# 2AC R2 – Happy Shirley!

## 2AC – R-Spec

### 2AC – Tech Key

#### Tech use is inevitable, that’s Karlsson – companies will keep producing – the only question that matters is how to increase access so that responding to climate change is not a disproportionate, Western privilege.

#### Only way to solve climate is to use the technology available.

Aronoff & Denvir 21 [Kate, staff writer at the New Republic, writing fellow at In These Times, Daniel, visiting fellow in International and Public Affairs at Brown Univ, “Capitalism Can’t Fix the Climate Crisis,” *Jacobin*, 08/25/21, <https://jacobinmag.com/2021/08/capitalism-climate-crisis-global-green-new-deal-clean-energy-fossil-fuel-industry>, accessed 08/26/21, JCR]

DD: You write: “My argument in this book is not that capitalism has to end before the world can deal with the climate crisis. Dismantling a centuries-old system of production and distribution, and building a carbon-neutral and worker-owned alternative, is almost certainly not going to happen within the small window of time the world has to avert runaway disaster. The private sector will be a major part of the transition off of fossil fuels. Some people will get rich, and some unseemly actors will be involved. Capitalist production will build solar panels, wind turbines, and electric trains. But whether we deal with climate change or not can’t be held hostage to executives’ ability to turn a profit. To handle this crisis, capitalism will have to be replaced as society’s operating system, setting out goals other than the boundless accumulation of private wealth.” This argument provoked a bit of controversy in the audience a few years back in Chicago when we discussed it on a panel at the Socialism Conference. Both of us would love to live in a socialist world, and we’ve got to continue to fight for one. But why do you think that it’s important for people to understand that we need to deal with climate change before we win an entirely new mode of production? What’s entailed by the conclusion that we need to pursue radical social-democratic reforms on the road to socialism? Is this a theory of how radical social-democratic reforms can lead to socialism? Is it just a reality that the fast-ticking climate clock imposes on us? Or is it some of both? KA: It’s a reality. If the climate crisis were playing out over the course of two hundred, three hundred, or a thousand years, one could have an interesting theoretical debate about whether we should change the system we have and tweak it slightly in order to take on the crisis, or whether we should create an entirely new mode of production and build up a workaround alternative. Unfortunately, we just don’t have that time. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] outlined in its 2018 report on 1.5 degrees Celsius that we had roughly twelve years. That is now nine years in which to rapidly decarbonize the global economy, which is an enormous challenge. In order to meet that ever-shrinking twelve-year window, we have to use the productive system in which we live — which is not my ideal situation, but then again, neither is global warming.

## K

### 2AC: FW

### 2AC: Framing

#### Their view of racial capitalism is reductive---it is an expression of power that becomes hegemonic via institutional entrenchment---viewing it as fixed effaces the agency to change the future that is never settled and proceeds dialetically.

Lewis R. **Gordon 17**. Philosophy Prof @ UCONN. 12/2017. “Thoughts on Afropessimism,” Critical Exchange on Afro pessimism. Contemporary Political Theory, pp. 1–33.

I begin with this tale of philosophical abstraction to contextualize Afropessimism. Its main exemplars, such as Jared Sexton and Frank Wilderson III, emerged from academic literary theory, an area dominated by poststructuralism even in many cases that avow ‘‘Marxism.’’ Sexton (2010) and Wilderson (2007) divert from a reductive poststructuralism, however, through examining important existential moves inaugurated, as Daniel McNeil (2011, 2012) observed, by Fanon and his intellectual heirs. The critical question that Afropessimism addresses in this fusion is the viability of posed strategies of Black liberation. (I’m using the capital ‘‘B’’ here to point not only to the racial designation ‘‘black’’ but also to the nationalist one ‘‘Black.’’ Afropessimists often mean both, since blacks and Blacks have a central and centered role in their thought.) The world that produced blacks and in consequence Blacks is, for Afropessimists, a crushing, historical one whose Manichaean divide is sustained contraries best kept segregated. Worse, any effort of mediation leads to confirmed black subordination. Overcoming this requires purging the world of antiblackness. Where cleansing the world is unachievable, an alternative is to disarm the force of antiblack racism. Where whites lack power over blacks, they lose relevance – at least politically and at levels of cultural and racial capital or hegemony. Wilderson (2008), for instance, explores my concept of ‘‘an antiblack world’’ to build similar arguments. Sexton (2011) makes similar moves in his discussions of ‘‘social death.’’ As this forum doesn’t afford space for a long critique, I’ll offer several, non-exhaustive criticisms. 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. Its limitations emerge from a basic fact: Black people and other opponents of such a project fought, and continue to fight, as we see today in the #BlackLivesMatter movement and many others, against it. The same argument applies to the argument about social death. Such an achievement would have rendered even these reflections stillborn. The basic premises of the Afropessimistic argument are, then, locked in performative contradictions. Yet, they have rhetorical force. This is evident through the continued growth of its proponents and forums (such as this one) devoted to it. In Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism, I argued that there are forms of antiblack racism offered under the guise of love, though I was writing about whites who exoticize blacks while offering themselves as white sources of black value. 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 thus 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. There is asymmetry where whites stand as others who look downward to those who are not their others or their analogues. Antiblack racism is thus not a problem of blacks being ‘‘others.’’ It’s a problem of their not-being-analogical-selves-and-not-evenbeing-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 that these problems occur. Reason in such contexts has a bad habit of walking out when Blacks enter. What are Blacks to do? As reason cannot be forced, because that would be ‘‘violence,’’ they must ironically reason reasonably with 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 Les Damne de la terre (‘‘Damned 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 emerges from interaction. The police, he observes, are the mediator in such a situation, as their role is force/violence instead of the human, discursive one of politics and civility (Fanon, 1991). 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 in those countries. An immediate observation of many postcolonies is that antiblack attitudes, practices, and institutions aren’t exclusively white. Black antiblack dispositions make this clear. Black antiblackness entails 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. Afropessimism faces the problem of a hidden premise of white agency versus Black incapacity. Proponents of Afropessimism would no doubt respond that the theory itself is a form of agency reminiscent of Fanon’s famous remark that though whites created le Ne`gre it was les Ne`gres who created Ne´gritude. Whites clearly did not create Afropessimism, which Black liberationists should celebrate. We should avoid the fallacy, however, of confusing source with outcome. History is not short of bad ideas from good people. If intrinsically good, however, each person of African descent would become ethically and epistemologically a switching of the Manichean contraries, which means only changing players instead of the 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 (1968) showed, a decline of values during periods of social decay. It emerges when people no longer want to be responsible for their actions. Optimists expect intervention from beyond. Pessimists declare relief is not forthcoming. Neither takes responsibility for what is valued. The valuing, however, 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, however, ex post facto: It 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: 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. 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, nearly erased. Yet there was resistance even in that realm, as Africana and First Nation intellectual history and scholarship attest. 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 understand 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 individualsubstance-based, this model, articulated by Hobbes, Locke, 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. An alternative model, shared by many groups across southern Africa, 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’’ story across time. 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 energy affords emergence of alternatives. Kinds cannot be known before the actions that birthed them. Abstract as this sounds, it has much historical support. Evelyn Simien (2016), 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 could be no 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.’’ 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 and back to every act of resistance from Nat Turner’s Rebellion in the USA, Sharpe’s in Jamaica, or Tula’s in Curac¸ao 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 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. Ironically, if Afropessimism appeals to transcendent intervention, it would collapse into faith. If, however, the argument rejects transcendent intervention and focuses 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. The first is that politics is a social phenomenon, which means it requires the expanding options of a social world. Turning away from the social world, though a statement about politics, is not, however, in and of itself political. The ancients from whom much western political theory or philosophy claimed affinity had a disparaging term for individuals who resigned themselves from political life: idio¯te¯s, 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. We don’t, however, have to end our etymological journey in ancient Greek. 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 Macedonians, 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, collapses ultimately into a form of moralism (private, normative satisfaction) instead of public responsibility born of and borne by action. The second is the importance of power. Politics makes no sense without [power] it. But what is 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 hoarding 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. That institutions in the Americas very rarely attempt establishing positive relations to Blacks is the subtext of Afropessimism and this entire meditation. The discussion points, however, to a demand for political commitment. Politics itself emerges under different names throughout the history of our species, but the one occasioning the word ‘‘politics’’ is from the Greek po´lis, which refers to ancient Hellenic city-states. It identifies specific kinds of activities conducted inside the city-state, where order necessitated the resolution of conflicts through rules of discourse the violation of which could lead to (civil) war, a breaking down of relations appropriate for ‘‘outsiders.’’ Returning to the Fanonian observation of selves and others, it is clear that imposed limitations on certain groups amounts to impeding or blocking the option of politics. Yet, as a problem occurring within the polity, the problem short of war becomes a political one. Returning to Afropessimistic challenges, the question becomes this: If the problem of antiblack racism is conceded as political, where antiblack institutions of power have, as their project, the impeding of Black power, which in effect requires barring Black access to political institutions, then antiblack societies are ultimately threats also to politics defined as the human negotiation of the expansion of human capabilities or more to the point: freedom. Anti-politics is one of the reasons why societies in which antiblack racism is hegemonic are also those in which racial moralizing dominates: moralizing stops at individuals at the expense of addressing institutions the transformation of which would make immoral individuals irrelevant. As a political problem, it demands a political solution. It is not accidental that Blacks continue to be the continued exemplars of unrealized freedom. As so many from Ida B. Wells-Barnett to Angela Davis (2003) and Michelle Alexander (2010) have shown, the expansion of privatization and incarceration is squarely placed in a structure of states and civil societies premised on the limitations of freedom (Blacks) – ironically, as seen in countries such as South Africa and the United States, in the name of freedom.

### 2AC: Links

### 2AC: Link Turns

#### Climate nationalism –

#### TRIPS –

#### That cements U.S. imperialism and economic control over other countries – the aff uniquely limits U.S. influence

Davis et al. 20 (Robin Davis, Onyesonwu Chatoyer, and Nancy Wright, writers for Hood Communist journal, 4-9-2020, Sanctions Kill: The Devastating Human Cost of Sanctions, Wear Your Voice, https://www.wearyourvoicemag.com/sanctions-kill-the-devastating-human-cost-of-sanctions/

Economic sanctions are a tactic of war that target a particular nation for pressure by leveraging US dominance over the global financial and trade system. Sanctions work by essentially strangling the economy of the targeted nation. Because the system of global capitalism largely uses the US dollar, all international transactions are routed through US banks. This allows US banks to block or freeze individual transactions – or all transactions initiated by or for a particular nation – and also confiscate billions of dollars held by a targeted government upon demand. US global financial dominance also means that the US government can demand banks owned by completely uninvolved countries comply by threatening them with sanctions as well. A recent example of this is when Citibank (a US bank) and Deutsche Bank (a German bank) seized $1.4 billion in Venezuelan gold after the US government applied economic sanctions on the Venezuelan Central Bank. The way the US is able to control who can give and receive money from who and who can do business with who is not dissimilar to how US political and military dominance has allowed them to control the globe in the post World War 2 modern age. The US military is able to drone bomb nearly any person in any colonized country at any time without any consequence – see the illegal assassination of Qasem Soleimani. The US Navy is able to intercept ships (and thus interrupt trade) in nearly any waters at any time – see when they seized a ship headed for Venezuela with food in the Panama Canal. The permanent US seat on the UN security council alongside two other Western imperialist powers with tightly aligned agendas allows it to force global consensus toward regime change again and again and again. Economic sanctions are typically imposed through bills that glide easily through the US House and Representatives and Senate. They can also be imposed through executive order directly from the US president or authorized by a particular US government agency like the Department of the Treasury, State, or Defense – bypassing the system of so-called “checks and balances” entirely. If the US empire desires international support for a particular round of sanctions – as they might if they’re using them as part of broader escalation to war with a particular country – they pursue the support of the European Union, the UN security council, or assorted neo-colonial bodies like the Organization of American States or the African Union. Although rhetoric around sanctions typically holds them up as a kinder, gentler means of bringing nations who do not submit to the will of Western imperialism to heel, the reality of economic sanctions **is starvation and devastation** for the masses of people on the ground in the targeted country. Economic sanctions often indiscriminately target import and export sectors of a given economy, drastically restricting a nation’s ability to generate revenue through trade while also drastically restricting the sorts of goods that a nation can import. The day to day consequences for a sanctioned country are a massive inflation of the national currency, a ruined credit rating that makes it extremely difficult to obtain international loans, huge shortages and high prices for goods like food, medicine, fuel, industrial equipment, and crumbling infrastructure that can not be repaired or replaced because the materials required to do so can not be imported. US economic sanctions are essentially part of a strategy of **compliance through collective punishment**. By design, US sanctions are not targeted in scope and impact at the government of a particular country but rather at the civilian population of that country. The inevitable consequence of restricting a nation’s ability to import and export goods and generate the revenue it needs to function day to day is a collapse in that nation’s economy and thus its ability to provide for the basic needs of its own people. We can look to the African world for a clear example of what this looks like. After the September 1991 coup that deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the US imposed a round of economic sanctions in Haiti that had a devastating impact on the day to day lives of poor and working class Africans on the island. According to one report released by international public health experts at Harvard University, up to 1000 Haitian children were dying every month after a US trade embargo drastically restricted the nation’s ability to import food, medicine, and vaccines. When questioned on the impact sanctions were having on Haiti’s vulnerable and defenseless children, a US State Department representative, David Johnson, said: “Sanctions are by their very nature a blunt instrument, but they remain the best tool we have at our disposal to bring about the return of democracy in Haiti.” Think about which people in our society are most affected when access to basic necessities is cut off. When the day to day reality is soaring unemployment, high food and fuel prices, greatly limited access to medicine and antibiotics, and underdeveloped housing and medical care – all the most common consequences of economic sanctions. When a nation’s economy has collapsed and it’s state is no longer able to provide for the basic survival of its citizens, the result is a new reality of **instability, shortages, famine, and death** that devastatingly impacts an entire population but which most acutely targets the most vulnerable sectors of our people. Sectors like the elderly, the chronically ill & disabled, the very young, caretakers, and women, queer, trans, and gender variant people – **groups that are already facing constant attack** under patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism **seeing those attacks heightened** as scarcity ripples through the broader society.

#### The aff confronts the history of western colonialism and economic exploitation. A global Fordian compromise ensures oppressed people around the world the resources necessary to resist exploitation and flourish.

Karlsson 09 [Rasmus, Senior lecturer in Political Science at Umea University, “A global Fordian compromise? – And what it would mean for the transition to sustainability,” *Environmental Science & Policy* 12, http://bit.ly/2kfrsg6]

