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**Capitalism is a systems architecture that now understands as information as the state of the commodity form, rather than money alone. Information is not natural, but an elaboration of *real abstraction*, where meaning is quantified from social qualifiers in order to extract value in the form of capital risk that must run on the substrate of the World Computer. The meta-structure of the World Computer overdetermines sociality and conscripts thought into algorithms of profit – that sediments algorithmic fascism and racism.**

**Beller 21** (Jonathan Beller = Professor of Humanities and Media Studies and Critical and Visual Studies at Pratt Institute, “*The World Computer: Derivative Conditions of Racial Capitalism”*, Duke University Press, BEH)

Information as Real Abstraction Taking the **notion that Capital was always a computer as a starting point** (Dyer-Witheford, 2013), The World Computer understands the **history of the commodification** of life as a process of encrypting the world’s myriad qualities as quantities. Formal and informal techniques, from double-entry bookkeeping and racialization, **to the rise of information and discrete state machines**, imposed **and extended the tyranny of racial capital’s relentless calculus of profit.** By means of the **coercive colonization of almost all social spaces, categories, and representations**—where **today language, image, music, and communication all depend upon a computational substrate** that is an outgrowth of fixed capital—all, or nearly all, expressivity has been captured in the dialectic of massive capital accumulation on the one side and radical dispossession on the other. **Currently the money-likeness of expression**—**visible as “likes”** and in other attention metrics that treat attention and affect as currency—is symptomatic of the financialization of daily life (Martin, 2015a). **All expression,** no matter what its valence, **is conscripted by algorithms of profit** that intensify **inequality by being put in the service of racial capitalism**; consequently, we are experiencing a near- apocalyptic, world-scale failure to be able to address global crises including migration for reparations, carceral systems, genocide, militarism, climate racism, racism, pandemic, anti-Blackness, extinction, and other geopolitical ills. The colonization of semiotics by racial capital has rendered **all “democratic” modes of governance outmoded** save those designed for the violent purpose of extracting profits for the enfranchised. Culturally these modes of extraction take the form of fractal fascism. An **understanding that informationalized semiotic practices** function as financial derivatives may **allow for a reimagining of the relationship between** language, visuality, and that other economic medium, namely **money, in an attempt to reprogram economy** and therefore the creation and distribution of value**—and thus also the politics and potentials of representation.** In what would amount to an end to postmodernism understood as the cultural logic of late capitalism, our revolutionary politics require, as did the communisms of the early twentieth century, a new type of economic program. In the age of computation, putting political economy back on the table implies a reprogramming of our cultural logics as economic media for the radical redress of the ills of exploitation and the democratization of the distribution of the world social product. **Sustainable communism requires the decolonizaton of abstraction** and the remaking of the protocols of social practice that give rise to real abstraction. **Though in this section we will more narrowly address the issues of money, race, and information as “real abstraction,” and their role in computational racial capitalism**, we note the overarching argument for the larger study: **1 Commodification inaugurates the global transformation** of qualities into quantities and gives rise to the world computer. **2 “Information” is not a naturally occurring** reality but emerges in the footprint of price and is always a means to posit the price of a possible or actual product. 3 **The general formula for capita**l, M-C-Mʹ, where M is money, C is commodity, and Mʹ is more money) can be **rewritten M-I-Mʹ,** where I is information. 4 “Labor,” Attention, Cognition, Metabolism, **Life converge as “Informatic Labor” whose purpose,** with respect to Capital, **is to create state changes in the Universal Turing Machine** that is the World Computer— racial capital’s relentless, granular, and planetary computation of its accounts**. 5 Semiotics, representation, and categories of social difference** function as financial derivatives—as wagers on the economic value of their underliers and as means of structuring risk for capital. 6 **Only a direct engagement with the computational colonization** of the life-world through a reprogramming (remaking) of the material processes of abstraction that constitute real abstraction can secure victory—in the form of a definitive step out of and away from racial capitalism—for the progressive movements of our times. Such a definitive movement requires an occupation and decolonization of information, and therefore of computation, and therefore of money. Only through a remaking of social relations at the molecular level of their calculus, informed by struggle against oppression, can the beauty of living and the fugitive legacies of creativity, community, and care prevail. The mode of comprehension, analysis, and transformation proposed here will require an expanded notion of racial capitalism. It interrogates the existence of deep continuities and long-term emergences—what one could correctly call algorithms of extractive violence—in the history of capitalism. These algorithms of violence include the reading and writing of code(s) on bodies, their surveillance and overcoding by informatic abstraction. Such algorithms of epidermalization or “the imposition of race on the body” (Browne: 113) are inscribed and executed on the flesh (Spillers 1987); and they are executed by means of codification processes that violently impose both a metaphysical and physical reformatting of bodies. As Simone Browne shows, epidermalization is given “its alphanumeric form” (99) through a vast array tools of marking, scarification, discipline, and surveillance that include branding irons, implements of torture, auction blocks, ship design, insurance policies, newspaper ads for runaway “property,” photographs in postcard form and a panoply of other media of dehumanization. Executable code is imposed as social categories of race, gender, religion and property, as ideologies, psychologies, contracts, brands, communication theories, game theories, and quantities of money—these abstractions work their ways into and are indeed imposed by the machines of calculation—and their avatars. We confront a continuous process of unmaking and remaking using all means available; it is violently inscribed on bodies. Sylvia Wynter, in her post– Rodney King piece “No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to My Colleagues” writes, “Both W. E. B. Du Bois and Elsa Goveia have emphasized the way in which the code of ‘Race’ or the Color Line, functions to systemically predetermine the sharply unequal re-distribution of the collectively produced global resources; and therefore, the correlation of the racial ranking rule with the Rich/Poor rule. Goveia pointed out **that all American societies are integrated on the basis of a central cultural belief** in which all share. This belief, that of **the genetic-racial inferiority** of Black people to all others, functions to enable our social hierarchies, including those of rich and poor determined directly by the economic system, to be perceived as having been as pre-determined by ‘that great crap game called life,’ as have also ostensibly been the invariant hierarchy between White and Black. Consequently in the Caribbean and Latin America, within the terms of this sociosymbolic calculus, to be ‘rich’ was also to be ‘White,’ to be poor was also to be ‘Black’ ” (Wynter: 52). “To be ‘rich’ was also to be ‘White,’ to be poor was also to be ‘Black.’ ” The real abstraction imposed by executable code—the “**code of ‘Race’ ” that “functions to systematically predetermine** the structurally **unequal redistribution of global resources**” is beholden to mediating capitalist exchange while embarking on a radical reformatting of ontology. This reformatting, the supposed result of “that great crap game called life,” brutally correlates race and value, but not entirely by chance, while racial capitalism embarks on imposing this calculus globally. Racial abstraction is endemic to what we will further explore as “real abstraction”; the evacuation of quality by abstract categories and quantities is, as we shall see in more detail, a “necessary” correlate to a world overrun by the calculus of money. Such algorithms of violence encode social difference, and although they may begin as heuristics (“rules of thumb”), they are none the less crucial to the **calculated and calculating expansion of racial capital**. Its processes and processing structures the meanings that can be ascribed to— and, as importantly, what can be done to—those of us whose data profiles constitute us as “illegal,” “Mexican,” “Black,” “[Roma] Gypsy,” “Jew,” and a lexicon of thousands of other actionable signs. This codification process draws from the histories of slavery, of colonialism, of state formation, of genocide, of gender oppression, of religious pogroms, of normativity, and again from the militarization and policing and the apparatuses of calculation that have developed within states and parastates in their own biometric pursuit of capital—power. Their violent destruction and remaking of the world. The **internalization of these codes**, including the struggles with them and the ways in which they license and/or foreclose various actions, exists in a recursive relationship to their perilous refinement. **Their analysis, a code-breaking of sorts,** will therefore demand some drastic modifications in many of the various anticapitalist, antistate warrior-stances practiced to date, particularly in a large number of their European and U.S. incarnations that until very recently remained blind to their own imperial violence and are too often complicit with hegemonic codes of masculine, unraced agency, imperialist nationalism, and default liberal assumptions in relation to questions of race, gender, sexuality, coloniality, and other forms of historically institutionalized oppression.3 The analytic, **computational racial capital, would identify the field of operations** that emerges around the embryonic form of the commodity and coarticulates with racial abstraction to formalize its code, code **that serves as operating system for the virtual machine here hypostasized as “the world computer”** and by inscribing itself on bodies and everything else. The commodity, the analysis of which famously begins volume 1 of Marx’s Capital, expressed the dual being and indeed dual registration of the humanly informed object as both quality of matter and quantity of exchange-value, along with the global generalization of this form. “The wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an immense collection of commodities” (125). Commodities were (and with some modifications to be discussed further on, still are) humanly informed materials with a **use-value and an exchange-value— humanly informed qualities indexed by quantities**. “Computational racial capital,” as a heuristic device, stages an analysis of the convergence of what on the one side often appeared as universal: **the economic, abstract, and machinic operating systems of global production** and reproduction endemic to the commodity form and its calculus, with what on another side, sometimes appeared as particular or even incidental: racism, colonialism, slavery, imperialism, and racialization. The concept organizes this dramaturgy of analytically reunifying elements that were never materially separate in light of the study that the late Cedric Robinson conducted and recorded as Black Marxism. Robinson writes, “The development, organization and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism. I have used the term ‘racial capitalism’ to refer to the development and to the subsequent structure as an historical agency” (1983: 2–3). The World Computer takes what Robinson saw as “civilizational racism,” and its central role in the development of capital as axiomatic,—and sees that this role extends to and deeply into capitalist calculation and machinery during the entire period in which the world economic system seems to have moved form the paradigm of the commodity to a paradigm of information. “**Computational racial capitalism” would** **thus understand the generalization of computation** as an extension of capital logics and practices that include and indeed require the economic calculus of the dialectics of social difference. These differences, both economic and semiotic, would include those plied by slavery, anti- Blackness and other forms of racism during the past centuries. Computation must **therefore be recognized** as not a mere technical emergence but the **practical result of an ongoing and bloody struggle** between the would-have- it-alls and the to-be-dispossessed. Developed both consciously and unconsciously, computational racial capitalism is, when seen in the light of ongoing racialization and value extraction, “the subsequent structure as an historical agency.” The racial logic of computation must be pursued when considering finance, surveillance, population management, policing, social systems, social media, or any of the vast suite of protocols plying difference for capital. The local instance of computation, a specific 1 or 0, may seem value neutral, a matter as indifferent as lead for a bullet or uranium for a bomb. But we are looking at computation as the modality of a world- system. Computation emerges as **the result of struggles that informed “class struggle**” in all its forms, recognized or not by the often spotty tradition(s) of Marxism, including those struggles specific to the antagonisms of colonialism, slavery, imperialism, and white supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalism more generally. It is the result of struggles indexed by race, gender, sexuality, nationality, and ethnicity, along with additional terms indexing social differentiation too numerous to incant here but that together form a lexicon and a grammar of extractive oppression—and as we have said and as must always be remembered, also of struggle. The lexicon includes compressions that result in many of history’s abstractions including a perhaps singularly pointed abstraction: “a history whose shorthand is race” (Spillers 1997: 142). The grammar for that lexicon depends upon the deployment and execution of forms of differentiating abstraction that are lived—lived processes of abstraction and lived abstraction organized by the increasingly complex and variegated calculus of profit and thus of domination. “**Real abstraction,”** then**, emerges** not just as money in Sohn-Rethel’s sense, but **as the codification of race, gender, sexuality, geography, credit and time**—and gives rise to a “grammar,” in Hortense Spillers’s (1987) use of the term, that not only structures meaning and redounds to the deepest crevices of being smelted by social practices, but also, and not incidentally, prices differentials indexed to social difference.4 “Real abstraction,” as Sohn-Rethel spent his life deciphering, takes place “behind [our] backs” as the practical and historical working out of the exchange of equivalents within the process of the exchange of goods (33). For him, the development of the money-form, of the real abstraction that is money, is Exhibit A of the abstraction process mediating object exchange. This capacity for abstraction, realized first in “the money commodity” and then as money provided the template for further abstraction, not least in the conceptual formations of Western philosophy itself (1978). Sohn-Rethel develops this argument that practices of exchange precede the abstraction of value in Intellectual and Manual Labour, providing the full quotation from Marx: “Men do not therefore bring the product of their labour into relation with each other as value because they see these objects merely as the material integuments of homogeneous human labour. The reverse is true: by equating their different products to each other in exchange as values, they equate their different kinds of labour as human labour. They do this without being aware of it. (Marx 1990: 166 in Sohn-Rethel 1978: 32). Here is Sohn- Rethel’s commentary: People become aware of the exchange abstraction only when they come face to face with the result which their own actions have engendered “behind their backs” as Marx says. In **money the exchange abstraction achieves concentrated representation**, but a