework (Walker, 2003, p. 8, 12–13), provided the region not become the analytical starting point. Such a neo-regionalist approach can avoid the above-discussed pitfalls by considering the interconnectedness intrinsic to the current world-system that shapes (dis- cursively contested) environmental processes and region-specific people–environment relations. For instance, Walker identifies substantive shifts in the local environmental politics in the rural areas of the western US as intimately associated with changing regional capitalist relations (2003, pp. 16–21). However, to cite one example, such regional processes have been predicated on, among other factors, world capitalist shifts, including the ability of US oil firms to secure vast quantities of fossil–fuel energy through US imperial might. Were the US national state not to have attained global economic and military supremacy, especially since the 1950s, the ex-urban, petrol- guzzling commuter behind the rural-residential economy and local landscape preservation simply could not exist. Such historical developments, furthermore, are predicated on the creation and enforcement of exploitation zones (of lesser paid and unpaid workers and resources like oil, heavy metals, etc.) within and outside the US that reach the household level. In other words, systemic and relational changes at the world capitalist scale shape regional people–environment relations and should be closely analysed to shed light on how regions (as combinations of social and environmental characteristics) even come into being. Another example that would benefit from a world-systems perspective could be in explaining regional differences in biocide production and use, which has recently been studied at the world scale (Robbins, 2007). Increasing biocide use in one place cannot be fully explained without considering what occurs in another, often far-away place. To add to Robbins’ large-scale analysis of agro-chemical industries and their repercussions, there could be a systemic and relational view of what is produced and used where. For example, uneven wages and capital flows between places, in accordance with pre-existing relations among different regions or countries, create conditions for some places to become rife with biocide use and/or characterised by agrochemical industry operations through the economic destabilisation (resource extraction, ‘‘underdevelopment”) of other places, with often negative, if differentiated environmental effects in all places concerned. Something similar can be said of the recent expansion of natural preserves (see Zimmerer, 2006) with the simultaneous worldwide reduction in biodiversity (increasing habitat destruction). Such a contradictory movement remains poorly explained without analysing world capitalist financial networks, centred in wealthy countries, which enable the expansion of urban/industrial and re- source-extraction areas worldwide and the changing roles of national states in the evolving capitalist world-system (e.g., legitimation functions, changes in capital-accumulation strategies and incentives). Another weakness in political ecology, due to omitting systemic and relational processes at the world scale, is evident in the understanding of discursive processes in policy-making circles, such as the treatment of ‘‘ecological modernisation” theory. Blaikie (1999, p. 138) offers, along with other political ecologists, a very carefully considered critique that avoids any implications of romanticised ‘‘pre-modern” human impacts. He points out the lack of analysis of social power relations and the curious absence of poorer countries or their particular contexts in ‘‘ecological modernisation” discussions (interestingly, Zimmerer and Bassett, 2003, p. 5, overlook the power relations aspect of the critique). But these critiques fail to consider the relational aspects that enable ‘‘ecological modernisation” even to exist as a discourse and as a set of regionally viable policies (i.e., the world-scale social relations and material conditions). When viewed through a world-systems lens, it becomes clear that such ‘‘modernisation” is often predicated on the maintenance of unequal exchange, through which less powerful national states expand internal territorial domination at the expense of local inhabitants and the most powerful national states establish greater direct or indirect control over conservation areas through loan contingencies (e.g., debts for nature swaps) and technocratic dictates on management priorities through NGOs and international political and economic institutions (e.g., the World Bank, the UN, Sierra Club, WWF), and the expansion of resource exploitation in poorer countries to allow for improvements in environmental quality in the wealthier countries (see Goldman, 1998). The above illustrations show how adopting world-systems theories and methodologies can enhance the practice and explanatory reach of political ecology perspectives. World-systems research concentrates on investigating large spatio-temporal scales to define the contextual units of analysis (e.g., long-term economic and hegemonic cycles) and mesh them with smaller scale phenomena (for works specifically related to environmental issues, see, for example, Barham et al., 1995; Bunker, 1985; Chew, 1999; Goldfrank et al., 1999). As exemplified in Dale Tomich’s work on plantation slavery systems in Martinique, micro-scale processes are not necessarily elided through large-scale (world-system) focus; on the contrary, as long as the emphasis is on the systemic and relational, they can be better understood and explained and contribute to understanding the making of larger-scale processes. ... although the object of inquiry ... is slave production in Martinique during the period 1830–1848, the unit of analysis is not Martinique itself. Rather, attention is paid to processes of commodity production and exchange beyond these boundaries ... to reconstruct the temporal and spatial frameworks that are constitutive of relations of slave production and exchange in Martinique in the historical process of development of the world economy. Thus, the world market and the French colonial system are not treated as ‘‘external” context or background for processes and relations in Martinique, but are taken to be formative of them. Conversely, Martinique represents a particular concatenation of diverse world processes. Each such process is revealed in the others, but none is reducible to any other. (Tomich, 1990, p. 7) By seeing the ‘‘local” in the ‘‘global” – to invert a tendency exemplified in Gezon (2005) – world-systems perspectives could productively divert political ecology research away from its highly problematic propensity to favour micro-scale (or meso-scale) empowerment as the solution to anthropogenic environmental degradation (Brown and Purcell, 2005, p. 608).