Though it may be simple to refute the normative and prescriptive elements of traditional green thought, we should be careful to think that we can do the same with its empirical analysis. The environmental problems are real and should indeed warrant radical political action. But any such action must first and foremost be based on the righteous claims for a decent life expressed by the developing world. Instead of seeing these claims as a threat to sustainability, the expansion of the global economy to the world’s poor should be seen as unique historic opportunity. Along those lines I will now delineate the idea of a global Fordian compromise. I will do this in a number of steps. First I will recapitulate the circumstances of the original ‘‘Fordian compromise’’. Then I will argue that even if economic globalization has been responsible for undermining the original compromise, the same forces may now be capable of renewing its relevance. With this in mind I will turn specifically to the agricultural sector and the European Union as an empirical illustration of how a global version of the compromise could work. By the early 1930s, the industrial countries were going through a deep and worsening recession. It seems correct to say that the crisis, at least to a large part, was caused by the very success of industrialism. The use of machinery and the division of labour had lead to a dramatic increase in productive capacity worldwide. At the same time, overall demand remained low, simply because the larger population could not afford to buy the goods that were produced. Historically, it had appeared rational for capital owners to keep wages as low as possible, to try to squeeze out that little extra marginal productivity through ever harsher conditions. This was also the analysis of Marx who thought that the declining rate of profit would lead to an increasing immiseration of the proletariat. Hence, for the more anarchistically inclined, the obvious solution was to overthrow the capital owners and divide their resources among the people. The problem with that approach however, was that the capitalists, albeit rich, were relatively few and the workers amounted to millions. What ensued, and what Marx famously did not foresee, was a new kind of compromise between capital owners and workers (Gourevitch, 1986, p. 128). In different countries, this compromise of so called ‘‘welfare capitalism’’ took on different shapes (Esping-Andersen, 1990). In the U.S. it was initiated by the capital owners, most notably by Henry Ford, who realized that it would be in ~~his~~ [their] own self-interest to raise salaries and by doing so making it possible for his workers to buy what they produced in the factories. In the Scandinavian countries, the same compromise came about as industrialists and unionists agreed to a peace accord on the labour market under the condition that salaries would rapidly be increased. Whatever its manifestation, the different compromises were unified in that they gave both sides of the labour market a vested interest in the future by pointing towards the long-term benefits of co-operation. Though the full effects of this grand bargain could not be seen until the 1960s, the ‘‘Fordian compromise’’ of welfare capitalism was indisputable the engine behind one of the longest periods of economic growth ever experienced. As material conditions improved, extreme poverty became more or less eradicated in many Western countries. Especially the Scandinavian countries showed that it was possible to combine a growth oriented market economy with a strong welfare state, at least as long as the total economic product kept growing in real terms from year to year. By the 1970s however, belief in the compromise of welfare capitalism began to fade. Increasing economic globalization had meant that wage increases were only possible to the extent that they were matched by real gains in terms of productivity. As companies became more export oriented, the purchase power of the own population also became relatively less important. Beside these materialistic explanations, there was simultaneously an ideological shift to the right, a shift that left classical liberals morally corrupted by the perverse idea that their future wealth was dependent on having more poor people in their societies. A similar kind of perverse logic was also replicated onto the international level. As globalization and trade liberalization made it possible to buy electronics, textiles and other consumer goods for remarkably low prices, many people came to believe that their own good life was somehow dependent on the hard and underpaid work carried out in other parts of the world. What such a belief failed to recognize is that the global economy is not, and has never been, a zero-sum game. Though consumers in the rich countries may benefit in the short run from low salaries in the developing world, the same is not true if we look beyond the immediate present. Then their interest would be much better served if these countries were transformed into advanced industrial economies and billions of new consumers would enter the global market. If the historic experience from countries like Japan and South Korea has any bearing, this would translate into a ‘‘race to the top’’ as growing wealth would allow automation and the substitution of menial work, which would then even further increase overall productivity (and thus, overall demand). It is in particular this possibility of automation and robotization that dependency theorists have ignored when insisting that global capitalism, as a system, requires poverty to function. On a political level, protectionists have repeatedly failed to offer a compelling alternative to this progressive vision, especially for the longer run. Not only does it seem morally suspect to deny poor countries the possibilities of economic development, the effects of artificially high prices also have to be borne by the own population while the allocation of resources into uncompetitive industries means less room for overall economic growth even domestically. Nowhere is this more evident than in the agricultural sector. Though the European Union is not alone in this regard, I will here take the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union as my main empirical example to illustrate what a global Fordian compromise could look like. Initiated in the early 1960s, the CAP today represents 44% of the EU budget with a total of 60 billion USD scheduled in spending for 2008 (EU, 2008). The principal problem motivating the different subsidies and programmes of the CAP has been the high productive capacity of the European farmers. Left to their own, they would easily produce an enormous surplus of for instance grain, milk products and olive oil. In a normal economy, the effect of such a surplus would be a sharp drop in prices, forcing enough farmers out of business until the market would reach an equilibrium point where supply is matched by demand. Since the political price of such a ‘‘reset’’ (be it in votes, landscape aesthetics or food security) has been considered too high, the surplus production has instead been continuously taken away from the European market. Though it would have been possible to simply burn the surplus (as actually has been done occasionally in the U.S. Midwest), much of the European surplus has instead been exported on to the world market. However, since prices on the world market historically have been dramatically lower than prices inside the EU, this has in practical terms meant a large scale dumping of agricultural products on the world’s poor. At first, this may seem like a good thing. The European agricultural surplus has enabled for instance the urban population along the coasts of Africa to buy farm products of good quality, products that they otherwise would not have been able to afford. But as the population of Lagos, Abidjan and other growing cities have turned to food from Europe (which has been sold according to the ‘‘Ryanair-logic’’; better to get at least something than nothing) they have also turned away from domestic producers who find themselves unable to compete. Again, if the agricultural market would have been any other normal market, these African producers would of course have turned to Europe or other industrial countries with their products. However, and here we see the true cynicism of the current regime, this is not possible since one of the core mechanisms of CAP is precisely high tariffs on agricultural products entering the union. The import tariffs are set at a level that raises the World market price up to a ‘‘target’’ price consistent with that inside the union. Though attempts to reform the CAP are nearly as old the policy itself, and moderate progress has indeed been made as in the recent ‘‘decoupling’’ of subsidies (giving farmers less of an incentive to overproduce), the overall picture remains bleak (Goodison, 2007). Unfortunately, even the recent surge in food prices has been insufficient to stimulate larger investments as long as the high import tariffs of the rich world remain intact. Deprived of any chance of entering the world economy from below, and from thereon start building a capital base of their own, the African countries have instead found themselves increasingly dependent on different forms of development aid. Obviously, such cash handouts cannot replace indigenous growth and history suggests that they may often do more harm than good (Easterly, 2006). What motivates the CAP and similar policies is the very high discount rate by which the future is weighted against the present. Even if nearly all of the world’s economists agree that it would bring tremendous benefits to every country, and especially to the developing world, if the CAP and other regimes preventing free trade were torn down, the current path dependency may seem overwhelming. Calculations suggest that global free trade could generate benefits of up to $2.4 trillion annually. Despite this, the industrial countries have been backing into every new agreement on agricultural products and other goods in which the developing world holds a competitive advantage, as mostly recently seen in the stalled talks of the Doha Development Round. Given the apparent lack of political leadership based on an alternative long-term vision, we repeatedly see well-organized concentrated interests (such as the French farmers) prevailing over broader but more diffused ones. We do not have to look further than to the shores of Europe to see the practical implications of this failure. There, every year thousands of impoverished people drown as they make their desperate attempts to enter the ‘‘free world’’. What is needed, more than anything else, is pro-active political action. We have to take seriously the environmentalists’ claim that the future matters, but employ that insight to supersede the cynical trade-off that they implicitly and silently project. Just as capital owners and workers eventually came to understand that it was in their mutual long-term interest to co-operate, so must the interests of global development and environmental protection be aligned in a manner that opens up an optimistic vision of the future. To some this may sound like the very idea of ‘‘sustainable development’’, as outlined in the so-called Brundtland report of 1987 (WCED, 1987). It is. But since then we have come to realize that in order to be successful, the scope of ecological modernization must be far greater, up to the extent that it will be able to challenge the fundamental axioms of sustainability (Karlsson, 2007). At the same time, the ‘‘low energy paths’’ of the original report have been outstripped by the overwhelming demand of billions in Asia and elsewhere. It is no longer a question (as it was then) if these parts of the world will become industrialized or not, the question is rather by what means they will industrialize. Both China and India possess abundant reserves of coal. In fact, China alone has enough coal to sustain its economic growth for a century or more (Fairley, 2007). Unless breakthrough technologies, such as nuclear fusion, are made readily available, it is most likely that these countries will start burning their coal reserves on a massive scale, rapidly undermining any effort to reduce carbon emissions. Already last year, China became the largest source of carbon emissions worldwide. These alarming trends, should if nothing else, emphasize the need for radical investment in research and development. This brings us back to the Fordian compromise and the present situation with regard to trade and development. Within the framework of forward-looking progressive politics, it should be recognized that the advanced industrial countries have a specific moral responsibility to reduce their environmental impact (Hayward, 2007). But unlike in traditional green thinking, that incurred ‘‘ecological debt’’ is not be paid through reduced economic activity or, as often has been suggested in more radical literature, by some sort of ‘‘wealth transfer’’. To play the historic parallel a bit further, that would be the equivalent of asking a capitalist in the 1930s to give out his money and join the working class in their suffering. Morally commendable as such an action certainly would have been, it would obviously be foolish to base the hope of social development on its realization. By the same token, we should not let the hope of environmental sustainability rest with environmental citizenship or some ‘‘great awakening’’ by the time a global climate catastrophe sets in. Instead, the moral responsibility consists in compelling the half-hearted liberals of Europe and elsewhere to actually live up to what they teach in the economic classes. Witnessing the raise of China, South Korea and the wider Pacific Rim, it should be beyond reasonable doubt that the liberal market economy is uniquely equipped to lift billions out of poverty. Considering the number of successful economic transformations that the advanced industrial countries themselves have gone through over the last century, it should also be clear that the path to the future should be one that embraces openness, innovation and competition. Applying this to the case of the CAP, we should see the unique chance of striking a grand bargain by which the rich countries accept to wither the storm as their markets are open to competition. Following a removal of all barriers preventing free trade, the developed economies could initiate the long overdue transfer of resources from agriculture to scientific research. At the same time, the poor countries of the world would finally be able to begin walking the long road towards modernization, a road on which they have been held back for centuries, first by colonialism and then by the collective clientelism encouraged by the international development aid establishment. In line with a global Fordian compromise, that economic development would raise the purchasing power of the poor. Part of that purchasing power would be directed towards the already rich countries, allowing them to reap the benefits of trade and put even more money into technological development and socially progressive politics. Combined, it is likely that the total amount of resources will be sufficient to open up advanced technological paths to global environmental sustainability. Further examining the bargaining situation, we see that failing to reach such a compromise would worsen international tensions, keeping the industrial countries in their oppressing role in which short-term gains are bought at the expense of long-term possibilities. Moreover, and if airy cosmopolitan arguments are insufficient to persuade us about our shared destiny, we have to remember that if poor states are allowed to fail they stand the risk of becoming breeding grounds for terror and extremism, all imposing skyrocketing costs for ‘‘security’’ on the developed world. Thus, though the analogy with the striking working class of the original compromise may not be perfect, the rich countries should have a strong incentive to listen to the warning sounds coming from the ‘‘lower decks’’.

#### Antitrust -- Would radically disrupt the monopoly capitalist economy by transforming antitrust law away from competition and toward social power

Marshall Steinbaum et al 20, Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Utah, Left Anchor, podcast episode 155: “Socialism vs. Antitrust with Marshall Steinbaum,” 9/12/20, transcribed by Otter, https://leftanchor.podbean.com/e/episode-155-socialism-vs-antitrust-with-marshall-steinbaum/

Marshall Steinbaum 31:39

But yeah, I mean, there's a kind of what you were saying, I definitely agree with that, I guess I would push back a little bit on the kind of interpretation of the states moving away. And so like, the only thing that matters is what whether Tim Cook allows Uber to make a living, as opposed to whether, you know, the taxing authorities of every city and their state labor departments and the FTC FTC have a say on it. Like they're, they're, you know, small potatoes in comparison to the CEO of some company. I think I mean, that's true about, you know, who wields power in the economy. But it's not right to say that that's because the state has retreated and sort of ceded all control to, to the capitalist, I think we have to understand the state's involvement or policies involvement as being, you know, kind of inescapable. So the question is like, okay, so you've got, you know, like, incorporation statutes, like who's allowed to be a company to enjoy limited liability or whatever, like, people don't think of that as being part of economic policy. But it absolutely is not just, you know, is Apple allowed to be a corporation or not a corporation as, as you know, say it's a California Corporation? I mean, it's probably a Delaware Corporation, but whatever, you know, can it operate across state lines? You know, these were big issues in the 19th century. Nowadays, we get things like, oh, if you're a corporation, then basically anything you want to do is legal under the antitrust laws, you know, but people who are not corporations cannot act together under the antitrust laws. So for example, you know, you're talking about like, oh, Uber could be liable under antitrust for this gigantic price fixing conspiracy. Through, executed through verticals restraints, yes. You know, who has actually been found to be liable under the antitrust laws? Uber drivers for potentially collectively bargaining their wages against Uber. So that it's this idea that like, Oh, you know, these individual drivers, like they're independent businesses operating on this neutral platform, but they can't get together. That's what the antitrust laws forbid. Whereas this one gigantic corporation that dominates them that is absolutely allowed to do whatever it wants. So this is the kind of concept that my my colleague and collaborator Sanjukta Paul is called the allocator, antitrust is an allocator of coordination rights and the title of her paper. This idea is like, who's allowed to coordinate economic activity? Is it it, and what she says is that antitrust has what's called the firm exemption. So here she's drawing on what what, you know, most every antitrust person recognizes and is known in the jurisprudence is the labor exemption, which is that labor unions bargaining wages within a recognized bargaining framework cannot violate the antitrust law through that collective bargaining. So that the idea is that's an exemption to antitrust's usual, preference for competition. What she says is, you know, we have to reinterpret that as being, as there being a firm exemption to antitrust, which is Uber telling everybody what to do, that has an exemption from antitrust law by virtue of the fact that Uber is a corporation and or the way that we have chosen to allocate coordination rights in her framework is to allow Uber to coordinate entire markets in the case of Apple to allow Apple to determine what is presented on its on its app store and you know, it has, you know, pretty, you know, strong representation in the retail smartphone market. So it's like okay, you know, Uber is probably going for relative upscale clientele, they all have iPhones, if it can't get on the iPad, if it can't get on the App Store can't get on the iPhone. And if you can't get on the iPhone, they have no business. You know, that is the allocation of coordination rights over that market to Apple, as opposed to some other mechanism for allocating coordination rights. And this is where, you know, to get back to what we were talking about earlier, anti monopolist framework would say, you know, there's no reason why Apple gets to be the one who decides who sees what, why don't we potentially, you know, in a kind of Co Op context, give, give that right to, you know, a consortium or, you know, quote unquote, union of app developers, or in the case of, say, ride sharing, like, why don't we have a union of taxi drivers, and they determine, you know, who gets who gets matched with which customer and what the fare is, as opposed to the company determining that

Alexi 35:48

this is so important, and I think it's really worth emphasizing, you know, the point about how jurisprudence and an antitrust enforcement does what she said, and so far as it, it chooses sides, and who can coordinate these things and who's autonomous and who has power. And since we're speaking of Apple, maybe you can talk a bit about how sanitation workers right at Kodak, Kodak back in the 80s had more power to coordinate and kind of exert their their power over sanitation workers at Apple, right in contemporary times, and then you write about how that is kind of an example of, you know, how the separation of workers from lead firms is kind of a simultaneous erosion of the in the jurisprudence of the Sherman act prohibitions on vertical restraints. So, yeah, maybe talk even a bit more about about the importance of this.

Marshall Steinbaum 36:40

Yeah, so that's getting to what a great economist David Weil has called the fissured workplace. And I think you're referring specifically to a article that was published, I think, by Neil Irwin, if I recall, correctly, in the New York Times, a couple years ago, that was profiling two specific people, one of whom had been kind of janitorial worker on payroll at Kodak in the early 80s. And like, she had basically benefited from their, you know, corporate policies that included incentives to like go to community college and get credentials. And so she got qualified as I you know, sort of IT person, she was like, trained on Lotus 123, or something from the, you know, from the dark history of personal computing. You know, she kind of worked her way up through the ranks at Kodak, thanks to the fact that she started in the ranks of Kodak that is that she was a janitorial worker on the payroll, she was able to be promoted, basically, to the point of being the head of it for the entire company at some at one point. So she was a senior executive, you know, and that kind of social mobility via the mechanism of a major economy leading firm that employs people kind of every stratum of the occupational hierarchy of the income hierarchy, and is itself a like, somewhat egalitarian organization in its own right. I mean, insofar as any corporation could be egalitarian within capitalism, you know, I think this is kind of what Wynand was talking about, when he referred to, you know, this sort of New Deal state that was created by the National Labor Relations Act and other other, you know, kind of New Deal reforms, it's like that, that kind of somewhat egalitarian corporate organization is, you know, a thing of the past. And my argument would be well, it's and it's the erosion of antitrust that made that not the case. So in the instance of Apple, the contrary, the contrasting individual was, you know, janitorial services worker who was contracted, so she was employed by some, you know, janitorial services contractor whom Apple contracted with to clean its offices, but like, there's no way that she's ever going to be promoted to be an employee of Apple, let alone a senior executive at Apple, you know, nowadays, Apple is one of the economies leading firms. So there's different, you know, just, you know, take and both firms are like, somewhat are considered somewhat technologically innovative in their time. So like, think of these, you know, kind of economy leading like blue chip companies that are that like defined the apex of the American economy in two different eras. One of them is constructed such that it's possible for a janitor to eventually become a senior executive, the other is constructed so as to make that impossible at all costs. And and and, you know, I think Irwin's piece gets exactly at this question of employment classification as being a crucial constituent of that changing reality. I would say that the ability to contract everything out and yet control everything so minutely use a, you know, arms legally at arm's length, but like economically, you know, at a very close distance and with total control to the boss, you know, that is we have to understand the erosion of antitrust is being just as much a part of that as the non enforcement of labor laws, the erosion of of enforcement of those and so on.

Ryan Cooper 39:59

Yeah, Yeah, that's that's a great dichotomy. I wanted to also, I wanted to bring up the the welfare state. I n, in, in a couple of these articles, you've mentioned how, you know, the gig economy and various sort of like, anti trust, you know, trying to escape any kind of liability for, for being responsible for one's, you know, employees has materially harmed workers by sort of excluding them from, you know, like traditional welfare state stuff, which is often administered through, you know, through the employment relation. But you've you've also written about how, like the cares act, part, partly helped with that, and then partly maybe, sort of entrenched the bad relationship. But, you know, in general, the cares act was like a pretty astounding piece. I mean, it's seems mostly expired now. But, like, it was a really interesting piece of legislative legislation that, that helped people out a lot and kind of revealed a lot of underlying, you know, deficiencies in the way that people in DC have done policy for the last like, 40 years. So can you can you kind of go through, like, the how the welfare state interacts with, you know, anti trust, and and, you know, kind of kind of how the two can can complement each other? And how they that might be fixed?

Marshall Steinbaum 41:41

Yeah, absolutely. So,we've been talking a lot about this question of the legal employment relationship, and why that matters so much for workers. And a big reason why it matters so much is exactly as you said, that so much of our welfare state is conditioned on employment. And so that's what you know. So in some sense, this like category, that's kind of, you know, not the main focus of attention at the time of the New Deal. You're that this distinction, the question of like employment independent contractor, and that is an important distinction, as I was referring to in the antitrust cases that we talked about earlier. But like, this idea that, you know, a lot matters for you economically, on the question of whether you are legally an employee or not, that's not true to the New Deal era, per se, it's that's what's been layered on since and especially since we kind of adopted the backlash to the Great Society view that the problem with the welfare state is that it causes people not to work and inculcates a culture of poverty. You know, all of that is basically racist drivel. But it's had an enormous impact on the kind of Orthodoxy around welfare policy, especially in DC. So as I've talked about, either of I've talked about in this podcast, certainly a couple of times on podcasts with bruenig. And in some other writings, you know, there's this sort of mania for the Earned Income Tax Credit among DC policy wonk types, which is this, basically wage subsidy for people who were employed in market labor, and it doesn't help you if you're not employed in market labor, and arguably, it hurts you, even if you are employed to market labor, and you don't receive it, because it by causing people to, you know, as sort of have to be employed to market labor in order to gain the benefit and arguably depresses wages for people who aren't beneficiaries, so reduces the market wage, basically. You know, that cares act is kind of by chance, the opposite of that. So first of all, you said that the cares act was like this revolutionary thing. It was that with respect to that unemployment insurance position, provision, so called pandemic unemployment compensation, and then pandemic unemployment assistance, we'll get to what those two things are in a second, the rest of the cares act for you know, it also included a, you know, sort of like one off $1200 check from the IRS, you know, for people earning about, I guess, it was like below 100,000 a year. And then there was like, a ton of stuff that was basically an indefinite extension of a whole, like firehose of money to, you know, the economy's leading corporations via the Federal Reserve and the Treasury. But I think, especially the Federal Reserve, so you're saying it's, like, mostly expired now? Well, not the part that gave capital, everything they want it that part's not expired, and that's exactly why the other part hasn't been renewed. So there was a sense, you know, the kind of political calculus that gave rise to the cares act is like, you know, we have like, suddenly a pandemic has hit the economy, it's going to be temporary, you know, so we need to, like, we need something to tie people over, let's juice up the unemployment insurance system, give people $1200 checks. And make sure all these businesses are able to borrow, you know, that are facing, you know, huge sudden shortfalls. It's like, oh, but you know, by the way, the last of those things that will be permanent, the first of those things will be temporary, because the pandemic is assumed to be temporary, and oh, wait, the pandemic is not temporary, or at least it's less temporary than we thought it was gonna be. You know, those people are suddenly high and dry because capitalists already got everything they wanted. So it's like we're in a pretty shitty situation, frankly, visa for pretty much all working people, but the stock market's doing great. Okay, so what did the cares act have for unemployment insurance? And why is that such a challenge to kind of policy received wisdom, it basically added this lump. So the PUC part, pandemic unemployment compensation added a lump sum $600 per week, on to traditionally eligible workers for unemployment. So that's PUC so if you're eligible for unemployment, there's some state formula that says that's a function of what your wages were pre layoff. You know, generally as as the lingo and unemployment insurance is replacement rates, so it's how much of your loss of your lost wages are, quote, replaced by unemployment insurance, you know, the average in the United States for people who are eligible is something like 50%. And like 50% of unemployed people aren't eligible or was not able to collect it, you know, very, like leaky sieve type system, that P You see, element of the cares act up to that number by whatever the replacement rate was under state law plus $600, which for a lot of workers is basically, you know, a gigantic windfall relative to the shittiness of the jobs that they actually have to do. So many workers, especially in low wage occupations experienced, you know, better pay when they were receiving the PVC than they did in their jobs and that they're ever likely to get in their jobs. PUA was the version of that for the gig economy. Basically, it was for workers who were not eligible for traditional unemployment insurance. And many gig economy workers were dis employed by the pandemic, this was a fully federal system that essentially gave them access to a temporary pool of unemployment insurance. And the key thing there is at the time, I wrote a letter with Sen. jepto, whom I mentioned earlier, I wrote a letter to Congress about that they have basically done a kind of ex post bailout of the of all of the misclassification that gig economy firms have been doing for a decade now. Because they're saying, Oh, you know, Uber has never paid a dime in unemployment insurance premiums for its workers, and they become unemployed all the time. Suddenly, in this pandemic, many of those workers are eligible for unemployment insurance, thanks to PUA. So that's great that they're, you know, able to subsist, but instead of paying into it, you know, Uber gets to skate for 10 years on its premiums, and then the federal government pays for that. So that was, you know, kind of, you know, a, under the radar screen bailout of the gig economy, employers. Anyway, now, you know, we're in this position where these things have been taken away, and what that has meant, you know, so the interesting thing that's come out in the economics research about the effect of the cares act, and specifically these UI provisions, is that, you know, that pandemic is and has been devastating to the low wage workforce, huge, extreme spike in unemployment, it's still very high, you know, a lot of service workers have been disappointed. But actually poverty rates went down, and earnings went up, or income went up, because their income was more than replaced by these temporary, generous provisions that were not conditional on showing up for work, because they couldn't be conditional on showing up for work, the whole point of the pandemic is that people can do their work, you know, now, you know, and, you know, given that like that, like, in the midst of an economic catastrophe, we reduce the poverty rate, you know, that like flies in the face of everything that we know about how the poverty, you know, the poverty rate usually goes up when there's an economic recession. And what we just found out is like, if you don't want that to happen, if you do want to reduce poverty, you have to enact these policies that aren't conditional on work. That's how you reduce policy, you give people money, basically, and in this case, unemployed people are the people who are likely to be dev low income to be in poverty. So that's how you get money to. So now, you know, we're kind of I mean, because of this political misjudgment that had, you know, given capital, everything and wanted while workers bailouts was temporary, you know, now it's like, Okay, well, like, please give us something for workers. You know, I think the the view had been that, like the election would be the leverage that, you know, pro worker interests would have over the federal political system, but that's not the case, actually, because the outcomes of elections aren't terribly responsive to the the well being of the population, which is a big problem that we should probably do something about at some point. But But, you know, so now it's like, Okay, well, we're sort of like pleading for scraps the way that we have been for the last decades, and everyone's reverted to, you know, basically versions of the EITC expansions that have been on their, you know, to do list for for a long time. So it's like, okay, you know, the wanks have guy kind of gotten back control in control of the message and the asks and whatever. And, you know, consequently, the agenda has gotten shittier.