mere functional one— embodied in a coin. It is not recognizable in its true identity as abstract form, but disguised as a thing one carries about in one’s pocket, hands out to others, or receives from them. Marx says explicitly that the value abstraction never assumes a representation as such, since the only expression it ever finds is the equation of one commodity with the use- value of another. The gold or silver or other matter which lends to money its palpable and visible body is merely a metaphor of the value abstraction it embodies, not this abstraction itself. (33–34) Exchange-value is “in our heads” but is not the creation of any individual. Alongside use-value it is the other, abstract component of the “double being” of the commodity-form. Like Norbert Wiener’s (1961: 132) definition of information but, strictly speaking, emerging long before the idea of information proper, real abstraction is “not matter or energy.” There is not an atom of matter in exchange-value, or, as Marx puts it, “Not an atom of matter enters into the objectivity of commodities as values; in this it is the direct opposite of the coarsely sensuous objectivity of commodities as physical objects” (1990: 138). And a bit on, “So far no chemist has ever discovered exchange-value in a pearl or diamond” (177). But unlike in Wiener’s naturalist definition of information, exchange-value is an index of a social relation, an historical outcome. It indexes “abstract universal labor time,” a third term that forms the basis of comparison between two ostensibly incomparable and therefore incommensurable commodities, and, because common to both, creates the ratio of value that renders them quantitatively commensurable. **This distinction between the social basis of exchange-value and the universal character** of information should give us pause. As we shall have occasion to observe, information, as it is today (mis)understood, is thought to be a naturally occurring additional property of things—neither matter nor energy—rather than a domain of expression constituted by means of a technological and economic repression of its social dimension. Notably, Sohn-Rethel “set[s] out to argue that the **abstractness operating in exchange and reflected in value does nevertheless find an identical expression**, namely the abstract intellect, or the so-called pure understanding—the cognitive source of scientific knowledge” (34). For him, it gives rise to the abstract capacities of the subject of philosophy as well as the quantitative capacities of the subject of science and mathematics that in the twentieth century move toward a paradigm of information. Echoing Sohn-Rethel, we could say then that information is in our machines but not the creation of any individual machine. Not an atom of matter enters into information, though, like value, it is platformed on matter and requires energy for creation. This thesis will take on particular importance as we consider social differences whose descriptors, it turns out, are executable in a computational sense, at least from the point of view of financial calculus, but platformed on matter, and indeed, on living matter, on life. Beyond the intention of any individual, abstraction as “exchange-value” in “money” occurs in and as the process and processing of exchange in accord with an emerging standard. This standard, which economists call “exchange-value,” and which, in Marx is based on abstract universal labor time (the historically variable, socially necessary average time required to produce a commodity), persists alongside and within the specific qualities of the commodity (its use-value) and creates the commodity’s dual being. Though without chemical or material basis, **this standard, exchange-value, is a social relation**—a social relation as an abstraction—that inheres in the commodity-form itself and is formalized with the rise of the money commodity. The money commodity, in becoming a general equivalent, standardizes and thus renders fully quantifiable the exchange-value of commodities—exchange-values denominated in quantities of money. The quantification of value in a measure of money is an abstraction enabled by money itself which, as we have seen, is a real abstraction. It is a calculation that has occurred behind our backs, and indeed produces what Hayek (1945) identifies as the price system. When we recognize the differences in wages among people who are raced, gendered, nationed, and classed by various matrices of valuation, we also recognize that the calculus performed by and as real abstraction includes racial abstraction and gender abstraction. It is part of the calculus of **capital that provides it with an account of and discounts on the rate of exchange** with the labor power of marked people(s) —by discounting people(s) (Beller 2017b; see also Bhandar and Toscano 2015: 8–17). Racial abstraction provides capital with an index that measures a deviation from the average value of human life (itself historically driven down by the falling rate of profit). In this, computational racial capitalism is not merely a heuristic or a metaphor for the processes of a virtual machine; it is a historical-material condition. As we shall see, and as is obvious at least in the general case to anyone who has thought seriously about it, whiteness (and the fascist masculinity endemic to it) is not only operating where one finds “race”: it is operating everywhere in the imperium that it can be imagined (by some) that race is not a factor—**in medicine, in science, in statistics, in computation, in information**. As I wrote—resituating Bateson’s (1972) definition of information—in The Message Is Murder, **information is not merely “a difference that makes a difference”; it is a difference that makes a social difference**. **This slight difference in expression situates information historically.** While in keeping with Bateson’s far reaching ideas regarding an ecology of mind **(“If I am right, the whole thinking about what we are and what other people are has got to be restructured”;** 468), ideas that at **once problematize any distinction between inside and outside** and that make him dubious of any thought that presupposes sovereign subjectivity, my interpolation of “social” in his formulation “a difference that makes a social difference” **shifts the emphasis somewhat by insisting on the always already sociohistoricity** of any possible knowledge. Bateson believed that his understanding of information and systems ecology promised a new mode of thinking that he himself, as a twentieth-century bourgeois white man, did not feel capable of really embodying. Thus our interpolation, in keeping with Bateson but made compatible with Marx is, in keeping with Marx, designed to “transform ... the problem of knowledge into one of social theory” (Postone 2003: 216). Such a transformation **situates knowledge and now also information in the sociohistorical milieu**, the ecology such that it is, of racial capitalism, and therein finds information’s historical conditions of possibility. Here we advance the argument for the ultimately determining instance of social difference (and up the ante for the bet against whiteness) by **proposing that information is the elaboration of real abstraction**, of abstraction that results from collective practices of economic exchange and therefore from the general management of value as a social relation. I argue that set out in logical sequence, information is posited by, then posits and then presupposes the human processes of exchange that Sohn-Rethel, following Marx, argues are the practices that first give rise to the money- form and to real abstraction. For Sohn-Rethel the result of the activities of comparison, adequation, and trading of specific things that have qualities— which are, strictly speaking, incomparable—resulted over time in a process of finding a relation of equivalence and then general equivalence indexed to abstract labor time, what was in effect socially average human labor time. Exchange-value was a quantitative measure of that abstract time—the average socially necessary time to create commodity X denominated in money. This real abstraction was no one’s invention but was the practical result of exchange—of people’s activity—and thus emerged as a nonconscious result that nonetheless interceded on conscious process. Consequently, real abstraction was for Sohn-Rethel also the precursor to conceptual abstraction, including philosophy, science and mathematics. He writes: **The essence of commodity abstraction, however, is that it is not thought-induced**; it does not originate in ~~men’s~~(people’s) minds but in their actions. And yet this **does not give “abstraction” a merely metaphorical meaning. It is abstraction in its precise, literal sense.