Alexi 49:39

never a good idea to give the Wong's power. But now, like so far, I just want to recap for the audience. We have number one left anchor Steinbaum, synthesis of anti trust and democratic socialism, to new idea breaking news, let's make government responsive to the needs of the people. That's that's that's what we've so these two important things that we're offering now. But But no, I think first of all the point point very well taken that, you know, our favorite game about the Democrats, is it malfeasance and or is it malice? You know, is it is it just, you know, bad politics or or is it just intentional, you know, slap in the face to the working people of this country into the poor. So, so yeah, yeah, point point well taken that the the corporations were given a, you know, indefinite Lifeline, and then I think they accidentally helped the poor and helped the working class, probably because they didn't realize how low pain, you know, jobs were out there. Yeah.

Marshall Steinbaum 50:39

Yeah. I mean, that's exactly right. It was pretty clear at the time that like, there was just sort of No, I mean, I think the rhetoric in Washington is like, somewhat responsive to, you know, insofar as there's any responsiveness to workers, it's like, you know, people who are not precariously employed. So, you know, that I, you know, so it's like they don't it's like any job is a good job, or they are not, that's a little bit of an overstatement. But it's like, you know, what we want to prevent as people losing their jobs, as long as they have their a job, there'll be fine. And, you know, there's just a very, very little apprehension on the part of like, the policy elite of like, just how bad most jobs

Alexi 51:18

but look, Marshall, we all know, worst case scenario, as Mitt Romney said back in the day, if you're really in a tough situation, just sell your stocks if you have to just

Marshall Steinbaum 51:28

Yes, yeah, yeah, right. Right. Just that Yeah, Dad stock at American Motors or whatever, you know, what you can afford? Right? I

Ryan Cooper 51:33

mean, it was a tough thing to have to do. But sometimes you got to just bootstrap it.

Marshall Steinbaum 51:40

Yeah, so well, you know, now now, Romney is a resistance hero. He's doing everything he can to bring our Trump Reign of Terror to an end

Ryan Cooper 51:47

he is, thank thank God for him, honestly. Yeah, so so to, I guess, to kind of like, like, tie a tie that together a little bit. You know, like, the welfare state is, you know, just like a critical lifeline. You know, like the cares act shows, you know, that, that, that four decades of neoliberalism was all bullshit, actually, we could solve poverty quickly and easily, just by, you know, dumping money on people who don't have money. That's literally It's that easy. But I think, you know, the interesting thing to me about, like, this whole discussion about, like market regulation, and so on and so forth, is that, like, I'm pretty convinced that the, you know, in so far as your, the economy is based to some degree around, you know, private businesses, you know, doing their thing, competition is a is a fairly useful tool, if it's done, right. And that means competition, that's that that happens, you know, through a sort of regulated process, because you can have competition that just means trying to cheat, and like drive the other guy out of business, so you can seize more market share, you know, try and try to force companies to compete on price and quality. And that means big government, basically. You know, an example I've seen recently, you know, the computer chip market for for like desktop PCs. That's like a pretty concentrated market. But there is competition there between AMD and Intel. And Intel's had like a big chunk of you know, the marketplace for for many years, AMD has been sort of a laggard for the last couple years AMD like they basically just beat Intel, it's better, better chips for cheaper. And suddenly Intel's on the backfoot. And they're doing all this stuff, they're retooling their, their machine to try to sort of, like, exceed, and like, that, I think is a reasonable process, so long as it's not, you know, like, you don't you don't end up with competition that takes place like, okay, we're shipping all of our, you know, all of our factories to Tanzania, and we're just gonna pay everyone $1 you know, make them buy all their stuff in company script, that kind of competition. But, you know, and then also, you could, you could say, like, oh, we're going to set up something like the post office as explicitly a monopoly, but it's going to be a monopoly with a sort of government policy purpose, like everybody has to get the same service for the same price even if it's like ridiculously uneconomical to provide it in a certain location. And that's like a kind of different that's like about quality government and how do you set up a agency with some sort of a spirit a core that like, does a good job. But like, I think the, you know, my sort of like fundamental takeaway, and maybe you can sort of quibble with this or qualify, Marshall is that like, like, the anti trust, and, you know, breaking up, like, like full on monopolies and like forcing the businesses to compete decently and, you know, the sort of like welfare state, you know, social democratic vision, these things like there are two, they can be two great tastes that taste great together. And, you know, like, there's not necessarily a trade off. And then like, one could sort of enable the other. What do you think?

Marshall Steinbaum 55:40

Yeah, I mean, I think that you can have a, you know, what might be called Race to the Top type of competition, I'm not exactly sure what's going on in the, you know, desktop computer chip market, but like, branding, what you the way you characterized it, or you can have race to the bottom competition, which is basically about sort of chiseling out your company's own regulatory arbitrage, or like, You're the one who gets to run the taxi company, but not actually charge the regulated rate, or you're the one who locates the factory in Tanzania so that you can pollute all you want and pay your workers like crap. And then you know, then you're in, you know, quote, unquote, competition with domestic producers, you know, who are then obviously incentivized to do the same themselves, I have tended to move away from the concept of competition, exactly, in some ways, exactly. For the reason that you're saying it. And for the reasons I just said, which is that it is not, it doesn't really work as like, we want more of it, or we want less of it, because there's different forms of it, as we were just saying, Yeah, and, you know, in particular, I have moved away from that concept of competition vis a vis antitrust law, like I just don't agree, now, now I have come to the view that I don't agree that the purpose of the antitrust laws is to promote competition. I think it is because, you know, for the reasons like that the world in which, you know, a US domestic manufacturer relocates overseas to take advantage of poor environmental and labor standards, you know, that's like, an act, you know, that could be understood as an anti competitive act vis a vis the workers, but like a pro competitive act vis a vis competitors, potentially. And so I don't think like it's, you know, a policy regime that gives workers that gives companies the ability to undercut their own workers through the threat of outsourcing isn't about promoting competition or repeating competition, it's about, you know, who gets to decide and the economy who has power, as Sanjukta said, who, to whom are coordination rights granted. And so my view is like, antitrust has one disposition of the allocation of coordination rights or, you know, who gets to operate as a monopoly or as a dominant firm versus who is subjected to their domination, which is designed subjected to competition under the current way of doing things that would be workers, so like, a dominant employer, you know, subjects workers to competition, so the workers have plenty of competition, and that's what reduces their labor standards. And I think that is exactly what is kind of tripped up or created this false dichotomy between like, anti monopoly ism versus socialism, because from a workers perspective, more competition is bad. Because they, you know, that's exactly what the economy already consists of, whereas from a, you know, sort of corporate perspective, you know, exactly what characterizes the economy is a lack of competition, that is to say, you know, dominance, not just in any one market, you know, where, you know, many major industries are basically, you know, an oligopoly if not a monopoly, and then, you know, vertical integration and vertical control, you know, that subjects, disadvantage actors to competitive forces and insulates powerful actors from those competitive forces. And what we want is the erosion of the concentration of power, which is to say, to, at least, you know, through the mechanism of competition that would be to subject powerful actors to competitive forces and protect unpowerful actors from them.

Ryan Cooper 59:00

Well, well said. Go ahead. I was gonna just do a just out of left field kind of question about, because it seems like non domination seems to be the maybe the principle that would kind of work through the synthesis of democratic socialism and the antitrust, kind of coalitional movement. And what do you think? How would you understand that principle, working with other ideas that the left is is kind of fighting over whether it's job guarantee or UBI? You know, how do you think this overall leftist synthesis should think through what principles can help us kind of navigate these contests or which policies to to kind of fight over and propose as the most important to push for?

Marshall Steinbaum 59:48

Yeah, well, I absolutely do think that non domination is the principle that's at play here. And that's why I support both UBI a job guarantee and I don't believe that there needs to be a clash between those two things. I mean, I have often thought and if I, you know, had a vast research budget of my command, I would indeed, commission this, you know that there should be a sort of left pro labor like pro low wage labor agenda that consists of a UBI, like the cares act, except not just for unemployed people, but including them, a job guarantee, which is to save full employment, you know, macroeconomic commitment to full employment, and a $15, minimum wage, as well as the enforcement of other labor standards, like maximum hours, and, you know, safe workplaces and that sort of thing. All of those things together to me form like the tripartite are the three legs of the stool of like a, you know, pro labor left agenda as against the EITC. And basically anything that's conditional on supply, market labor for in order to receive benefits. So like all three of the things I mentioned, what characterizes them is rights, and entitlements accruing to the worker that's independent of any one employer. And that's all of that is at odds with existing policy orthodoxy, for example, the EITC, the other thing that I have written about a great deal is a student debt and labor market credential is Asian. So I interpret the rise of student debt as being basically the federal government's most ambitious labor market policy of the last few decades, which is the idea that like, oh, if people are earning enough in the labor market, they need more human capital, so they need more higher education, and we'll lend them the money to get that higher education, and then their earnings will go up, like that has, you know, kind of spiraled out of control, because people's earnings haven't gone up. So they're left with a bigger pile of debt than they would have had otherwise, and consequently, aren't paying it off. But like, all the real big reason why the whole, like student debt and Higher Education and Human Capital approach to labor market policy hasn't worked, it's because it also doesn't take into account employer power and the domination, that bosses are able to exercise over workers in a capitalist economy. So what the effect of that, you know, student debt thing in the labor market has been to basically shift the cost of training or being trained for your job or qualified for your job to individuals from employers or from, you know, the public higher education system, you know, these, this is just the transfer of those costs to the shoulders of the agent that's like least able to shoulder them.

#### Activism -- Activists are marching in the streets demanding accessibility to climate solutions – - the plan is consistent with those demands

France24.com 11-11-21 (COP26: Tens of thousands rally in Glasgow to demand climate action. https://www.france24.com/en/environment/20211106-cop26-thousands-rally-in-glasgow-to-demand-climate-action)

Tens of thousands of protesters braved rain and wind in Glasgow Saturday to take part in worldwide demonstrations against what campaigners say is a failure of crunch UN climate talks to act fast enough to tame global warming. Dozens of events are planned worldwide to demand cuts in fossil fuel use and immediate help for communities already affected by climate change, particularly in poorer countries. In Glasgow, police earlier said they expected up to 50,000 people to parade through the streets, while organisers later claimed more than 100,000 had turned out. Demonstrators marched close to the COP26 summit venue and through the centre of the Scottish city on Saturday in a colourful protest with music and dancing. Protesters chanted "system change, not climate change" and carried placards calling for "Climate Justice" and a "Fair COP" as they made their way to a park on the edge of the city in the afternoon. "We need the biggest emitters to be held responsible," Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, from the Marshall Islands, told the crowd. "We did nothing to contribute to this crisis, and we should not have to pay the consequences." Glasgow is hosting delegates from nearly 200 countries for the crucial UN talks, tasked with hammering out how to meet the Paris Agreement goals of limiting temperature rises to between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius. During the first week of the meeting, some countries have upgraded their existing pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while there have been separate deals on phasing out coal, ending foreign fossil fuel funding, and slashing methane. But many thorny issues remain and many protesters on the streets said they were there to keep up the pressure. Jill Bird, 66, who had travelled to Glasgow's march from Bristol, was among a group of people dressed in white jumpsuits with "greenwash busters" backpacks. She said she wanted to see rich nations live up to their pledge of providing $100 billion annually to vulnerable nations that "keeps being promised and promised and promised and doesn't actually materialise". Swedish campaigner Greta Thunberg said the summit had gone nowhere near far enough in a speech at Friday's youth march in Glasgow, where she labelled the conference "a failure". A pre-COP26 estimate from the UN that said national climate plans, when brought together, put Earth on course to warm 2.7C this century. With just 1.1C of warming so far, communities across the world are already facing ever more intense fire and drought, displacement and economic ruin wrought by global heating. And a major assessment last week showed global CO2 emissions were set to rebound in 2021 to pre-pandemic levels. Protesters took to the streets in cities across the world to demand more radical action. Earlier in Australia demonstrators dressed as lumps of coal and Prime Minister Scott Morrison -- a vigorous mining advocate. "No more blah, blah blah. Real climate action now," read one sign at a protest in Sydney. About 1,000 people gathered in London outside the Bank of England with placards reading "Less talk more action" and "No More COP outs". And protesters gathered outside Paris city hall carrying a giant banner that said: "Climate inaction = crimes against the living." 'Words not enough' Security has been boosted for Saturday's march, which had a party atmosphere and wrapped up in the late afternoon with few incidents. "Thousands of us are marching right across the world today to demand immediate and serious action," said activist Mikaela Loach. "We're clear that warm words are not good enough -- and that the next week of talks must see a serious ramping up of concrete plans." COP26 negotiations will pause on Sunday ahead of what is shaping up to be a frantic week of shuttle diplomacy, as ministers arrive to push through hard-fought compromises. Countries still need to flesh out how pledges made in the Paris deal work in practice, including rules governing carbon markets, common reporting timeframes and transparency. Dan Blumgart, 33, was at London's protest holding a "Mars sucks, save Earth" placard. "Because I really like the planet we live on and I want it to be, you know, able to keep it okay to live on," he said.

### 2AC: PermPerm do both.

#### There’s a timeframe net benefit to the permutation. Only way to solve climate is to use the technology available.

Aronoff & Denvir 21 [Kate, staff writer at the New Republic, writing fellow at In These Times, Daniel, visiting fellow in International and Public Affairs at Brown Univ, “Capitalism Can’t Fix the Climate Crisis,” *Jacobin*, 08/25/21, <https://jacobinmag.com/2021/08/capitalism-climate-crisis-global-green-new-deal-clean-energy-fossil-fuel-industry>, accessed 08/26/21, JCR]

DD: You write: “My argument in this book is not that capitalism has to end before the world can deal with the climate crisis. Dismantling a centuries-old system of production and distribution, and building a carbon-neutral and worker-owned alternative, is almost certainly not going to happen within the small window of time the world has to avert runaway disaster. The private sector will be a major part of the transition off of fossil fuels. Some people will get rich, and some unseemly actors will be involved. Capitalist production will build solar panels, wind turbines, and electric trains. But whether we deal with climate change or not can’t be held hostage to executives’ ability to turn a profit. To handle this crisis, capitalism will have to be replaced as society’s operating system, setting out goals other than the boundless accumulation of private wealth.” This argument provoked a bit of controversy in the audience a few years back in Chicago when we discussed it on a panel at the Socialism Conference. Both of us would love to live in a socialist world, and we’ve got to continue to fight for one. But why do you think that it’s important for people to understand that we need to deal with climate change before we win an entirely new mode of production? What’s entailed by the conclusion that we need to pursue radical social-democratic reforms on the road to socialism? Is this a theory of how radical social-democratic reforms can lead to socialism? Is it just a reality that the fast-ticking climate clock imposes on us? Or is it some of both? KA: It’s a reality. If the climate crisis were playing out over the course of two hundred, three hundred, or a thousand years, one could have an interesting theoretical debate about whether we should change the system we have and tweak it slightly in order to take on the crisis, or whether we should create an entirely new mode of production and build up a workaround alternative. Unfortunately, we just don’t have that time. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] outlined in its 2018 report on 1.5 degrees Celsius that we had roughly twelve years. That is now nine years in which to rapidly decarbonize the global economy, which is an enormous challenge. In order to meet that ever-shrinking twelve-year window, we have to use the productive system in which we live — which is not my ideal situation, but then again, neither is global warming.

### 2AC: Alt

#### Racial subordination is not an intrinsic feature of liberalism. Radicalizing and attuning its principles to the current racial formation allows us to transgress current structures of white supremacy.

Charles MILLS 12, the John Evans Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy at Northwestern University [“Occupy Liberalism! Or, Ten Reasons Why Liberalism Cannot Be Retrieved for Radicalism,” *Radical Philosophy Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2012, p. 305-323, http://pages.uoregon.edu/koopman/siap/readings/Mills\_Charles\_RPR.pdf]

7. Liberalism Is Naïve in Assuming the Neutrality of the State and the Juridical System

Mainstream liberalism tends to assume the juridico-political neutrality of the liberal-democratic state, but such naivety need not be true of all varieties of liberalism. (Note that nowhere in Gray's characterization is any such assumption made.) The neutrality of the juridico-political system is really a liberal ideal, a norm to be striven for to reflect citizens' equal moral status before the law and entitlement to equal protection of their legitimate interests. To represent it as a sociological generalization of liberal theory about actual political systems, including systems self-designated as liberal, would be to confuse the normative with the descriptive. Liberalism has certainly historically had no trouble in seeing the illicit influence of concentrated group power in the sociopolitical systems it opposed (see section #2). The original critique of "feudal" absolutism, the twentieth-century critique of "totalitarianism," relied in part on the documentation and condemnation of the extent of legally-backed state repression in curbing individual freedom. Liberalism's blind spot has been its failure to document and condemn the enormity of the historic denial of equal rights to the majority of the population ruled by self-styled "liberal" states: the "absolutism" and "totalitarianism" directed against white women and white workers, and the nonwhite enslaved and colonized. Patriarchal democracy, bourgeois democracy, Herrenvolk democracy have all been represented as "democracy" simpliciter, with no analysis of the mechanisms of structural subordination that have characterized such polities, or the ideological sleights-of-hand that have rationalized them. But to claim a necessary conceptual connection between such evasions and liberal assumptions is to confuse the contingent necessities of the discourse of hegemonic liberalism-aimed at preserving, whether by justifying or obfuscating, patriarchal, bourgeois, and racial power-with what is taken to be some kind of transworld essence of liberalism. In recent decades, a large body of literature has developed that investigates the impact of class, race, and gender dynamics in the actual functioning of the state and the legal system.23 Radical liberalism would draw on this body of literature in seeking to put in place the safeguards necessary for guaranteeing equal protection not merely on paper but in reality.

8. Liberalism Is Necessarily Anti-Socialist, so How "Radical" Could It Be?

"Socialism" is used in different senses. Assuming that a romanticized return to pre-industrial communal systems is not on the cards for a globalized world of 7 billion people, there are three main alternatives so far (two tried, one theorized about): state-commandist socialism, social democracy, market socialism. State-commandist socialism, aka "communism," is indeed incompatible with liberalism, but would seem to have been refuted as an attractive ideal by the history of the twentieth century. 24 Social democracy is just left-liberalism, whether in Rawls's version or in versions further left, like Brian Barry's, more worried about the inequalities Rawls's two principles of justice leave intact.25 Market socialism is yet to be implemented on a national level, but many of the hypothetical accounts of how it would work emphasize the importance of respecting liberal norms. 26 In other words, market socialism's putative superiority to capitalism is not defended by invoking distinctively socialist values, but by showing how such uncontroversial and traditional liberal values as democracy, freedom, and self-realization are not going to be achievable for the majority under the present system. (Or through the appeal to more recent values like sustainability, generated by awareness of the impending ecological disaster, which the present order will make achievable for nobody!) Other possibilities are not ruled out, but their proponents would have to explain how their models have learned the lessons of the past in both (a) being economically viable (b) respecting human rights, the common global moral currency of the postwar epoch, which is best developed in the liberal tradition. Criticism of the existing order is not enough; one has to show how one's proposed "socialist" alternative will be superior (and in more than a vague hand-waving kind of way).

9. The Discourse of Liberal Rights Cannot Accommodate Radical Redistribution and Structural Change

Marxism's original critique of liberalism, apart from deriding its (imputed) social ontology, represented liberal rights as a bourgeois concept. But that was a century and a half ago. Lockean rights-of-non-interference centered on private property, "negative" rights, are indeed deficient as an exclusivist characterization of people's normative entitlements, but such a minimalist view has been contested by social democrats (some self-identifying as liberal) for more than a century. A significant literature now exists on "welfare" rights, "positive" rights, "social" rights, whose implementation would indeed require radical structural change. The legitimacy of these rights as "liberal" rights is, of course, denied by the political right. But that's the whole point, with which I began-that liberalism is not a monolith but a set of competing interpretations and theorizations, fighting it out in a common arena. 27 The U.S. hostility to such rights is a manifestation of the historic success of conservatives in framing the normative agenda in this country; not a necessary corollary of liberalism as such. As earlier emphasized: liberalism must not be collapsed into neo-liberalism. Nor is it a refutation to point out that having such rights on paper does not guarantee their implementation, since this is just a variation of the already-discussed imputation to liberalism of a necessarily idealist conception of the social dynamic (section #6), in which morality is a prime mover. But such a sociological claim is neither a foundational nor derivative assumption of liberalism.

Moreover, in the specific case of the redress of racial injustice, one does not even need to appeal to such rights, since the situation of, e.g., blacks in the United States is arguably the result of the historic and current violation of traditional negative rights (life, liberty, property), which are supposed to be the uncontroversial ones in the liberal tradition, as well as the legacy of such practices as manifest in illicitly accumulated wealth and opportunities. Here again the hegemony of Rawlsian "ideal theory" over the development of the mainstream political philosophy of the last forty years has had pernicious consequences, marginalizing such issues and putting the focus instead on principles of distributive justice for an ideal "well-ordered" society. But an emancipatory liberalism would be reoriented from the start towards non-ideal theory, and would correspondingly make rectificatory justice and the ending of social oppression its priority. 28

10. American Liberalism in Particular Has Been so Shaped in Its Development by Race that Any Emancipatory Possibilities Have Been Foreclosed

Liberalism in general (both nationally and internationally) has been shaped by race, but that does not preclude reclaiming it.29 Moreover, it is precisely such shaping that motivates the imperative of recognizing the multiplicity of liberalisms, not merely for cataloging purposes but in order to frame them as theoretical objects whose dynamic requires investigation. The conflation of all liberalisms with their racialized versions obstructs seeing these ideologies as historically contingent varieties of liberalism, which could have developed otherwise. A Brechtian "defamiliarization" is necessary, a cognitive distancing that "denaturalizes" what is prone to appear as the essence of liberalism. Jennifer Pitts's A Turn to Empire, for example, which is subtitled The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France, and Sankar Muthu's Enlightenment against Empire, both seek to demarcate within liberalism the existence of anti- as well as pro-imperialist strains, thereby demonstrating that liberalism is not a monolith. 30 Admittedly, other scholars have been more ambivalent about some of their supposed exemplars; see, for example, Losurdo, already cited, and John Hobson's recent The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics, which develops a detailed and sophisticated taxonomy of varieties of Eurocentrism and imperialism that demonstrates the compatibility of racism, Eurocentrism, and anti-imperialism. 31 (For instance, many European liberal theorists were anti-imperialist precisely because of their racism-their fears that the white race would degenerate as a result of miscegenation with inferior races and the deleterious consequences of prolonged residence in the unsuitable tropical climates of colonial outposts.) But the mere fact of such a range of positions illustrates that a liberalism neither Eurocentric nor imperialist is not a contradiction in terms.

In the United States in particular, as Rogers Smith has demonstrated, liberalism and racism have been intricately involved with one another from the nation's inception, a relationship Smith conceptualizes in terms of conflicting "multiple traditions," racism versus liberal universalism, and which I see as a conflict between "racial liberalism" and non-racial liberalism.32 My belief is that formally identifying "racial liberalism" as a particular evolutionary (and always evolving) ideological phenomenon better enables us to understand the role of race in writing and rewriting the most important political philosophy in the nation's history, from the overtly racist liberalism of the past to the nominally color-blind liberalism of the present. From the eighteenth-century /nineteenth-century accommodation to racial slavery and aboriginal expropriation to the twentieth-century tainting of welfare and social democracy on this side of the Atlantic,33 race has refracted crucial terms, concepts, and values in liberal theory so as to remove any cognitive dissonance between the privileging of whites and the subordination of people of color. Correspondingly, the shaping of white moral psychology by race, and the distinctive patterns of uptake of abstract liberal values ("equality," "individualism") in such a psychology, then become legitimate objects of investigation for us.34 In this revisionist framework, one begins from the assumption that crucial norms will be color-coded in their actual operationalization, so that any efficacious framing of an interracial political project will need to anticipate and correct for this differential understanding, rather than being naively surprised by it. But such racialization (as popular interpretation and reception) is going to be a common problem for any American ideology with emancipatory pretensions. Liberalism is certainly not unique in that respect, as the history of the white American left and socialist movements illustrates. As Jack London famously put it at a meeting of the Socialist Party in San Francisco "when challenged by various members concerning his emphasis on the yellow peril": "What the devil! I am first of all a white man and only then a Socialist!"35 Herrenvolk socialism existed no less than Herrenvolk liberalism.

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#### Material improvements that alleviate suffering are consistent with afro-pessimism---denying this is paternalistic, internally contradictory, and sanctions violence against millions.

Hartman et al. ’17 [Saidiya, Frank Wilderson, Jared Sexton, Steve Martinot, and Hortenese Spillers; September 2017; Professor of African American Studies at Columbia University; Professor of Drama and African American Studies at the University of California, Irvine; Professor of African American Studies at the University of California, Irvine; Instructor Emeritus at the Center for Interdisciplinary Programs at San Francisco State University; Professor at Vanderbilt University; Racked and Dispatched Publishing, “Afro-Pessimism: An Introduction,” p. 10-41]

The challenges Afro-pessimism poses to the affirmation of Blackness extend to other identities as well and problematize identity-based politics. The efforts, on the part of such a politics, to produce a coherent subject (and movement), and the reduction of antagonisms to a representable position, is not only the total circumscription of liberatory potential, but it is an extinguishment of rage with reform—which is to stake a claim in the state and society, and thus anti-Blackness. Against this, we choose, following Afro-pessimism, to understand Black liberation as a negative dialectic, a politics of refusal, and a refusal to affirm; as an embrace of disorder and incoherence;10 and as an act of political apostasy.11 This is not to categorically reject every project of reform—for decreased suffering will surely make life momentarily easier—but rather to take to task any movement invested in the preservation of society. Were they not to decry every action that didn’t fit within their rigid framework, then they might not fortify anti-Blackness as fully as they do. It is in the effort to garner legitimacy (an appeal to whiteness) that reformism requires a representable identity and code of actions, which excludes, and actually endangers, those who would reject such pandering. This also places undo faith in politicians and police to do something other than maintain, as they always have and will, the institutions—schools, courts, prisons, projects, voting booths, neighborhood associations—sustaining anti-Blackness.

Afro-pessimism can also be used to critique prevalent liberal discourses around community, accountability, innocence, and justice. Such notions sit upon anti-Black foundations and only go so far as to reconfigure, rather than abolish, the institutions that produce, control, and murder Black subjects.12 Take for example the appeal to innocence and demand for accountability, too frequently launched when someone Black is killed by police. The discourse of innocence operates within a binary of innocent/ guilty, which is founded on the belief that there is an ultimate fairness to the system and presumes the state to be the protector of all. This fails to understand the state’s fundamental investment in self-preservation, which is indivisible from white supremacy and the interests of capital. The discourse goes that if someone innocent is killed, an individual (the villainous cop) must be held accountable as a solution to this so-called injustice. The structural reality of anti-Black violence is completely obfuscated and justice is mistook as a concept independent from anti-Blackness. Discrimination is indeed tragic, but systematic dispossession and murder is designedly more—it is the justice system—and no amount of imprisoned cops, body cameras or citizen review boards will eliminate this.

Furthermore, Afro-pessimist analysis exposes the often unacknowledged ways that radical movements perpetuate anti-Black racism. One such way is in the rhetoric repeatedly used that takes an assumed (historically oppressed) subject at its center—e.g., workers or women.13 This conflates experience with existence and fails to acknowledge the incommensurate ontologies between, for instance, white women and Black women. To speak in generalities, of simply workers or women, is to speak from a position of anti-Blackness, for the non-racialized subject is the white, or at least non-Black, subject. For this reason, movements against capitalism, patriarchy, or gender mean unfortunately little if they don’t elucidate ontological disparities within a given site of oppression; and if they don’t unqualifiedly seek to abolish the totality of race and anti-Blackness. This is not to privilege antiBlack racism on a hierarchy of oppression, but to assert—against the disparaging lack of analysis—the unlivability of life for Blacks over centuries of social death and physical murder, perpetuated (at varying times) by all non-Black subjects in society.

Finally, we should add that alongside the valuable theoretical offerings of Afro-pessimism, this reader was also motivated by a desire to contribute to the efforts of bringing these writings out of the ivory towers of the academy, the place from which all these writings originated. We wish to remove the materials from this stifling place and see them proliferate among those in the streets and prisons. The topics discussed here may have origins in a place of lofty theory, but they deal with the constant realities of millions of people. We therefore find it imperative that these theories directly inform the practices of everyone desiring a life other than this one—while not simply resorting to the empty gesture of empathy.14

We must acknowledge the fact that non-Black people are complicit in perpetuating anti-Blackness and face the necessity of abolishing all notions of the self and identity, practicing an antiracism with a view toward the total abolition of the state, and developing an anti-capitalism aimed at the destitution of race. We take heed of the following statement: “If we are to be honest with ourselves, we must admit that the ‘Negro’ has been inviting whites, as well as civil society’s junior partners, to the dance of social death for hundreds of years, but few have wanted to learn the steps.”15 Consider this project an opening sashay.

I.

Blacks and the Master/Slave Relation

Frank Wilderson

C. S. Soong: The question for today is how to properly situate Black people in today’s world? What is their position in relation to other people? And what is the nature of their vulnerability to violence? Those questions can be addressed in a number of ways. Conservatives, Liberals, and radicals offer perspectives that perhaps you’ve heard over time. The answer offered by my guest today is singular and provocative, not least because he calls Black people, all Black people, slaves. But what does Frank Wilderson, III mean by slave? Why does he argue that the master/slave relation cannot be analogized with the capitalist/worker relation? And what does he mean when he asserts that slavery is social death? And that slaves, that is Blacks, are subject to gratuitous violence because their masters, that is all non-Blacks, need to exercise that violence in order to give their lives, their non-Black lives, integrity and coherence? Frank Wilderson is a writer, professor of African American studies and Drama at UC Irvine, and founder of what’s called the Afro-Pessimism movement. His books include Red, White and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms, and Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid. Frank spent five years in South Africa as an elected official in the African National Congress during that country’s transition from apartheid and he was a member of the ANC’s armed wing. When Frank Wilderson joined me recently in studio I began by asking how important Marxism has been to his understanding of capitalism.

Frank Wilderson: I think that when I began to study Marxism in college I understood that here was a theory that took a kind of attitude toward the world that was uncompromising. That was valuable to me because before that in junior high school and in high school I had seen the kind of performative political labor of people in the Panthers and people in the Students for a Democratic Society—part of that time was here—and I knew that these folks were on a mission that was more robust and more unflinching than the mission of certain types of Bobby Kennedy Democrats and members of the Civil Rights movement. When I actually began to study the theory I understood why their performance was so much more unflinching than other peoples’ performance. So I think the study of Marxism helped me get into thinking about relations of power, which I think is more important than simply thinking about the way power performs.

CSS: In other words, structures of power as opposed to how power tends to manifest itself in individual relations.

FW: Yes, and I also mean that if you kind of turn your head sideways and listen to most Americans on the Left talk about politics, what you’re going to hear is that the rhetorical weighting of their discourse tends to be heavily weighted on discriminatory actions, the effects of unfair relations on people. And so what we really don’t do so much in this country is—and this is what I found to be very different when I started traveling the world, when I went to Italy, and various places in South America and Africa—we’re not as readily able to think about power as a structure. We tend to think about power as a performance, a series of discriminatory acts. That’s okay if you’re a Liberal-Humanist-reformist, but if you’re a revolutionary, that simply leads you down a track of increasing wages or getting more rights for women or ending racial discrimination and you’re finding yourself in the same kind of cycle of performative oppression ten, twenty years later without an analysis of why the “fix” that you had years ago doesn’t last and isn’t working now.

CSS: Well, the antagonism according to the Marxists is that between capitalist and worker. Would you agree that the essential antagonism in social relations and political relations is in fact between capitalist on the one side and worker on the other?

FW: No. All of my work is an interrogation of that assumptive logic. I’m sometimes misunderstood to be saying that I have left Marxism. I’m sometimes misunderstood to be saying that the cognitive map that Marx gives us should be thrown out. That’s not what I’m saying. How do you throw out a cognitive map that explains political economy so well? What I’m saying is that in Das Kapital vol. I, Marx has two opportunities to think the relation between the slave and everyone else and each of those opportunities presents him with a kind of paradox, a conundrum; and instead of meditating on that he bounces off of it and continues to posit that the world is out of joint because there is a dichotomy between haves and have-nots, because there’s a dichotomy between those who accumulate capital and those who work for a wage. What I’m saying is that his hit on the slave and then bouncing off of that are a disavowal of the nature of the slave relation, which is symptomatic of the problems in political organizing and political thought on the Left. I’m saying that the antagonism in Das Kapital should be relegated to a conflict because there is an aspect of the thinking which presents itself with a coherent way out. The slave/non-slave, or the Black/human relation, presents us with a structural dynamic which cannot be reconciled and which does not have a coherent mode of redress.

CSS: Alright, you see the master/slave relation as the essential antagonism, so what do you mean by that? A lot of people would think, okay, slavery in the U.S., so Black slavery, and then 1865, the formal end of slavery. But then of course you have slavery today and we hear about issues with people in bondage, debt bondage, and other forms of bondage, so when you say the master/slave relation, what are you specifically referring to?