** The economic concept of value resulting from it is characterized by a complete absence of quality, a differentiation purely by quantity and by applicability to every kind of commodity and service which can occur on the market. These qualities of the economic value abstraction indeed display a striking similarity with fundamental categories of quantifying natural science without, admittedly, the slightest inner relationship between these heterogeneous spheres being as yet recognizable. While **the concepts of natural science are thought abstractions, the economic concept of value is a real one**. It exists nowhere other than in the human mind but it does not spring from it. Rather it is purely social in character, arising in the spatio-temporal sphere of human interrelations. It is not people who originate these abstractions but their actions. “They do this without being aware of it.”5 The practical rise of a form of abstraction indifferent to particular qualities is key here and is to be understood as a precursor to the content- indifferent abstractions of a variety of types. As Simmel notes in The Philosophy of Money, law, intellectuality, and money “have the power to lay down forms and directions to which they are content indifferent” (441–2). Without doubt, such power informed the racial categories of the Humanism of Ernst Renan, Roger Caillois, and others so brilliantly excoriated by Aimé Césaire in his Discourse on Colonialism. We add here the hypothesis that **the rise of information as the content-indifferent assignation of numerical index to any social relation** whatever, is a development of the abstraction necessary for economic exchange to persist under the intensive “developmental” pressure of global racial capitalism—information is derived from the increasingly complex things that people do through and as exchange and as such is both precursor and corollary to financialization— **the social conditions that sustain what is fetishistically apprehended as “finance capital”** and its seeming capacity to derive wealth from pure speculation and risk management in ways that (incorrectly) appear to be fully detached from labor and labor time. In this light, information reveals itself as **neither naturally occurring nor the creation of anyone in particular**, but, in keeping with Sohn-Rethel’s Marxian formulation of real abstraction, is likewise invented “**behind our backs” as a result of ~~“man’s”~~ “People’s” practical activity**. Information enables a complexification and further generalization of what will turn out to be monetary media, media that would be adequate to, and indeed are adequate (from the perspective of capital) to contemporary forms of exchange—what people do when they interact with one another in what is now the social factory. In brief, information is the extension of a monetary **calculus adequate to the increasingly abstract character of social relations and social exigencies**. It is an interstitial, materially platformed, calculative fabric of abstraction that through its coordinated capillary actions orchestrates social practice and provides interface for the uptake of value production. Once this idea is fully grasped, it becomes pointless to look for any other origin to the information age. Just as for Marx there is not a single atom of matter in exchange value (1990: 138), we say that there is not a single atom of matter in information.6 “All the phenomenon of the universe, whether produced by the hand of man or indeed by the universal laws of physics, are not to be conceived as acts of creation but solely as a reordering of matter” (Pietro Verri 1771, cited in Marx 1990: 133; note 13). Value is the socially valid informing of matter, so too is information. Economy then is society’s matter compiler and, approximately simultaneously with the advent of “man,” “history,” and “the world market,” “exchange value” emerges as a quantitative measure of the social value of material state changes indexed to human labour posited as “abstract universal labour time.” Marx’s famous example of the simple wooden table in Chapter 1 of Capital, which “transcends sensuousness” when leaving the clear-cut framework of use value and becoming a commodity and thus an exchange value, registers as “fetishism,” the “metaphysical subtleties,” “theological niceties,” and “grotesque ideas” (1990: 163), endemic in the table’s computability as value. In brief, just as **discreet states of matter embodying value as a network of commodities** mediated by markets and tied to labor give rise historically to the discrete state machine, otherwise known as the computer, exchange value gives rise to computable information and then to computation itself, becoming interoperable with it. Even before the rise of information proper, **exchange value operates as information** (and thus, necessarily information processing) —and then, as synthetic finance and contemporary forms of computer- mediated accounting and production readily testify, by means of it. Computation is the extension, development, **and formalization of the calculus of exchange value**—the ramification of its fetish character—and becomes in spirit and in practice, a **command control layer for the management of the profitable calculus of value**. Platformed on states of matter, information, not matter but rather difference between and among states of matter, extends, grammartizes, and granularizes the calculus of value regarding the organization of matter. **Commodities and computation thus run the same basic operating system**—state changes in matter driven by human practices—the value of which in any given state is expressed in the context of an informatic network and indexed to labor time. As such, information is the processing power of money itself and is inexorably beholden to abstract labor time and thus to racial capitalism. It is, in brief, an outgrowth of the money form. The cost of computation, the **arrival at a discrete state, is a derivative operation**, indicating an investment, that is explicitly a risk on the future value of an underlier, that is, on value itself. This argument for understanding the social as the ultimate referent and ground for any and all information, further advanced in chapter 1, is not content to serve **as a mere heuristic for cultural theorists to express a modicum of suspicion** with respect to truth claims backed by statistics and information. It is a **thoroughgoing indictment of information as a technique of value extraction**, racialization, and instrumental social differentiation. As a first approximation, actually existing information, like actually existing money, can indeed be said to be the root of all evil—in as much as the fact of its existence is a symptom of a far more complex historical process than what would seem to be discernible from the fact of the coin or the bit. The problem, of course, is that your metabolism (and mine), cannot easily extend into the future without access to both. I develop this idea here to say that everywhere computation operates, so too does racial capitalism—at least until proven otherwise. The repressive apparatus of capital clearly assumes this role for information, even if it does so at a level that most often exceeds ordinary default “human” (white) understanding: **the net result to date of the number crunch of “the world computer**” is a hierarchy of valuations inseparable from the violence of racialization and its attendant dispossession, and inseparable again from what Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007: 28) in her classic and statistically attuned definition of racism calls “the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group- differentiated vulnerability to premature death.” Today, we argue, no calculation**, networked as it is with the world computer, is fully separable from informatics and its basis in racial capitalism.** We will argue for this logical and also horrific history of abstraction in more detail below as we explore the interoperability of digital systems and their colonization of the semiotic, corporeal and material domains. The global learning curve of revolutionary praxis must attend to this modal innovation of systemic oppression, an oppression which is at once beyond all calculation and one with it.7