FW: There is no way I can actually answer that in a compact way, I think I have to step back a minute. So what Afro-pessimism—the conceptual lens or framework that myself and other people are working on—assumes is that you have to begin with an analysis of slavery that corrects the heretofore thinking about it. So the first thing that happens—and this is built on the work of Orlando Patterson’s 1982 tome Slavery and Social Death—the first thing we have to do is screw our heads on backwards. In other words, stop defining slavery through the experience of slaves. What happens normally is that people think of slavery as forced labor and people in chains. What Orlando Patterson does is shows that what slavery really is, is social death. In other words, social death defines the relation between the slave and all others. Forced labor is an example of the experience that slaves might have, but not all slaves were forced to work. So if you then move by saying that slavery is social death, by definition, then what is social death? Social death has three constituent elements: One is gratuitous violence, which means that the body of the slave is open to the violence of all others. Whether he or she receives that violence or not, he or she exists in a state of structural or open vulnerability. This vulnerability is not contingent upon his or her transgressing some type of law, as in going on strike with the worker. The other point is that the slave is natally alienated, which is to say that the temporality of one’s life that is manifest in filial and afilial relations—the capacity to have families and the capacity to have associative relations—may exist very well in your head. You might say, “I have a father, I have a mother,” but, in point of fact, the world does not recognize or incorporate your filial relations into its understanding of family. And the reason that the world can do this goes back to point number one: because you exist in a regime of violence which is gratuitous, open, and you are openly vulnerable to everyone else, not a regime of violence that is contingent upon you being a transgressed worker or transgressing woman or someone like that. And the third point is general dishonor, which is to say, you are dishonored in your very being— and I think that this is the nature of Blackness with everyone else. You’re dishonored prior to your performance of dishonored actions. So it takes a long time to build this but in a nutshell that’s it. And so that’s one of the moves of Afro-pessimism. If you take that move and you take out property relations—someone who’s owned by someone else—you take that out of the definition of slavery and you take out forced labor, and if you replace that with social death and those three constituent elements, what you have is a continuum of slavery-subjugation that Black people exist in and 1865 is a blip on the screen. It is not a paradigmatic moment, it is an experiential moment, which is to say that the technology of enslavement simply morphs and shape shifts—it doesn’t end with that.

CSS: If Orlando Patterson, who is a sociologist at Harvard, argues that forced labor is not a defining characteristic of slavery, if he says that naked violence is one of the key elements of social death, which is slavery, and if the violence directed at Blacks is not based on, as you said, this person transgressing in some way, being disobedient in some way, refusing to consent in some way to what the ruling class thinks or does, then why is violence freely directed at Blacks? What is the reason that the non-white or the master in the master/slave relation treats Blacks violently?

FW: The short answer is that violence against the slave is integral to the production of that psychic space called social life. The repetitive nature of violence against the slave does not have the same type of utility that violence against the post-colonial subject has—in other words, in the first instance, to secure and maintain the occupation of land. It does not have the utility of violence against the working class, which would be to secure and maintain the extraction of surplus-value and the wage. We have to think more libidinally and in a more robust fashion. This is where it becomes really controversial and really troubling for a lot of people because what Patterson is arguing, and what people like myself and professor Jared Sexton and Saidiya Hartman at Columbia University have extended, is to say that what we need to do is begin to think of violence not as having essentially the kind of political or economic utility that violence in other revolutionary paradigms have. Violence against the slave sustains a kind of psychic stability for all others who are not slaves.

CSS: When you say that—and I’ve read some of your writings on the subject—it seems like you’re suggesting that only if some population perceives another population as inferior, or so degraded that anything can be done to them—unless they have that other in mind that somehow, psychologically and psychically—they can’t have the integrity that they want. Is that correct? And why would that be the case psychologically? Why would somebody need to have some other person seen in that light in order to feel actualized, in order to feel worthy of life?

FW: It’s a very good question and we could spend several hours on it, but what I’m trying to do is give you short-hand answers that have integrity and hopefully your listeners will do some more reading and research to actually see how these mechanisms work. But let’s take it for one second outside of the way in which I and other Afro-pessimists are theorizing it. One of our claims is that Blackness cannot be dis-imbricated from slaveness—that is a very controversial claim; that claim is actually the fault line right now of African and Black Studies across the country, the claim that Blackness and slaveness cannot be dis-imbricated, cannot be pulled apart. But I can’t argue against everyone who disagrees with that right now. One of the points that Patterson makes at a higher level of abstraction is that the concept of community, and the concept of freedom, and the concept of communal and interpersonal presence, actually needs a conceptual antithesis. In other words, you can’t think community without being able to register non-community. His book Slavery and Social Death goes back thousands of years and covers slavery in China and all over the world and he says that communal coherence has a lot of positive attributes: this is my language, this is how I organize my polity, these are the anthropological accoutrements of how we work our customs—but at the end of the day what it needs to know is what it is not. So the idea of freedom and the idea of communal life and the idea of civic relations has to have a kind of point of attention which is absent of that or different from that. This is the function that slavery presents or provides to coherence so that prior to Columbus, for example, the Choctaw might have someone inside a Choctaw community who transgresses the codes of the community so fiercely that they’re given a choice, and the choice at this moment of a transgression, which is beyond-the-beyond, is between real death—“We will kill you in an execution”—or social death. Nothing changes in the mind of that person tomorrow or the day after he or she chooses social death. He or she still thinks they have a cosmology, that they have intimate family relations, but the point that Patterson is making is that everything changes in the structure of that person’s dynamic with the rest of the tribe. So now that that person is a slave, that person is socially dead. This is bad for that person, obviously, but what he is suggesting is that that type of action regenerates the knowledge of our existence for everyone else. Now where I and some others take Patterson further is to say that Black, Blackness, and even the thing called Africa, cannot be dis-imbricated, cannot be pulled apart from that smaller scale process that he talks about with respect to Chinese communities or the Choctaw. In other words, there is a global consensus that Africa is the location of sentient beings who are outside of global community, who are socially dead. That global consensus begins with the Arabs in 625 and it’s passed on to the Europeans in 1452. Prior to that global consensus you can’t think Black. You can think Uganda, Ashanti, Ndebele, you can think many different cultural identities, but Blackness cannot be dis-imbricated from the global consensus that decides here is the place which is emblematic of that moment the Choctaw person is spun out from social life to social death. That’s part of the foundation.

CSS: This is really provocative. Are you saying then—let’s just focus on the U.S.—that every African American, regardless of income or wealth or status, can and should be understood in the figure of the slave who is socially dead in relation to the master, who I presume is white?

FW: Well, the master is everyone else, whites and their junior partners, which in my book are colored immigrants. It’s just that colored immigrants exist in an intra-human status of degradation in relation to white people. They are degraded as humans, but they still exist paradigmatically in that position of the human. So yes, I am saying that. Now part of the reason is that one of the things that we are not doing is talking about the different ways in which different Black people live their existence as slaves. I’m willing to do that, but what’s interesting to me is the kind of anxiety that this theory elicits from people other than yourself. I mean this is the calmest conversation that I’ve had on this subject [laughter]. You could say to someone that you are a professor at UC Berkeley and there is a person in a sweatshop on the other side of the Rio Grande. This person in the sweatshop is working sixteen hours a day, cannot go to the bathroom, dies on the job from lack of medical benefits… and you are a kind of labor aristocrat. And they could say, “Okay, well that’s interesting.” And you could say to that person, “But if you read the work of Antonio Negri, the Italian communist, you come to understand that even though you live your life as a proletarian differently than a sweatshop laborer, you both stand in relation to capital in this same way, at the level of structural, paradigmatic arrangement.” That person would say, “Oh yeah! I get that, I get that.” You say to someone that all Blacks are slaves and that we’re going to change the definition of slavery because the other things are not definitions, they are actually anecdotes, and your teacher in third grade told you that you don’t use an anecdote to define something. And that person says, “Oh wait a minute, I know a person who’s richer than me and also Black and they live in the Tenderloin…” and it just goes off to the races. It’s a symptomatic response primarily because they understand that what Black people suffer is real and comprehensive but there is actually no prescriptive, rhetorical gesture which could actually write a sentence about how to redress that. Most Americans, most people in the world, are not willing to engage in a paradigm of oppression that does not offer some type of way out. But that is what we live with as Black people every day.

CSS: Let me take us on what sounds like a bit of a detour, but I think it will help you clarify certain concepts that you’re forwarding, and that’s to go to Antonio Gramsci’s work and think about a word that he had a very specific definition of, which is “hegemony.” And of course Gramsci, coming out of the Marxist tradition, was very interested in workers and capital and the struggle between capitalists and workers, although he was also interested in a lot of other things. What did Gramsci mean by the word hegemony?

FW: In 1922 Antonio Gramsci was working for the Comintern and he asked Lenin the following question: “How did you create this successful revolution and I can’t get it off the ground in Italy?” Lenin said, “Well there is no trough of civil society between our working class and the command modality of capitalism, the violent manifestations of the capitalist state. We go on strike and the Cossacks come out.” And Gramsci began to theorize: between working class suffering and state violence and state institutionality there’s this thing called civil society which captivates the workers—in other words, induces a kind of spontaneous consent to the values of capital. Guild associations, schools—today it would be talk shows, but not this talk show of course [laughter]—and he began to theorize that what Lenin meant by hegemony, which is the domination of imperialist countries over countries that are trying to evolve into a kind of revolutionary dispensation, is different than what he needed to develop his theory of hegemony and so he came up with three constituent elements: influence, leadership, and consent. By influence, leadership, and consent he means the influence of the ruling class—not the influence of one person or another, but the influence of a class—the leadership of its ideas—which is to say the idea of meritocracy, which was a very bad idea for a Marxist—and the consent of the working class to that influence and those ideas. What he sought to do was to find ways to break the spontaneous consent to those ideas. Once he could break the spontaneous consent to those ideas, then the working class of a Western, so-called devout country like Italy would be able to see what Marxists think of as the antagonism between them and the ruling class. Then it would move from a passive revolution to a real revolution, which would be a violent overthrow of the state. The European Gramscians actually leave out that last part, the violent overthrow of the state, but that was actually his dream.

CSS: Okay, so then we have on the one hand force and on the other we have consent. We have the force of the ruling class and we have consent, which you’re suggesting if it is withheld, if it is abrogated to such an extreme degree, there might be social and political revolution. But how does, in Antonio Gramsci’s conception, hegemony normally work in terms of the relationship between force and consent in a nominally stable society?

FW: When a state is stable in a capitalist dispensation, such as Canada, then there is an equilibrium between force and consent. In other words, one of the things you have in a “good” (for capitalists) dispensation is a smooth situation. So for the hundreds of years it took to develop capitalism, there was all this violence. Once people have been remolded from peasants and whatever else into workers, then in a capitalist dispensation, just as in a patriarchal dispensation, the violence goes into remission. That’s what Gramsci means by equilibrium. Violence goes in remission and it only needs to rear its ugly head in those singular moments, which hopefully are not global for the capitalist, when the working class refuses or transgresses those symbolic codes that it has consented to.

CSS: Such as general strikes, mass aggression against the capitalist order…

FW: Exactly.

CSS: So then this equilibrium between force and consent, which constitutes hegemony in Gramsci’s mind, how does that notion apply or not in your mind to the relationship between master and slave?

FW: Consent is never a constituent element of the slave relation. If only Marx had picked up on this, but he says in Capital that he doesn’t understand the slave to exist in a relation of pure force but then he moves away from that. So, why is that? Well, one of the things that Orlando Patterson points out is that any stratified society—by that he means for example a capitalist society—only comes into being through a kind of pre-history of violence—the violence that it takes to move from feudalism to capitalism. But once the state of capitalism is set up the violence goes into remission. But then he goes on to say that what’s interesting about the slave estate—the slave estate is actually a phrase from the Black feminist Hortense Spillers—or the slave relation is that the violent pre-history of the slave relation carries over and becomes the concurrent dynamic of the current history of slavery. And that is really, really profound. It is so profound, that it’s traumatic and painful even for Black politicos and Black writers and you see the pain of that coming through in slave narratives. In the film Twelve Years a Slave, there’s a lot of narrative energy put into making sense of how and why Edwin Epps beats his concubine, Patsy, and why his wife wants him to beat her. So it kind of looks like ordinary sadism and jealousy on the wife’s part and so it actually almost becomes a sort of sick love triangle. Alright, put the film away. Pick up the book and what you find is that the violence against the slaves in the book that became the movie actually has no utility, it has no rationale. For instance between a place like Berkley and San Jose there were about four hundred plantations—I know because my father is from one of those plantations—and you have what I would call a bacchanal of pleasure, not a kind of utilitarian need to extract work or obedience out of people, number one. Number two, what you find is that the families on these plantations all participate in the regular beating of slaves—children, wives, husbands… It sustains the psychic health of the people in the first ontological instance. In the second instance, it gets good sugar cane production out of them—and that could even be questioned.

CSS: If you believe the plight of Black people does not mirror the plight of the working class because of gratuitous, as opposed to reasoned, violence against Blacks, and that there is no consent coming from Black people as there is when workers buy into the capitalist order and agree to offer their services in ways that satisfy capitalists, then what about Native Americans? What do you say to those who say the plight of Black people mirrors the treatment of Native Americans?

FW: A lot of people have been genocided so the middle 88 pages of my book, Red, White and Black, first begins by honoring the destruction of Native Americans and what that has meant for white Americans. However, to make it really simple, to pare it down, I do think that there is, in the main, a utility to the genocide of Native Americans that does not mirror the prelogical “rationale” of the violence against Blacks. Indians are genocided, in the main, for the occupation of Turtle Island, which is primarily why so much Native American theorization builds upon Frantz Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth and does not build upon Fanon’s Black Skin, White Masks. In other words, so much theorization under what I call the meta-commentary called Indigenism leads us back to thinking genocide as a mechanism for usurpation of cartography, of space. Violence against Black people is a mechanism for the usurpation of subjectivity, of life, of being. It’s great if you have a place to stay, but if you don’t have a sense of your own identity, that’s even worse. I think that the repetitive violence against Blacks, if we get back to social death, produces a regenerative form of being in everyone else.

CSS: In other words, settlers wanted Indian land so they killed Indians in large part to get the land, whereas what non-Blacks want from Blacks is not land but…

FW: …but being. If you look at the Dred Scott decision, there’s a really interesting three or four paragraphs in this two hundred and fifty-page decision where Judge Taney says to the lower court, “We are returning Dred Scott to slavery.” One lower court had said, “Dred Scott made it to Minnesota, so he’s not a slave, he made it to a free territory.” The next court said, “No, he never got released, manumission from his master so he is a slave.” The Supreme Court returns Dred Scott to slavery and then does what is known in jurisprudential logic as a “Herculean opinion.” It says to both courts, “We’re not siding with the court that returned him to slavery because he didn’t get freedom from his master; we are trying to correct your thinking in this. In order for Dred Scott to appear before the Bar, he had to become a jurisprudential subject and Africa is a place of non-community. As a result, we’re trying to teach you a lesson—there’s no such thing as a jurisprudential subject that can come out of Africa. We are returning him to slavery not because he didn’t get freedom from his master but because he had no standing before the Bar.” And then they go on to talk about Native Americans and they say that Native Americans actually have political community: “We recognize the arrangements of natality, affiliation, cartography. They have a degraded community in our eyes, and we’re trying to help them evolve to become a superior community, but they actually have community.” This is to say that the people on reservations are subjects worthy of jurisprudential adjudication. So in other words, return him to slavery not because he didn’t get permission to be freed, but because he is not a human being.

CSS: Well, let’s engage in a thought experiment. I’m thinking back to your claim about the master in the master/slave relation: unless they dole out violence to Blacks, they can have no psychic or psychological integrity or security. Let’s posit that all Blacks are wiped out. There is a genocide and all Blacks are removed. In that case, in a sense, you are saying by implication that humanity would cease to exist because the conceptual coherence that it needs would be absent.

FW: Exactly, and that will never happen. We need to bring people like David Marriott from UC Santa Cruz and Jared Sexton from UC Irvine to think more psychoanalytically about this. But in a nutshell, the reason that this will never happen is, remember, that the utility of violence against the slave is not the same as the utility of violence against the Indian, the post-colonial subject, the worker, or the woman. In Fanon’s Black Skin, White Masks, he’s negotiating between two dynamics: one is negrophilia—“I just love Black people, I love Black music, I want to sleep with them, I want to be around them…”—and one is negrophobia—“Yeah you can come over to my crib but don’t bring your friends.” And so, what he’s saying is that the psychic arrangement of the collective unconscious is manifest with the push/pull in the collective unconscious between negrophilia and negrophobia. It’s not important how that gets worked out. What’s important is that that is a process of psychic integration which is necessary for global community. So, one day there could be negrophobia in one psyche, the next day there could be negrophilia. One community could be completely, like teenage boys in the suburbs, negrophilic. Another community, like teenage boys in the deep south, could be completely negrophobic. The point is not that this gets worked out in a decisive way one way or the other because that would make Blacks like Indians, that they have something tangible to give up, like workers. The point is that it’s there that this is the push/pull of collective unconscious meditations. In that push/ pull, whether it’s negrophilia or negrophobia, the concept that has to be reiterated is that the Black is an implement of that negotiation. If the Black does not become an implement of that negotiation then you have not a crisis but an epistemological break, a catastrophe in the knowledge-arrangement of the world. We would find ourselves on the cusp of a new world order, but one that could not be predicted in the way that Marx does.

CSS: Let’s talk more about the Black experience of social death. I’m wondering specifically if you feel that African Americans in this country can in fact consciously acknowledge the violence, the structure of violence, in which they operate and encounter every day.

FW: Well, we can articulate it, but normally when we’re by ourselves. Because when we get into Progressive communities— first of all it’s not even heard of, I used to work in banking for eight years and you can’t even talk about this stuff—but in Progressive humanities there’s a policing action that happens, which is to say: “Make your grammar of suffering, your paradigmatic arrangement, your relationship to structural violence articulate with the other oppressed people in the room.” Once that happens we’re trapped. I mean we’re surrounded by white supremacists, militarization, the police, the military, but we’re also surrounded by people-of-color-consciousness that polices our capacity to flower, to expand upon theorization that I’m doing. A short anecdote: there was a conference years ago at UC Santa Cruz. At the end of the conference, Haunani-Kay Trask, the revolutionary from Hawai‘i, spoke and then we were supposed to break away into groups. The conference organizer said, “You must go into a breakaway room based upon your color—in other words how you are policed.” And immediately—this is how the antagonism manifests itself symptomatically—the Black people were like, “Yes! Now we get to be in a place where we can talk about how we are policed as Blacks.” But the people of color stalled by saying, “There’s no such thing as yellow. We’re Koreans, we’re Japanese, we’re Chinese, we’re Taiwanese. We’re not going to let you pigeonhole us into this position when we have our ethnic identities.” The Latinos did the same thing. The Native Americans did the same thing. My wife, who is white, went to the white room and they rejected the entire arrangement. They said, “We’re just going to talk about ourselves as Armenians, as women, as Jews.” It was the Black people who were energized by the prospect of leaving culture and identity by the wayside and having a conversation about how we fit into the gaze of the police. I think it was up to the other people to be authorized by that project and stop complaining about the fact that the exercise was putting them in a box that was positional and not cultural. But until that happens, there’s no real political coalition building that’s happening. What’s happening, as Jared Sexton says, is Black people become the refugees in everyone else’s political project.

CSS: Let me ask you a personal question, but you can of course refuse to answer. So your wife is white; given what you were telling me about the position of Blacks, what’s your sense that she could truly ever understand your consciousness, your positioning within society? And if she can’t, then what are the prospects of a relationship that could reach as deeply as, for example, two Black people or two white together could?

FW: Well, she can’t. She tries, but what’s interesting and important is that I would never put my marriage out there as a kind of example of what people could aspire to. As a kind of short hand, I call her my wife and she calls me her husband. But the reality is that I’m her slave. And that doesn’t change because we have sentimental—as I would say, contrapuntal—emotions to the contrary. In fact, oftentimes those contrapuntal emotions are mechanisms or means of disavowing the true nature of the relation. Now, I will give her a lot of props for the past eight years that she has actually inculcated this logic. She did her best at that Santa Cruz conference I talked about to tell the white people in that room, “We’re not here to think about how we think about ourselves, we’re here to think about our complicity as whites with policing. Not as women, not as gays, not Armenians, not as Jews, but as white.” On the other hand, if you read my book Incognegro, you’ll see that in the first eight years, there was nothing but resistance to that. So that resistance is as traumatizing as the second eight years are regenerative and I will say that the first eight years are what Black people should take away from that. There’s no way in hell we should have to go through the kind of resistance that white people and non-Black people have to this particular logic because they know it’s the truth. They know their own anxieties about the question, Where is Blackness?, but they can’t approach it because what it would mean is a kind of confrontation with people who are intimate to them that they don’t know they could withstand. And so the real question is, Will these people do all they can to fall into the abyss of nonexistence?, not about how they will perform as partial allies while keeping their cultural presence.

CSS: Why would a Black person, why would you, choose intentionally, consciously, to enter into a life relationship in which you perceive yourself as the figure of the slave?

FW: I don’t think it’s a fair question because the question implies that, knowing what I know, I can actually change my life in an essential way. The question actually takes us away from the problem that I’ve outlined and actually puts the responsibility of correcting the situation on me when actually it should be on you.

CSS: I hear that and I think that prompts me to ask the final thing I want to bring up with you which is regarding how we hear a lot about groups and people who are victims. There is this victimhood frame and so these people have been victimized by, let’s say, another group of people and then the critique is that, by focusing on that, by concentrating on that, you then deflect attention away from their subjectivity, from their agency, from what they can do about their circumstance. Are you concerned that the master/slave relation, which is positioning Blacks as foremost a victim, in my mind, and then focusing only or mainly on a group status as victim, tends to deny—and we’re speaking here now about Blacks—the kind of agency, I think you would admit, that they have at least some semblance of ? And maybe some more than others based on their position in society?

FW: I don’t agree with that and we don’t have the time to actually get into this, but my book, Red, White and Black, is a critique of agency as a generic category. What I’m saying is that, okay, I’m not Elijah Mohammed, I don’t believe that the white man is the devil and that this is all divined by god. I do believe that there is a way out. But I believe that the way out is a kind of violence so magnificent and so comprehensive that it scares the hell out of even radical revolutionaries. So, in other words, the trajectory of violence that Black slave revolts suggest, whether it be in the 21st century or the 19th century, is a violence against the generic categories of life, agency being one of them. That’s what I meant by an epistemological catastrophe. Marx posits an epistemological crisis, which is to say moving from one system of human arrangements and relations to another system of human relations and arrangements. What Black people embody is the potential for a catastrophe of human arrangements writ large. I think that there have been moments—the Black Liberation Army in the 1970s and 1980s is a prime example—of how the political violence of the Black Liberation Army far outpaced the anti-capitalist and internationalist discourse that it had and that’s what scares people; and as Saidiya Hartman says, “A Black revolution makes everyone freer than they actually want to be.” A Marxist revolution blows the lid off of economic relations; a feminist revolution blows the lid off patriarchal relations; a Black revolution blows the lid off the unconscious and relations writ large.

CSS: I have to ask you, when you talk about this violence, in maybe the ideal situation of a Black revolution, what are we talking about concretely? Who or what is the violence directed against? Are we talking about literally the elimination of the master threat physically?

FW: Well, the short answer is that’s for me to know and for you to find out [laughter]. And the long answer is that as a professor I’m uniquely unqualified to actually make that answer. I rely on providing analysis and then getting those marching orders from people in the streets.

II.

The Burdened Individuality of Freedom

Saidiya Hartman

The limits of political emancipation appear at once in the fact that the state can liberate itself from constraint without man himself being really liberated; that a state may be a free state without man himself being a free man.

—Karl Marx, On the Jewish Question (1843)

The emancipation of the slaves is submitted to only in so far as chattel slavery in the old form could not be kept up. But although the freedman is no longer considered the property of the individual master, he is considered the slave of society.

—Carl Schurz, Report on the Condition of the South (1865)

Are we to esteem slavery for what it has wrought, or must we challenge our conception of freedom and the value we place upon it?

—Orlando Patterson, Slavery and Social Death (1982)

The entanglements of bondage and liberty shaped the liberal imagination of freedom, fueled the emergence and expansion of capitalism, and spawned proprietorial conceptions of the self. This vexed genealogy of freedom plagued the great event of Emancipation, or as it was described in messianic and populist terms, Jubilee. The complicity of slavery and freedom or, at the very least, the ways in which they assumed, presupposed, and mirrored one another—freedom finding its dignity and authority in this “prime symbol of corruption” and slavery transforming and extending itself in the limits and subjection of freedom—troubled, if not elided, any absolute and definitive marker between slavery and its aftermath.1 The longstanding and intimate affiliation of liberty and bondage made it impossible to envision freedom independent of constraint or personhood and autonomy separate from the sanctity of property and proprietorial notions of the self. Moreover, since the dominion and domination of slavery were fundamentally defined by black subjection, race appositely framed questions of sovereignty, right, and power.2

The traversals of freedom and subordination, sovereignty and subjection, and autonomy and compulsion are significant markers of the dilemma or double bind of freedom. Marx, describing a dimension of this paradox, referred to it with dark humor as a double freedom—being free to exchange one’s labor and free of material resources. Within the liberal “Eden of the innate rights of man,” owning easily gave way to being owned, sovereignty to fungibility, and abstract equality to subordination and exploitation.3 If sovereignty served “to efface the domination intrinsic to power” and rights “enabled and facilitated relations of domination,” as Michel Foucault argues, then what we are left to consider is the subjugation that rights instigate and the domination they efface.4

The task of the following chapters is to discern the ways in which emancipatory discourses of rights, liberty, and equality instigate, transmit, and effect forms of racial domination and liberal narratives of individuality idealize mechanisms of domination and discipline. It is not simply that rights are inseparable from the entitlements of whiteness or that blacks should be recognized as legitimate rights bearers; rather, the issue at hand is the way in which the stipulation of abstract equality produces white entitlement and black subjection in its promulgation of formal equality. The fragile “as if equal” of liberal discourse inadequately contends with the history of racial subjection and enslavement, since the texture of freedom is laden with the vestiges of slavery, and abstract equality is utterly enmeshed in the narrative of black subjection, given that slavery undergirded the rhetoric of the republic and equality defined so as to sanction subordination and segregation. Ultimately, I am trying to grapple with the changes wrought in the social fabric after the abolition of slavery and with the nonevent of emancipation insinuated by the perpetuation of the plantation system and the refiguration of subjection.

In exploring these issues and in keeping with the focus on everyday practices, I examine pedagogical handbooks designed to aid freed people in the transition from slavery to freedom, the itinerancy of the freed and other “exorbitant” practices, agricultural reports concerned with the productivity of free labor, political debate on the Reconstruction Amendments, and legal cases in order to consider the discrepant bestowal of emancipation. The narratives of slavery and freedom espoused in these disparate sources vied to produce authoritative accounts of liberty, equality, free labor, and citizenship. This generally entailed a deliberation on the origins of slavery, if not the birth of the republic, the place of slavery in the Constitution, the substance of citizenship, and the lineaments of black freedom.

By examining the metamorphosis of “chattel into man” and the strategies of individuation constitutive of the liberal individual and the rights-bearing subject, I hope to underscore the ways in which freedom and slavery presuppose one another, not only as modes of production and discipline or through contiguous forms of subjection but as founding narratives of the liberal subject revisited and revisioned in the context of Reconstruction and the sweeping changes wrought by the abolition of slavery. At issue are the contending articulations of freedom and the forms of subjection they beget. It is not my intention to argue that the differences between slavery and freedom were negligible; certainly such an assertion would be ridiculous. Rather, it is to examine the shifting and transformed relations of power that brought about the resubordination of the emancipated, the control and domination of the free black population, and the persistent production of blackness as abject, threatening, servile, dangerous, dependent, irrational, and infectious. In short, the advent of freedom marked the transition from the pained and minimally sensate existence of the slave to the burdened individuality of the responsible and encumbered freed person.

The nascent individualism of the freed designates a precarious autonomy since exploitation, domination, and subjection inhabit the vehicle of rights. The divisive and individuating power of discipline, operating in conjunction with the sequestering and segregating control of black bodies as a species body, permitted under the guise of social rights and facilitated by the regulatory power of the state, resulted in the paradoxical construction of the freed both as self-determining and enormously burdened individuals and as members of a population whose productivity, procreation, and sexual practices were fiercely regulated and policed in the interests of an expanding capitalist economy and the preservation of a racial order on which the white republic was founded. Lest “the white republic” seem like an inflated or unwarranted rhetorical flourish, we must remember that the transformation of the national government and the citizenship wrought by the Reconstruction Amendments were commonly lamented as representing the loss of the “white man’s government.”5

In light of the constraints that riddled conceptions of liberty, sovereignty, and equality, the contradictory experience of emancipation cannot be adequately conveyed by handsome phrases like “the rights of the man,” “equal protection of the law,” or “the sanctity of life, liberty, and property.” Just as the peculiar and ambivalent articulation of the chattel status of the enslaved black and the assertion of his rights under the law, however limited, had created a notion of black personhood or subjectivity in which all the burdens and few of the entitlements of personhood came to characterize this humanity, so, too, the advent of freedom and the equality of rights conferred to blacks a status no less ambivalent. The advent of freedom held forth the possibility of a world antithetical to slavery and portents of transformations of power and status that were captured in carnivalesque descriptions like “bottom rail on top this time.” At the same time, extant and emergent forms of domination intensified and exacerbated the responsibilities and the afflictions of the newly emancipated. I have opted to characterize the nascent individualism of emancipation as “burdened individuality” in order to underline the double bind of freedom: being freed from slavery and free of resources, emancipated and subordinated, self-possessed and indebted, equal and inferior, liberated and encumbered, sovereign and dominated, citizen and subject. (The transformation of black subjectivity effected by emancipation is described as nascent individualism not simply because blacks were considered less than human and a hybrid of property and person prior to emancipation but because the abolition of slavery conferred on them the inalienable rights of man and brought them into the fold of liberal individualism. Prior to this, legal precedents like State v. Mann and Dred Scott v. Sanford made the notions of blacks’ rights and black citizenship untenable, if not impossible.)

The antagonistic production of abstract equality and black subjugation rested upon contending and incompatible predications of the freed—as sovereign, indivisible, and self-possessed and as fungible and individuated subjects whose capacities could be quantified, measured, exchanged, and alienated. The civil and political rights bestowed upon the freed dissimulated the encroaching and invasive forms of social control exercised over black bodies through the veneration of custom; the regulation, production, and protection of racial and gender inequality in the guise of social rights; the repressive instrumentality of the law; and the forms of extraeconomic coercion that enabled the control of the black population and the effective harnessing of that population as a labor force. The ascribed responsibility of the liberal individual served to displace the nation’s responsibility for providing and ensuring the rights and privileges conferred by the Reconstruction Amendments and shifted the burden of duty onto the freed. It was their duty to prove their worthiness for freedom rather than the nation’s duty to guarantee, at minimum, the exercise of liberty and equality, if not opportunities for livelihood other than debt-peonage. Emancipation had been the catalyst for a transformed definition of citizenship and a strengthened national state. However, the national identity that emerged in its aftermath consolidated itself by casting out the emancipated from the revitalized body of the nation-state that their transient incorporation had created.6 In the aftermath of the Civil War, national citizenship assumed greater importance as a result of the Fourteenth Amendment, which guaranteed civil rights at the national level against state violation and thus made the federal government ultimately responsible for ensuring the rights of citizens.7 Yet the illusory universality of citizenship once again was consolidated by the mechanisms of racial subjection that it formally abjured.

This double bind was the determining condition of black freedom. The belated entry of the newly freed into the realm of freedom, equality, and property, as perhaps expected, revealed the boundaries of emancipation and duly complicated the meaning of freedom. Certainly manhood and whiteness were the undisclosed, but always assumed, norms of liberal equality, although the Civil Rights Act of 1866 made this explicit in defining equality as being equal to white men. The challenge of adequately conveying the dilemmas generated by this delayed entry exceeds the use of descriptions like “limited,” “truncated,” or “circumscribed” freedom; certainly these designations are accurate, but they are far from exhaustive. This first order of descriptives begs the question of how race, in general, and blackness, in particular, are produced through mechanisms of domination and subjection that have yoked, harnessed, and infiltrated the apparatus of rights. How are new forms of bonded labor engendered by the vocabulary of freedom? Is an emancipatory figuration of blackness possible? Or are we to hope that the entitlements of whiteness will be democratized? Is the entrenchment of black subordination best understood in the context of the relations of production and class conflict? Is race best considered an effect of the operation of power on bodies and populations exercised through relations of exploitation, domination, and subjection? Is blackness the product of this combined and uneven articulation of various modalities of power? If slave status was the primary determinant of racial identity in the antebellum period, with “free” being equivalent to “white” and slave status defining blackness, how does the production and valuation of race change in the context of freedom and equality?8

The task of describing the status of the emancipated involves attending to the articulation of various modes of power, without simply resorting to additive models of domination or interlocking oppressions that analytically maintain the distinctiveness and separateness of these modes and their effects, as if they were isolated elements that could be easily enumerated—race, class, gender, and sexuality—or as if they were the ingredients of a recipe for the social whereby the mere listing of elements enables an adequate rendering. Certainly venturing to answer these questions is an enormously difficult task because of the chameleon capacities of racism, the various registers of domination, exploitation and subjection traversed by racism, the plasticity of race as an instrument of power, and the divergent and sundry complex of meanings condensed through the vehicle of race, as well as the risks entailed in generating a description of racism that does not reinforce the fixity of race or neglect the differences constitutive of race. As well, it is important to remember that there is not a monolithic or continuous production of race. […]

If race formerly determined who was “man” and who was chattel, whose property rights were protected or recognized and who was property, which consequently had the effect of making race itself a kind of property, with blackness as the mark of object status and whiteness licensing the proprietorship of self, then how did emancipation affect the status of race? The proximity of black and free necessarily incited fundamental changes in the national fabric. The question persists as to whether it is possible to unleash freedom from the history of property that secured it, for the security of property that undergirded the abstract equality of rights bearers was achieved, in large measure, through black bondage. As a consequence of emancipation, blacks were incorporated into the narrative of the rights of man and citizen; by virtue of the gift of freedom and wage labor, the formerly enslaved were granted entry into the hallowed halls of humanity, and, at the same time, the unyielding and implacable fabrication of blackness as subordination continued under the aegis of formal equality. This is not to deny the achievements made possible by the formal stipulation of equality but simply to highlight the fractures and limits of emancipation and the necessity of thinking about these limits in terms that do not simply traffic in the obviousness of common sense—the denial of basic rights, privileges, and entitlements to the formerly enslaved—and yet leave the framework of liberalism unexamined. In short, the matter to be considered is how the formerly enslaved navigated between a travestied emancipation and an illusory freedom.9

When we examine the history of racial formation in the United States, it is evident that liberty, property, and whiteness were inextricably enmeshed. Racism was central to the expansion of capitalist relations of production, the organization, division, and management of the laboring classes, and the regulation of the population through licensed forms of sexual association and conjugal unions and through the creation of an internal danger to the purity of the body public. Whiteness was a valuable and exclusive property essential to the integrity of the citizen-subject and the exemplary self-possession of the liberal individual. Although emancipation resulted in a decisive shift in the relation of race and status, black subordination continued under the aegis of contract. In this regard, the efforts of Southern states to codify blackness in constitutions written in the wake of abolition and install new measures in the law that would secure the subordination of freed black people demonstrate the prevailing disparities of emancipation. The discrepant production of blackness, the articulation of race across diverse registers of subjection, and the protean capacities of racism illuminate the tenuousness of equality in a social order founded on chattel slavery. Certainly the freed came into “possession” of themselves and basic civil rights consequent to the abolition of slavery. However, despite the symbolic bestowal of humanity that accompanied the acquisition of rights, the legacy of freedom was an ambivalent one. If the nascent mantle of sovereign individuality conferred rights and entitlements, it also served to obscure the coercion of “free labor,” the transmutation of bonded labor, the invasive forms of discipline that fashioned individuality, and the regulatory production of blackness.

Notwithstanding the dissociation of the seemingly inviolable imperial body of property resulting from the abolition of slavery and the uncoupling of the master-and-slave dyad, the breadth of freedom and the shape of the emergent order were the sites of intense struggle in everyday life. The absolute dominion of the master, predicated on the annexation of the captive body and its standing as the “sign and surrogate” of the master’s body, yielded to an economy of bodies, yoked and harnessed, through the exercise of autonomy, self-interest, and consent. The use, regulation, and management of the body no longer necessitated its literal ownership since self-possession effectively yielded modern forms of bonded labor. However, as Marx observed with notable irony, the pageantry of liberty, equality, and consent enacted within this veritable Eden of rights underwent a radical transformation after the exchange was made, the bargain was struck, and the contract was signed. The transactional agent appeared less as the self-possessed and willful agent than as “someone who has brought his own hide to market and now has nothing to expect—but a tanning.”10 Although no longer the extension and instrument of the master’s absolute right or dominion, the laboring black body remained a medium of others’ power and representation.11 If the control of blacks was formerly effected by absolute rights of property in the black body, dishonor, and the quotidian routine of violence, these techniques were supplanted by the liberty of contract that spawned debtpeonage, the bestowal of right that engendered indebtedness and obligation and licensed naked forms of domination and coercion, and the cultivation of a work ethic that promoted self-discipline and induced internal forms of policing. Spectacular displays of white terror and violence supplemented these techniques.12

At the same time, the glimpse of freedom enabled by the transformation from chattel to man fueled the resistance to domination, discipline, and subjugation, for the equality and personal liberty conferred by the dispensation of rights occasioned a sense of group entitlement intent on collective redress as these newly acquired rights also obfuscated and licensed forms of social domination, racial subjection, and exploitation, Despite the inability of the newly emancipated to actualize or enjoy the full equality or freedom stipulated by the law and the ways in which these newly acquired rights masked the modes of domination attendant to the transition from slavery to freedom, the possession of rights was nonetheless significant.