#### Data, not antitrust, controls the free market -- circulation is the site of profit accumulation which increasingly lacks physical reference.

Halpern et al., 22 [Orit Halpern is an associate professor in sociology and anthropology at Concordia University. She is also the director of the Speculative Life Research Cluster and D4 : The Disrupting Design Research Group, laboratories bridging the arts, environmental sciences, media, and the social sciences. She is the author of Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and Reason since 1945 (2015). Patrick Jagoda is a professor in the Departments of English Language and Literature, Cinema and Media Studies, Obstetrics and Gynecology, and the College at the University of Chicago. He is executive editor of Critical Inquiry and director of the Weston Game Lab. He is the author of Network Aesthetics (2016), The Game Worlds of Jason Rohrer (2016, cowritten with Michael Maizels), and Experimental Games: Critique, Play, and Design in the Age of Gamification (2020). He is also a recipient of a 2020 Guggenheim Fellowship. Jeffrey West Kirkwood is an assistant professor in the Department of Art History at Binghamton University, State University of New York. He is the author of Endless Intervals: Cinema, Psychology, and Semiotechnics around 1900 (2022). Leif Weatherby is associate professor of German and director of the Digital Theory Lab at New York University. He is the author of Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ: German Romanticism between Leibniz and Marx (2016)., “Surplus Data: An Introduction,” Winter 2022, Critical Inquiry, volume 48, number 2, p 197-210]//Townes