#### Fatalism forecloses political agency and cements white supremacy.

**Rogers 15**, Associate Professor of African American Studies & Political Science University of California, Los Angeles. Ta-Nehisi Coates’s Wounded Attachment: Reflections on Between the World and Me Fugitive Thoughts, August 2015, http://www.academia.edu/14337627/Ta-Nehisi\_Coatess\_Wounded\_Attachment\_Reflections\_on\_Between\_the\_World\_and\_Me

The Dream seems to run so deep that it eludes those caught by it. Between the World and Me initially seems like a book that will reveal the illusion and in that moment open up the possibility for imagining the United States anew. Remember: “Nothing about the world is meant to be.” But the book does not move in that direction. **Coates** rejects the American mythos and the logic of certain progress it necessitates, but **embraces the certainty of white supremacy and its inescapable constraints. White supremacy is not merely a historically emergent feature** of the Western world generally, and the United States particularly; **it is an ontology**. By this I mean that **for Coates white supremacy does not structure reality; it is reality. There is, in this, a danger. When one conceptualizes white supremacy at the level of ontology, there is little room for one’s imagination to soar and** one’s **sense of agency is inescapably constrained**. The meaning of action is tied fundamentally to what we imagine is possible for us. “The missing thing,” Coates writes, “was related to the plunder of our bodies, the fact that any claim to ourselves, to the hands that secured us, the spine that braced us, and the head that directed us, was contestable.” The body is one of the unifying themes of the book. It resonates well with our American ears because the hallmark of freedom is sovereign control over our bodies. This was the site on which slavery did its most destructive work: controlling the body to enslave the soul. We see the reconstitution of this logic in our present moment—the policing and imprisoning of black men and women. **The reality of this colonizes not only the past and the present, but also the future. There can be no affirmative politics when race functions primarily as a wounded attachment—when** our **bodies are the visible reminders that we live at the arbitrary whim of another**. But **what of** **those** young men and women **in the streets of Ferguson, Chicago, New York, and Charleston—how ought we to read their efforts?** We come to understand Coates’s answer to this question in one of the pivotal and tragic moments of the book—the murder of a college friend, Prince Jones, at the hands of the police. As Coates says: “This entire episode took me from fear to a rage that burned in me then, animates me now, and will likely leave me on fire for the rest of my days.” With his soul on fire, all his senses are directed to the pain white supremacy produces, the wounds it creates. This murder should not be read as a function of the actions of a police officer or even the logic of policing blacks in the United States. His account of this strikes a darker chord. What he tells us about the meaning of the death of Prince Jones, what we ought to understand, reveals the operating logic of the “universe”: She [referring to his mother] knew that the galaxy itself could kill me, that all of me could be shattered and all of her legacy spilled upon the curb like bum wine. And no one would be brought to account for this destruction, because my death would not be the fault of any human but the fault of some unfortunate but immutable fact of ‘race,’ imposed upon an innocent country by the inscrutable judgment of invisible gods. The earthquake cannot be subpoenaed. The typhoon will not bend under indictment. They sent the killer of Prince Jones back to his work, because he was not a killer at all. He was a force of nature, the helpless agent of our world’s physical laws. **But if we are all just helpless agents of physical laws, the question might emerge again: What does one do? Coates recommends interrogation and struggle**. His love for books and his journey to Howard University, “Mecca,” as he calls it, serve as sites where he can question the world around him. **But interrogation and struggle to what end? His answer is contained in his** incessant **preoccupation with natural disasters**. We might say, at one time we thought the Gods were angry with us or that they were moving furniture around, thus causing earthquakes. Now **we know earthquakes are the result of tectonic shifts. Okay, what do we do with that knowledge? Coates seems to say: Construct an early warning system—don’t misspend your energy trying to stop the earthquake itself.** There is a lesson in this: “**Perhaps one person can make a change, but not the kind of change that would raise your body to equality with your countrymen…And still you are called to struggle, not because it assures you victory, but because it assures you an honorable** and sane **life**.” One’s response can be honorable because it emerges from a clear-sightedness that leaves one standing upright in the face of the truth of the matter—namely, that your white counterparts will never join you in raising your body to equality. “It is truly horrible,” Coates writes in one of the most disturbing sentences of the book, “to understand yourself as the essential below of your country.” Coates’s sentences are often pitched as frank speech; it is what it is. This produces a kind of sanity, he suggests, releasing one from a preoccupation with the world being other than what it is. **Herein lies the danger**: Forget telling his son it will be okay. **Coates cannot even muster a tentative response to his son; he cannot tell him that it may be okay.** “The struggle is really all I have for you,” he tells his son, “because it is the only portion of this world under your control.” What a strange form of control. Black folks may control their place in the battle, but never with the possibility that they, and in turn the country to which they belong, may win. **Releasing the book at this moment—given all that is going on with black lives under public assault and black youth in particular attempting to imagine the world anew—seems the oddest thing to do. For all** of **the channeling of James Baldwin, Coates seems to have forgotten that black folks “can’t afford despair.” As Baldwin went on to say: “I can’t tell my nephew, my niece; you can’t tell the children there is no hope.” The reason** why **you can’t say this is not because you are living in a dream or selling a fantasy, but because there can be no certain knowledge of the future. Humility, borne out of our lack of knowledge of the future, justifies hope.** Much has been made of the comparison between Baldwin and Coates, owing largely to how the book is structured and because of Toni Morrison’s endorsement. But what this connection means seems to escape many commentators. In his 1955 non-fiction book titled Notes of a Native Son, Baldwin reflects on the wounds white supremacy left on his father: “I had discovered the weight of white people in the world. I saw that this had been for my ancestors and now would be for me an awful thing to live with and that the bitterness which had helped to kill my father could also kill me.” Similar to Coates, Baldwin was wounded and so was Baldwin’s father. Yet **Baldwin knew all too well** that **the wounded attachment if held on to would destroy not the plunderers of black life, but the ones who were plundered. “Hatred,** which could destroy so much, **never failed to destroy the man who hated and this was an immutable law.” Baldwin’s father, as he understood him, was destroyed by hatred. Coates is less like Baldwin in this respect and, perhaps, more like Baldwin’s father.** “I am wounded,” says Coates. “I am marked by old codes, which shielded me in one world and then chained me in the next.” The chains reach out to imprison not only his son, but you and I as well. **There is a profound sense of disappointment** here. **Disappointment because** given the power of the book, **Coates seems unable to linger in the conditions that have given life to** **the Ta-Neisha Coates that now occupies the public stage.** Coates’s own engagement with the world—his very agency—has received social support. Throughout the book he often comments on the rich diversity of black beauty and on the power of love. His father, William Paul Coates, is the founder of Black Classic Press—a press with the explicit focus of revealing the richness of black life. His mother, Cheryl Waters, helped to financially support the family and provided young Coates with direction. And yet he seems to stand at a distance from the condition of possibility suggested by just those examples. **One ought not to read these moments above as expressive of the very “Dream” he means to reject. Rather, the point is that black life is at once informed by, but not reducible to**, the **pain exacted on our bodies by this country. This eludes Coates. The wound is so intense he cannot direct his senses beyond the pain.**

#### A positive orientation towards history and the ideals of radical humanist freedom are key to global liberationist struggles. Only this can avert every major existential crisis of our times.

Karenga 6—Professor and Chair Department of Africa Studies at Cal State University and a major figure in the Black Power movement [Maulana, *Philosophy in the African Tradition of Resistance: Issues or Human Freedom and Human Flourishing in Not Only The Master’s Tools*, 2006, p. 242-5]

Surely, we are at a moment of history fraught with new and old fOnTIS of anxiety, alienation, and antagonism; deepening poverty in the midst of increasing wealth; proposals and practices of ethnic cleansing and genocide; pandemic diseases; increased plunder; pollution and depletion of the environment; constant conflicts, large and small; and world-threatening delusions on the part of a superpower aspiring to a return to empire, with spurious claims of the right to preemptive aggression, to openly attack and overthrow nonfavored and fragile governments openly, and to seize the lands and resources of vulnerable peoples and establish "democracy" through military dictatorship abroad, all the while suppressing political dissent at home (Chang 2002; Cole et at. 2002). These anxieties are undergirded by racist and religious chauvinism, by the self-righteous and veiled references of these rulers to themselves as a kind of terrible and terrorizing hand of God, appointed to rid the world of evil (Ahmad 2002; Arnin 2001; Blum1995). At the same time, in this context of turmoil and terror and the use and threatened use of catastrophic weapons, there is the irrational and arrogant expectation that the oppressed will acquiesce, abandon resistance, and accept the disruptive and devastating consequences of globalization, along with the global hegemony it implies (Martin and Schumann 1997). There is great alarm among the white-supremicist rulers of these globalizing nations, given the metical resistance rising up against them, even as globalization’s technological, organizational, and economic capacity continues to expand (Barber 1996; Karenga 2002e, 2003a; Lusane 1997). There is great alarm when people who should "know" when they are defeated ridicule the assessment, refuse to be defeated or dispirited, and, on the contrary, intensify and diversify their struggles (Zepezauer 2002). Certainly the battlefields of Palestine, Venezuela, long suffering Haiti, and Chiapas, Mexico, along with other continuing emancipatory struggles everywhere, reaffirm the indomitable character of the human spirit and the durability and adaptive vitality of a people determined to be free, regardless of the odds and assessments against them. Indeed, they remind us that the motive force of history is struggle, informed by the ongoing quest for freedom, justice, power of the masses, and peace in the world. Despite "end of history" claims and single-super- power resolve and resolutions, these struggles continue. For still the oppressed want freedom, the wronged and injured want justice, the people want power over their destiny and daily lives, and the world wants peace. And all over the world-especially in this U.S. citadel of aging capitalism with its archaic dreams of empire-clarity in the analysis of issues, and in the critical determination of tasks and prospects, requires the deep and disciplined reflection characteristic of the personal and social practice we call philosophy. But this sense of added urgency for effective intervention is prompted not only by the critical juncture at which we stand but also by an awareness of our long history of resistance as a people, because in our collective strivings and social struggles we seek a new future for our people, our descendants, and the world. Joined also to these conditions and considerations is the compelling character of our self-understanding as a people, as a moral vanguard in this country and the world. For we have launched, fought, and won with our allies struggles that not only have expanded the realm of freedom in this country and the world but also have served as an ongoing inspiration and a model of liberation struggles for other marginalized and oppressed peoples and groups throughout the world. Indeed, they have borrowed from and built on our moral vocabulary and moral vision, sung our songs of freedom, and held up our struggle for liberation as a model to emulate. Now, self-understanding and self-assertion are dialectically linked. In other words, how we understand ourselves in the world determines how we assert ourselves in the world. Thus, an expansive concept of ourselves as Africans-continental and diasporan-and as Africana philosophers forms an essential component of our sense of mission and the urgency with which we approach it. It is important to note that I have conceived and written this chapter within the framework of Kausaida philosophy (Karenga 1978, 1980, 1997) Kawaida is a philosophic initiative that was forged in the crucible of ideological and practical struggles around issues of freedom, justice, equalitys, self-determination, conullunal power, self-defense, pan~African- ism, coalition and alliance, Black Studies, intellectual emancipation, and cultural recovery and reconstlouction. It continued to develop in the midst of these ongoing struggies within the life of the mind and stmggles iottbtn the life of the people, as well as within the context of the conditions of the world. Kawaida is defined as an ongoing synthesis of the best of xAfrican thought and practice in constant exchange tuttb tl3e 'U)()ltd. It characterizes culture as a unique, instructive and valuable way of being human in the world-as a foundation and framework for self-understanding and self-assertion. As a philosophy of culture and struggle, Kawaida maintains that our intellectual and social practice as Nricana activist scholars must be undergirded and informed by ongoing efforts to (1) ground our- selves in our own culture; (2) constantly recover, reconstruct, .and bring forth from our culture the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense; (3) speak this special cultural truth to the world and (4) use our culture to constantly make our own unique contribution to the reconception and reconstruction of this country, and to the forward flow of human history.

#### We can reappropriate state power – challenging neoliberalism and imagining new spaces for democratic engagement is key to a viable anti-racist politics

Giroux 04 (Henry, Prof of Comm @ McMaster, The Terror of Neoliberalism, p. 77-8)

Defined through the ideology of racelessness, the state removes itself from either addressing or correcting the effects of racial discrimination, reducing matters of racism to individual concerns to be largely solved through private negotiations between individuals, and adopting an entirely uncritical role in the way in which the racial state shapes racial policies and their effects throughout the economic, social, and cultural landscape. Lost here is any critical engagement with state power and how it imposes immigration policies, decides who gets resources and access to a quality education, defines what constitutes a crime, how people are punished, how and whether social problems are criminalized, who is worthy of citizenship, and who is responsible for addressing racial injustices. As the late Pierre Bourdieu argued, there is a political and pedagogical need, not only to protect the social gains, embodied in state policies, that have been the outcome of important collective struggles, but also “to invent another kind of state.”64 This means challenging the political irresponsibility and moral indifference that are the organizing principles at the heart of the neoliberal vision. As Bourdieu suggests, it is necessary to restore the sense of utopian possibility rooted in the struggle for a democratic state. The racial state and its neoliberal ideology need to be challenged as part of a viable anti-racist pedagogy and politics. Anti-racist pedagogy also needs to move beyond the conundrums of a limited identity politics and begin to include in its analysis what it would mean to imagine the state as a vehicle for democratic values and a strong proponent of social and racial justice. In part, reclaiming the democratic and public responsibility of the state would mean arguing for a state in which tax cuts for the rich, rather than social spending, are seen as the problem; using the state to protect the public good rather than waging a war on all things public; engaging and resisting the use of state power to both protect and define the public sphere as utterly white; redefining the power and role of the state so as to minimize its policing functions and strengthen its accountability to the public interests of all citizens rather than to the wealthy and corporations. Removing the state from its subordination to market values means reclaiming the importance of social needs over commercial interests and democratic politics over corporate power; it also means addressing a host of urgent social problems that include but are not limited to the escalating costs of health care, housing, the schooling crisis, the growing gap between rich and poor, the environmental crisis, the rebuilding of the nation’s cities and impoverished rural areas, the economic crisis facing most of the states, and the increasing assault on people of color. The struggle over the state must be linked to a struggle for a racially just, inclusive democracy. Crucial to any viable politics of anti-racism is the role the state will play as a guardian of the public interest and as a force in creating a multiracial democracy.

#### No single causes or cures. Even if instances of injustice share traits does NOT justify transcendental attribution to a single social force – theories are only useful so far as they attend to the specifics of the situation.

Pappas 17 (Gregory Fernando Pappas, Professor at Texas A&M University, author of Pragmatism in the Americas, and John Dewey's Ethics: Democracy as Experience, Fulbright Scholar, recipient of a Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship, the William James and the Latin American Thought prizes by the American Philosophical Association, and the Mellow Prize by the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, “Empirical Approaches to Problems of Injustice Elizabeth Anderson and the Pragmatists,” in *Pragmatism and Justice*, eds. Susan Dieleman, et al., Oxford University Press, 2017, p.82-96)

Pragmatism: Problematic Situations of Injustice as Starting Point Anderson’s claim is that the pragmatists’ “method is unorthodox” because it starts “from a diagnosis of injustices in the actual world” (2010, 3). However, under Dewey’s formulation, the pragmatist methodology is more “unorthodox” and more demanding than Anderson thinks it is, because beginning with a diagnosis is already to start with a theoretical account and not with the concrete problems of injustice as they are experienced in the midst of social life. Let us examine the methodological reasons why Dewey thinks designation should precede diagnosis in an empirical philosophy. In Experience and Nature, Dewey names the empirical way of doing philosophy the “denotative method” (LW 1:371). What Dewey means by “denotation” is simply the phase of an empirical inquiry where we are concerned with designating, as free from theoretical presuppositions as possible, the concrete problem (subject matter) for which we can provide different and even competing descriptions and theories. Once we designate the subject matter, we then engage in the inquiry itself, including diagnosis, possibly even constructing theories and developing concepts. Of course, that is not the end of the inquiry. We must then take the results of that inquiry “as a path pointing and leading back to something in primary experience” (LW 1:17). This looping back is essential, and it never ends as long as there are new experiences that may require a revision of our theories. Injustices are events suffered by concrete people at particular times and in particular situations. We should start by pointing out and describing these problematic experiences, instead of starting with a theoretical account or diagnosis of them. Dewey is concerned with the consequences of not following the methodological advice to distinguish designation from diagnosis. Definitions, theoretical criteria, and diagnosis can be useful; they have their proper place and function once inquiry is on its way. But if stressed too much at the start of inquiry, they can lead us to overlook aspects of concrete problems that escape our theoretical lenses. We must attempt to designate the subject matter pretheoretically, i.e., to “point” in a certain direction, even if it’s with only a vague or crude description of the problem. This is a difficult task for philosophers because we are often too prone to interpret the particular problem in a way that confirms our most cherished theories of injustice. One must be careful to designate the subject matter in such a way as to not slant the question in favor of one’s theory or theoretical preconceptions. A philosopher must make an honest effort to designate the injustices based on what is experienced as such, because a concrete social problem (e.g., injustice) is independent of and neutral with respect to the different possible competing diagnoses or theories about its causes. Moreover, without this effort, there is no way to test or adjudicate between competing accounts. That designation precedes diagnosis is true of any inquiry that claims to be empirical. To start with the diagnosis is to start with something other than the problem. The problem is pretheory or preinquiry not in any mysterious sense, but simply in the sense that it is first suffered by someone in a particular context. Otherwise, efforts to diagnose the causes of the problem lack an object and the inquiry cannot even be initiated. In his Logic, Dewey lays out the pattern of all empirical inquiries. All inquiries start with what he calls an “indeterminate situation,” prior even to a “problematic situation” (LW 12). Here is a sketch of the process: Indeterminate situation → Problematic situation → Diagnosis: What is the problem? What is the solution? (operations of analysis, ideas, observations, clarification, formulating and testing hypothesis, reasoning, etc.) → Final judgment (resolution: determinate situation). To make more clear or vivid the difference between Anderson and Dewey on the starting point, we can use the example of medical practice. The doctor’s starting point is the experience of a particular illness of a particular patient, i.e., concrete and unique embodied patients experiencing a disruption or problematic change in their lives (LW 6:6). The problem becomes an object of knowledge once the doctor engages in certain interactions with the patient, analysis, and testing, which lead to a diagnosis. For Dewey, “diagnosis” occurs when the doctor is engaged in operations of experimental observation in which she is already narrowing the field of relevant evidence, concerned with the correlation between the nature of the problem and possible solutions. Dewey uses the example of the doctor to emphasize the radical contextualism and particularism of his view. The good doctor never forgets that this patient and “this ill is just the specific ill that it is. It never is an exact duplicate of anything else” (MW 12:176). Similarly, the empirical philosopher in her inquiry about an injustice brings forth general knowledge or expertise to an inquiry into the causes of an injustice. She relies on sociology and history, as well as knowledge of all forms of injustice, but it is all in the service of inquiry about the singularity of each injustice suffered in a situation. Just as with the doctor, empirical inquirers about injustice must return to the concrete problem for testing, and should never forget that their conceptual abstractions and general knowledge are just means to ameliorate what is particular, context- bound, and unique. The correction or refinement that I am making to Anderson’s characterization of the pragmatists’ approach has methodological and practical consequences for how we approach an injustice. The distinction between the diagnosis of the problem and the designation of the problem (the illness, the injustice) is an important functional distinction that must be kept in inquiry because it keeps us alert to the provisional and hypothetical aspect of any diagnosis. To rectify or improve any diagnosis we must return to the concrete problem; as with the patient, this may require attending as much as possible to the uniqueness of the problem. This is in the same spirit as Anderson’s preference for an empirical inquiry that tries to “capture all of the expressive harms” in situations of injustice (2010, 6). But this requires that we begin with and return to concrete experiences of injustice rather than beginning with a diagnosis of the causes of injustice provided by studies in the social sciences. For instance, a diagnosis of causes that are due to systematic, structural features of society or the world disregards aspects of the concrete experiences of injustice that are not systematic and structural. Making the designation of problematic situations of injustice our explicit methodological starting point functions as a directive to inquirers to locate the problem before venturing into descriptions, diagnosis, analysis, clarifications, hypothesis, and reasoning about the problem. These operations are instrumental to its amelioration and must ultimately return to and be tested against the problem that sparked the inquiry. This directive makes inquirers more attentive to the complex ways in which such differences as race, culture, class, or gender intersect in a problem of injustice. Sensitivity to complexity and difference in matters of injustice is not easy; it is a very demanding methodological prescription because it means that no matter how confident we may feel about applying solutions designed to ameliorate systematic evil, our cures should try to address as much as possible the unique circumstances of each injustice. This directive is not opposed to inquiry into how big categories (race, capitalism, colonialism, modernity) produce and perpetuate injustices. However, such abstract and general inquiries are ultimately just tools to illuminate particular injustices, just as knowledge of research about diseases of entire populations can assist a doctor. The directive keeps us honest, fallible, and aware of our limitations as intellectuals because it implies that there is always a gap between our best diagnoses and theories of injustice, and the concrete problems of injustice. We cannot assume that our theories or our ways of gathering evidence have captured all there is in concrete problematic contexts. This is relevant to the second qualification that I want to make to Anderson’s characterization of pragmatism as a nonideal: the breadth of experiential resources. Pragmatism: A Broad View of the Experiential Resources for Inquiry Given its starting point, pragmatism has a broad view of the initial experiential material to be analyzed by inquiry. Contrary to what Anderson seems to suggest, there is no good reason for a pragmatist approach to injustice to limit its experiential resources to the empirical research and material provided by scientific studies. In fact, without the use of other resources, we risk not capturing those aspects of injustices that may not be amenable to scientific types of inquiry. Starting inquiry with the features of events or injustices that are already known or as they are diagnosed or accounted for by a scientific investigation (such as the social sciences) is valuable, but prior to these theoretical lenses there is the problem experienced (sometimes suffered) by concrete human beings in their robust and raw character. We cannot ignore the crudities of life just because they are crude. In making a diagnosis, we are already reflectively removed from the problem and have been selective in disregarding those features that seem irrelevant to our inquiries. For pragmatism, admitting the selectivity of theoretical lenses in all inquiries does not undermine the notion that some inquiries are better than others (more on this later). But it does imply that what scientific research reveals about a concrete problem is partial and may need to be supplemented by other approaches and experiential resources. In The Imperative of Integration, Anderson reaches her conclusions based on empirical academic research, including social science findings in economics, sociology, and psychology. These findings are important since they seek causal regularities behind the problems, but they need to be complemented with other ways of capturing the complexity and uniqueness of the concrete problems of injustice. For instance, Anderson’s diagnosis would have benefited from more concrete interactions with the marginalized of whom she wrote, just as a doctor can enhance her diagnosis via interaction with her patient. Jane Addams used this method of first- order empiricism to inform her work (1902). She thought that one must interact and converse with others to understand, as closely as possible, their experiences of social inequality, discrimination, and oppression. Addams did not confine herself to academia; she put herself into the world. Importantly, experience was her data— interactions unmitigated by statistical compilations, theoretical interpretations, and the like. Sometimes a doctor needs to engage, be participant, and take a sympathetic interest in the condition of the patient to gather new evidence. To understand persons, communities, and even social structures requires that we experience them as historically evolving in a particular context. I am not claiming that Anderson’s conclusions are invalidated by her distance from the raw data of experience, or her lack of interaction with the experiences of those who directly suffer injustice; they may be perfectly sound. The point I want to make is a more general one about how pragmatists should try to approach problems of injustice. Both empirical research and first- order experiences can be utilized together in an effort to identify the problems that persist in society and to develop solutions to these problems. The idea of enmeshing oneself in the circumstances of others, and thereby gaining a broad and rich perspective, received uptake in sociology (e.g., Robert Park) under the influence of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead in Chicago in the first part of the twentieth century. This is what today is known as the qualitative and ethnographic approach to sociology. However, it would be a mistake to identify the pragmatist approach as one that negates the importance of other techniques such as the ones stressed in quantitative research; they too have their proper place and function. Recently, there has been a new generation of sociologists that has rectified this narrow conception of the pragmatist approach. In fact, pragmatism is now considered the philosophical basis of mixed- methods research (MMR).2 However, in regard to methodologies and experiential resources, pragmatism has an even more inclusive view than does MMR. Quantitative and qualitative methods are sociological and as such are only interested in the sort of data that interest sociology: facts about human beings as social animals or members of groups. Therefore, in the study of concrete injustices, they will be selective in ways different than other sciences like psychology. There are as many different ways to capture and understand experiences of injustice as there are types of inquiry. This pluralism is a strength of pragmatism, one that sets an inclusive framework that supports interdisciplinary and cooperative research about problems of injustices. What the philosopher provides is the critical perspective needed to help inquirers from different disciplines avoid reductionism and other common mistakes by reminding them of their particular biases. However, the pragmatist approach is even more radically open with regard to the evidence it can draw on in its designation and diagnosis of problems of injustice. It isn’t restricted to the evidence of any particular academic discipline; neither is it restricted to the evidence that is gathered and validated via the academic disciplines, full stop. Among the experiential resources that pragmatism can draw on are also autobiographical texts, narratives, and stories that the Eurocentric paradigm of knowledge and science often discard as irrelevant, as fiction, or art. For example, Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderlands / La Frontera (1987) is a first- person autobiographical account of multiple forms of oppression suffered by Mexican Americans growing up in the border. Without the stories of different oppressed groups, academics would lack the resources needed to begin to understand the complex experiences of oppression as they are lived and the structural constraints as they are experienced in everyday lives. By explicitly holding a broader sense of the “empirical,” Anderson’s view could have avoided some of the objections that have been raised since the publication of her book. More than one commentator has raised questions about whether a privileged, white scholar like Anderson is too removed or out of touch with the Black community’s experience to be able to offer a reliable inquiry about their experiences of injustice. Paul Taylor, for example, writes, “Anderson endorses the Deweyan thought that social and political philosophy needs to be grounded in an empirically adequate understanding of the problems we face. But Dewey never tired of explaining that empirical adequacy had to do with experience in all of its existential and phenomenological depth” (2013, 201). And V. Denise James has argued, “my deepest concern [about Anderson] is rooted in another of classical Deweyan pragmatism’s central claims that our work should attend to and get not only data from, but also be interpreted through, lived experience” (2013, 1). These are concerns about Anderson’s experiential basis for the knowledge that she has produced. To be sure, the view that just because an inquirer is a member of a privileged group (e.g., a white intellectual) she could not possibly produce reliable knowledge about the injustices suffered by the oppressed is an extreme and implausible view. But one could, and sometimes should, raise the question of whether an investigator’s position in her society may have in some way limited the experiential resources of her inquiry into an injustice. In the case of someone like Anderson, one can ask, beyond relying on the best social sciences, whether she considered other experiencebased resources that may have had an impact on the scientific research. One could ask, of course, the same questions about Black scholars who for some other reason, such as being academic intellectuals, may be too far removed from the same experiential resources. In the case of Anderson, what became a red flag for her critics was the simple fact that she did not realize that the term “integration” has many negative connotations in Blacks’ lived experience.3 Anderson’s personal distance from the problem of injustice in the lives of Blacks may not invalidate her conclusions, but it raises the question of whether she missed experiential data obtainable via other means, such as a cross- racial dialogue about the very causes of the problem. There is in Anderson’s work an oversight; that is, she does not acknowledge other sources for inquiry. She may reply that the only sources of knowledge she needs are the causal mechanisms reproducing undemocratic and unjust race relations as they have been revealed by studies in the social sciences. But even these studies are limited if they are too far removed from and not sensitive enough to the particular experiences, daily struggles, and circumstances of particular communities and situations in the United States. Pragmatism’s Methodological Warnings to Contemporary Nonideal “Empirical” Approaches The pragmatist approach to problems of injustice can be distinguished by its starting point and its broad view of empirical inquiry. There is in this view a demanding commitment to be sensitive to the uniqueness and complexity of the problematic contexts that trigger inquiry. However, does pragmatism provide more specific lessons or directives that can be useful for today’s nonideal theorists in their efforts to provide a better alternative to traditional ideal theories in addressing problems of injustice? First, pragmatism issues the warning to contemporary nonideal theories not to take for granted that their approach is “empirical” simply because they are critical of ideal theories or because they have the intention to be empirical. Theories and categories, no matter how empirically grounded they may seem by virtue of the fact that they are grounded in history or science, can function as “blinders” in our efforts to capture and resolve concrete injustices. Second, while Dewey provided no infallible method by which one can guarantee success in the empirical method he proposes, he would suggest that nonideal theorists learn from other philosophers’ mistakes. In this respect, Dewey’s occasional efforts to summarize the general and systematic kinds of mistakes nonempirical philosophers tend to make can prove helpful. Specifically, he identifies a series of methodological fallacies that nonideal theorists would do well to avoid. Dewey formulated different ways in which philosophers have made the same basic mistake, which is the tendency to begin with reflective products or theoretical abstractions, as if there is no prior nontheoretical problematic context. Hence, Dewey concludes that “the most pervasive fallacy of philosophic thinking goes back to neglect of context” (LW 6:5). I will sort out how the different versions of this fallacy have made their way into sociopolitical philosophy, in particular, in philosophical inquiry about injustice. While these fallacies are more common or even to be expected from ideal theories, it is worth demonstrating that nonideal ones are not immune from them either. The Fallacy of Unlimited Universalization When philosophers ignore the fact that judgments arise out of limiting conditions set by the contextual situation of particular inquiries, they tend to elevate the conclusions of their inquiries to the point of giving them unlimited application. Philosophers are prone to this fallacy because they are the ones who are usually trying to formulate theories about truth, good, justice, or the absolute, writ large. In many instances of this fallacy, “It is easy and too usual to convert abstraction from specific context into abstraction from all context whatsoever” (LW 6:16). Dewey was aware of how abstract conceptions such as justice, freedom, and democracy have been used by intellectuals and politicians to ignore or divert attention from the concrete social problems in need of our intelligence. However, he was also aware of how the categories of nonideal theories, while seemly empirical, may have the same effect. In fact, one could argue that these categories are more pernicious since they foster the illusion of empirical grounding in solving problems. Rationalist philosophers are not the only ones liable to forget the instrumental and context- bound character of their abstract conceptions. Political philosophy inspired by sociology often focuses on broad universal-general abstractions (categories) such as the state, individuals, groups, society, capitalism, racism, [and] white supremacy, oppression, structural racism, and the people, even though in the end there are only particular and unique instances of all of these categories in a situation at a particular time and place. To be sure, abstractions, generalities, and universal concepts have a legitimate function in inquiry. They are “tools” to be employed and tested in clarifying concrete social problems. The danger is when intellectuals (especially philosophers) tend to forget both the proper function of these tools and the details of concrete particular contexts. When this happens, they impose their theoretical abstractions upon particulars and oversimplify their empirical complexity. But the concrete troubles or evils that provoke our philosophical inquiries are situation specific and often far more complex than our intellectual analysis may suggest. The failure to recognize this specificity and complexity is an oversight with serious consequences, especially reductionistic, oversimplified, and one- sided solutions to serious social problems. This oversight also tends to generate among academics theoretical problems that are based on false oppositions among their abstract conceptions, which are barriers to continuing inquiry. In this regard, Dewey mentions debates about individualism and collectivism, but today, examples include debates about whether race, class, or gender is the key cause of an injustice. Anderson seems to be aware of the same danger with abstract conceptions when she replies to the charge that she disregards capitalism and white hegemony in her analysis of racial injustice in the United States. She replies that these concepts are “too lumpy to do the practical work non- ideal theory needs” (Anderson 2013, 4). She would not mind “white hegemony” if all it means is “the entire interlocking and mutually reinforcing set of mechanisms that reproduce systematic black oppression today” (2010, 16). But the concept is one that covers in broad strokes a lot of history across time and place when nonideal theory should be more meticulous and focused on more specific problems of the here and now. She claims that nonideal theory “demands splitting, not lumping” and should be committed to being “meticulous and precise in differentiating the variety and interaction of discrete causal mechanisms underlying the problem at hand” (2013, 4). This resonates with Dewey’s metaphilosophical standpoint, but given Dewey’s starting point (his radical particularism and contextualism), he would wonder if Anderson’s view is immune to the same danger of “lumpiness” that worries her about others’ analysis of racial injustice. Anderson argues in The Imperative of Integration that, even though the United States may have legally abolished segregation, de facto segregation is worse; it is the cause of racial injustice. Her solution is that we must integrate in all areas of social life. From Dewey’s perspective, Anderson should recognize that her use of “segregation” and “integration” may be as susceptible to the same dangers as “white supremacy” or “capitalism”; they are all abstract concepts that, while useful, may sometimes cover over or lump together too much. Even if one can theoretically discriminate the same general structural cause across cases of racial injustice, there is no single cause called “segregation.” Segregation is experienced differently in a variety of complex and unique injustice events. Without this qualification, one runs the risk of lumping all cases together under one name and even disregarding other causes that may be operative in an inextricable way in a problematic situation. Even the specific mechanism of segregation that Anderson identifies varies depending on what other contextual conditions are present in different areas of the United States. In inquiry, simplicity or lumping in the diagnosis by means of an abstract concept usually results in an answer or solution that has the same, simplistic character. In Anderson’s case, the solution is integration. To be fair, Anderson does provide plenty of differentiation in the variety of multiple strategies needed to undertake the problem. But nonideal theorists must be careful not to forget that behind a single conceptual handle there is a plurality of means depending on the particular problem. The temptation to seek and want a single cure under a single name has to be one of the most common temptations in any inquiry about injustice, and nonideal theorists are not immune from this. The Analytic and Selective Fallacies When inquirers forget their intellectual dissections, they commit the analytic fallacy. When they forget that evidence of their intellectual dissections indicates that they have been selective from the original subject matter, it is called the fallacy of selective interest. The analytic and selective fallacies are for Dewey two facets of the same general tendency to neglect context, and they are counterproductive in ameliorating concrete problems. Let us consider how they can undermine inquiries about injustice. Anderson claims that “Non- ideal theory demands splitting, not lumping” (2013, 4). She is, of course, correct. However, the analytic fallacy represents a way of splitting that is undesirable from a pragmatist point of view. Analysis is that process where we discriminate some particulars or elements within a context. Of course, what hangs those particulars together, i.e., what gives them their connection and continuity, is the context itself. Philosophers commit the analytic fallacy when “the distinctions or elements that are discriminated are treated as if they were final and selfsufficient” (LW 6:7). Philosophers, as a result of their analyses (e.g., as a result of adopting historical accounts and scientific studies), have provided a diagnosis of a particular injustice. For instance, Anderson has shown that inquiry can result in a meticulous and precise differentiation of “the variety and interaction of discrete causal mechanisms underlying the problem” of racial injustice (2013, 4). This is as it should be. However, the danger comes when inquirers neglect or forget the concrete, integral contexts from which things were dissected in the first place. They may then invent artificial, intellectual problems that center on how the variety of causal mechanisms discriminated (analyzed) can be brought together or unified, or, what is more likely, engage in endless debates about which among the plurality of diagnoses is the correct or “real” one. However, these causal mechanisms (after inquiry has formulated them) are not antecedent to the concrete problem, nor can the problem be reduced to their intellectual analysis. Nonideal theorists must also guard against committing the related fallacy of selectivity. Different types of inquiry will discriminate different causal mechanisms underlying the same problem because each is selective in some way. Pluralism of diagnoses about the same problem of injustice is not problematic unless, by failing to recognize selectivity (i.e., ignoring context), we postulate some ontologically or epistemologically privileged access or approximation to some antecedent “reality” of the problem. When we forget or overlook the unavoidable selectivity of even our best theoretical tools, we run the risk of becoming complacent in the belief that our accounts exhaust all of the causes in the case, or we may proclaim it as the “real” cause and anything else as illusory. Anderson is correct in that ideal theories tend to overlook or ignore concrete injustices like racism. This is a function of their starting point, which is unreasonably, and some may argue, suspiciously, selective. But even the best nonideal “empirical” views will be selective as well, for, as Dewey says, “there is selectivity (and rejection) found in every operation of thought” (LW 6:14). Pragmatism, however, does not think that admitting or embracing selectivity means that all selectivity is equally good or equally distortive (i.e., biased or partial) with respect to an antecedent reality. Standpoints and perspectives are not things that stand against a uniform and antecedent reality of a problem of injustice. While selectivity is unavoidable, there are usually contextual grounds, depending on the nature of the problem, for distinguishing better from worse selections in a situation without the need to presuppose an Archimedean standpoint or privileged epistemic access by some group or person. For pragmatism, all selectivity or bias in inquiry has both a positive and a negative aspect. The positive is that it makes available for inquirers aspects of a concrete problem that someone without that particular bias would not have experienced or appreciated. The negative is that no matter how productive our bias is, one may have left out something from the concrete problem that has not been disclosed by our tools of analysis. In other words, the particular forms of selectivity that we bring to an inquiry account both for our limitations and for our particular power- capacity to inquire and ameliorate the problem. The particular selectivity that we bring to an inquiry into a problem of injustice can have different sources. We would do well to distinguish two broad categories of selectivity or bias: theoretical ones (of the type of inquiry) and pretheoretical (of the investigator).