Surplus Derivation

“Data is the new capital asset of the 21st century,” announces Tom Wheeler, former chairman of the US Federal Communications Commission, commenting on the rise of Amazon over companies like Walmart.25 We can further extend this line of thinking to consider Facebook, Alphabet, and Twitter’s role in the Capitol riots of January 2021. Democratic members of Congress have suggested that the mayhem that day was driven by informational excesses, whose exploitation was responsible for simultaneously destabilizing the American political system and generating a huge windfall for the largest tech companies. According to Wheeler, such situations lay bare the inadequacy of old regulatory concepts for capturing new technological, social, and commercial realities. The regulation that Wheeler and others are accostomed to is based on “industrial antitrust, anti-centralization kinds of concepts.”26 What Wheeler suggests is that our contemporary situation in both politics and economy no longer functions according to the ideals of efficiency, energy, and scarcity that preoccupied industrial economies. Surplus data is the condition that Wheeler places beyond the industrial, and its paradigm is derivation. It was once the imagined limits to resources and energy that shaped industrial conceptions of efficiency, energy, and labor power.27 In the early twenty-first century, data capitalism changes this formula by putting the derivative before the source. Derivation takes the place of extraction, and where there was efficiency, there is now optimization.28

We glimpse the centrality of such inefficiency and derivation in the highprofile case of the r/wallstreetbets subreddit, whose members in January 2021 (and again in February and again in June) strategically bought up shares of dying brick-and-mortar companies, such as GameStop and AMC Theatres, which had high levels of short interest. These actions triggered a massive short squeeze that nearly drove some hedge funds, like Melvin Capital, out of business. The improbably parabolic price movement was made possible by ferreting out the unhedged positions of (ironically) hedge funds in the share interest data and mobilizing a vast army of traders invisibly in plain sight. What had come to feel like a guarantee of endless surplus to mega-money investment firms was, in a matter of days, undone by a data overload in the form of digital buy orders sent by retail traders on desktop and smartphone trading apps. The amount of trading data was so great that it created liquidity problems for brokerages, who decided to block buying of some popular meme stocks at various times. Conspiracy speculation took root on the Reddit boards, which then passed to mainstream attention and finally to hearings in Congress.

As this case demonstrates, the actions of the masses are now a resource for capital. Robinhood, a trading app launched in 2015 that advertises a dark utopian mission to “democratize finance for all,” offers commission-free trading and became the popular vehicle for the retail traders who joined the GameStop mania.29 But, as Richard Serra and Carlota Fay Schoolman contended in their 1973 piece, Television Delivers People, producing a statement that has since become a foundational principle of media studies: when something is free, you are not the consumer, “you are consumed.”30 And sure enough, Robinhood makes much of its money from selling traders’ order flow data to market makers like Citadel, whose CEO had invested $2 billion in Melvin Capital, the very hedge fund that was caught in the short squeeze. Beneath the David and Goliath story of Main Street investors sticking it to Wall Street villains was a more nefarious revelation that the real surplus at work in the meme stock affair was reaped as data that helped shore up the more traditional forms of surplus among big institutional firms that control the very contours of a supposedly free market. Moreover, the qualitative, affective response to such market dynamics, as recorded on Reddit and Twitter, have now become a tactical resource of hedge funds, who have learned to profit from even the best attacks against them. Quantitative trading algorithms analyzing massive amounts of social media data using advanced natural language processing are deployed to perform sentiment analysis and opinion mining. And so the cycle of surplus continues from data to affect to data, ad infinitum—each derived from the last with the derivative more fundamental than the putative source of derivation.

Surplus Politics

During the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented portion of the population was confined to their homes, producing and consuming data in a state of hermetic globalism, straining the already overloaded bandwidth of global data transfer.31 On 6 January 2021, a group of right-wing supporters of Donald Trump attacked the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., fueled by the conspiracy theory of the group QAnon, a widespread online network surrounding a putative source high up in the “deep state” (the figure known as Q) and propagating racist, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic propaganda. As we see in Cullen Hoback’s documentary about the movement, Q: Into the Storm (2021), Q operates on the suspicion that the truth is in hidden byways of digital data, sometimes yielding deadly consequences. To witness Hoback accompany Jim Watkins—a businessman and the operator of 8Chan, the main platform on which Q, an alleged intelligence officer, posted his “drops”—laughing as the crowd breaks into the Capitol building is to see the conflation of the digital and the social all too directly.32 Q has created a semiotic world of clues that severs itself and its followers from the fabric of social reality altogether, gamifying it as Hoback suggests in a comparison to Cicada 3301, alternately characterized as an actual secretive organization or a fictional alternate reality game that has run complex digital scavenger hunts since 2012. 33 Q’s game indeed has rules, a perverse affective sense of fun, and easter eggs that provide domesticated surprise. QAnon’s slogan “‘do your own research’” might be taken as a command to surf your own surplus data channels.34And the Q movement has one thing right: data is worldly; digital channels do shape the world and are in excess of any heuristic intent. Events like the Capitol riot reify the data surround, among other things giving rationale to the increasingly datafied police to expand their quantitative vision.35 The events themselves are shocking and somehow predictable all at once: it is as though image boards (4Chan, 8Chan, 8kun) premeditate events by sniffing them out of the back alleys of data and insinuating them into reality.

This eruption of conspiratorial violence reminds us that data has inherited the legacy of biopolitics, particularizing its manipulation of society as a mass. As Rob Kitchin has argued, it is not just size that makes data big. Even speed of transfer and variety of format make up necessary but insufficient conditions for the revolution we were promised. Data deserving the name big also has to be “flexible” and “relational”—open to the inclusion of new fields—and, crucially, both “exhaustive” and “fine-grained.”36 The usefulness of data was traditionally attached to the precision with which it was gathered and defined. Sparse data, very exact, could create predictions to guide action by means of averages. The resulting categories, like those in an actuarial table, did not apply to individuals directly but at the level of the mass. This type of data was a crucial technique of what Michel Foucault called biopolitics, governance not of the individual body but at the level of generality. However, if biopolitics still relied on the assumed reality of demographic data, surplus data is something entirely novel. What was once a disjunction between individual and mean has become a partly automated loop between machine vision (or more generally, categorization) and its application to singular states of affairs. This logic stretches from FICO scores to healthcare data, from global logistics to finance capital.

Data has indeed become big and granular, and it has gained the ability to move from particulars to generalities and back again. Ecological fallacies emerging from large data sets now simply become new sources of value in both markets and politics. Without norms or quantifiable risks, we enter endless loops of uncertainty. David Bering-Porter, in his contribution to this issue, juxtaposes W. E. B. Du Bois’s data visualizations and speculative fictions with the famous case of Judge Schreber’s paranoid fantasies. Extrapolating into our present, we might imagine the paranoid conspiratorial politics of QAnon as occupying the space of paranoic dreams, ones of absolute counting, datafication, and control of the future, aspirations whose impossibility always drives violent forms of speculation and politics. But, Bering-Porter suggests, there are other pathways available. In the quantitative countermyths put forth by Du Bois to document racism in America, there was also an alternative aspiration “to reconcile the aims of visuality and data in two senses: as sight and apparition, evidence and aspiration.”37 Perhaps there is a future in which data stories offer evidence of a reality surplus data seems to foreclose in the present, the reality of the Black lives that Du Bois highlights and that have taken center stage in US politics today. It is the new task of a progressive politics to turn the endless extendable and colonizing frontiers of machine learning systems into something other than conspiratorial derivative instruments. In the surplus of data, any faith in the singularity of the real has been shattered—but these systems might harbor another way to encounter the world, one grounded in the experiences and data of the diverse multitudes. Our machines make technically visible what perhaps has always been there—the social nature of our technical lives. They need only be turned toward that future.

#### Anti-trust’s promise of reformed capitalist competition is a ruse to solidify American domination. Western academics erase imperialism from consideration, ensuring anti-trust cases will always hinge on American interests and never consider global impact.

Kwet 22, PhD in Sociology from Rhodes University, visiting professor @ Yale Information Society Project (Michael, The Digital Tech Deal: a socialist framework for the twenty-first century, *Race & Class*, Vol. 63, Issue 3, DOI:10.1177/03063968211064478)

Limitations of liberal and progressive ‘techlash’ reforms

In response to the rise of Big Tech, the intellectual classes in the Global North, led by American scholars, researchers and journalists, have formulated a liberal/progressive critique of Big Tech and a corresponding set of capitalist reforms they call the ‘techlash’. Their framework, informed by progressive-era figures like Louis Brandeis and Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), aims to restore the Golden Age of Capitalism through enlightened state regulation. This circuit of intellectuals are drawn primarily from elite universities (Ivy League, MIT, Stanford, Oxford, etc.) and the corporate media. Money for their research is sourced from elite academia and media outlets, wealthy foundations, philanthropists and Big Tech itself. The techlash critics ignore or downplay the analytical and moral centrality of digital capitalism and colonialism, ecological context and the need for a socialist transformation. A de facto vanguard within the intellectual community tuned into tech, together with Big Tech itself, these elite intellectuals set the bounds of leftist discourse and exercise ‘tech hegemony’ over the broader narrative.37

There are two branches of critique put forth by the American techlashers: a legal branch which focuses on anti-trust as its centrepiece to reform digital capitalism and a human rights branch which focuses on discrimination, privacy, content moderation and workers’ welfare. These intellectuals are typically in agreement with each other and often weave their critiques and solutions together. Let us consider each in turn.

Legal reformers

Within the legal domain, a new wave of anti-trust scholars have occupied centre-stage to address the digital economy.38 At the leftmost end of the spectrum in the United States, ‘neo-Brandeisian’ anti-trust scholars draw inspiration from Louis Brandeis, who viewed a fair and just democracy as one without extreme concentrations of wealth and power into the hands of corporations. Neo-Brandeisians share with socialists the idea that socioeconomic inequality in part springs from the monopoly power of big corporations. However, anti-trust reformers depart from socialists in irreconcilable ways.

For one, they envision a ‘small business capitalism’ of private property owners kept intact by enlightened state regulators. Socialists, by contrast, argue that the capitalist system naturally concentrates wealth and objects to class inequalities and private ownership of the means of production. For another, neo-Brandeisians fetishise competition as a force for social good, rather than a force which pits owners and workers against each other in the battle for revenue, profits and market share.

Critically, the limits of economic growth are not acknowledged anywhere in the literature, nor are digital colonialism and American empire. This is an analytical failure because the fact that Big Tech corporations exercise global dominance should be evaluated in light of their international and environmental impact. It’s as if central features of the global tech economy – American empire and ecological crisis – don’t even exist. It is a moral failure because all parties affected should be involved in formulating and implementing remedies, but, instead, the United States’ scholars, lawmakers, courts and regulators are the ones making critical decisions about reforming American firms with global reach.

European counterparts share in the US anti-trust reformist agenda, with an added caveat: the Europeans are explicitly trying to cut down the American super-giants in order to build their own tech giants and colonise global markets.

In Europe, there are already tens of unicorns (privately held start-ups valued over $1 billion). Rich European countries dominate this race. The UK leads the pack and aims to produce its own trillion-dollar behemoth. President Emanuel Macron will be pumping €5 billion to tech start-ups in hopes that France will have at least twenty-five unicorns by 2025. Germany is attracting billions for its start-ups and spending €3 billion to become a global AI powerhouse and a world leader (i.e., market coloniser) in digital industrialisation. For its part, the Netherlands aims to become a ‘unicorn nation’. In 2021, the European Union’s competition commissioner, Margarethe Vestager, told the press in no uncertain terms that Europe needs to ‘build its own European tech giants’.39

Thus, the notion that European leaders are against Big Tech is demonstrably false. They are trying to shrink the American super-giants (GAFAM) so they can carve out market share for burgeoning European tech giants. It’s pure power politics – an inconvenient truth for America’s neo-Brandeisians, who laud and borrow ideas from their European counterparts.

The new anti-trust scholars erase these realities from within their own self-referential echo chambers, and instead act as if anti-trust is a matter of remedying harms to their own citizens. This is not a small point. Even if anti-trust reforms go through, the space created for new market entrants will almost certainly be dominated by the rich countries, who still have the most advanced engineers and resources to pay them high salaries and poach foreign talent.

#### US pharma replicates colonial destruction. They will use profits to monopolize production and restrict access.

Douglas-Vail 14, MD, emergency medicine fellow (Matt, “Antiretrovirals and Neo-Colonialism,” *Juxtaposition: Global Health Magazine*, May Edition)

In order to understand the harm pharmaceutical companies have done to sub-Saharan Africa, the current climate of the epidemic must be examined. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) reported that in 2012, 35.3 million people worldwide were living with HIV.1 The majority of HIV infections however, occur in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2011, there were 25 million people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. Among the 1.6 million AIDS-related deaths globally, 1.2 million occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.1 Of the 2.3 million new infections that arose globally, 1.6 million occurred in this same region. The importance of ARVs in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic cannot be understated. In fact, access to these drugs directly corresponds to HIV/AIDS prevalence rates, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.2 Extensive evidence demonstrates that combined ARVs can substantially extend the life of people living with HIV despite differences in risk factors for transmission of HIV, sex, race or age.3 Initiation of ARVs can also delay the onset of AIDS and reduce the incidence of AIDS-defining diagnoses.4 ARV treatment is also capable of preventing transmission of HIV. The World Health Organization notes that early initiation of ARVs decreases HIV transmission between couples with different HIV statuses (sero-discordant) by 96%.5 As well, ARVs decreased mother-to-child prenatal transmission by 50%.6 To understand fully the effect that pharmaceutical companies have on restricting access to medication and thereby exacerbating the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is important to examine the official policies outlined by governing bodies like the United Nation and World Health Organization (WHO). These policies represent global expectations concerning access to treatment. In 2001, the UN Commission of Human Rights declared that access to medications is a fundamental process in the goal of achieving the highest attainable standards of health.7 Therefore, in 2002, 12 ARVs were added to the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.7 Essential Medicines are pharmaceuticals that are classified as absolutely necessary for a “basic health care system.”7 These drugs are intended to be consistently “available in adequate amounts at prices the individual and the community can afford.”8 In 2002, the World Bank founded the Multi-Country AIDS Program (MAP) to increase access to HIV treatment in sub-Saharan African and the Caribbean.7 This program aimed to purchase and distribute ARVs in a safe, equitable, effective and ethical way. UNAIDS aims to ensure access to ARVs for 15 million people by 2015 and eventually universal coverage.1 Unfortunately, 15 million people equates to coverage of less than 75% of the population. As well, the definition of universal coverage itself is problematic. UNAIDS definition of universal coverage only means that 80% of those eligible for treatment receive ARVs.1 This means that even though UNAIDS will have achieved their goal, 1 in 5 people will still be without treatment. Official policies however, leave no doubt to the public that access to medication is vital to mitigating and reducing the burden of the epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, which puts enormous power in the hands of the pharmaceutical companies. The legitimization of these products through official policies could allow pharmaceutical companies the ability to argue they are providing an invaluable service. That claim however, must be examined more closely. This legitimization gives control to the pharmaceutical companies and ensures that countries most affected by HV are dependent. This dependence embodies the contemporary neo-colonialism. There is unfortunately a great disparity between the official policies on access to medications and the number of people who are actually receiving ARVs. The neo-colonial agenda of pharmaceutical companies has contributed to this disparity. While the WHO suggests 28.3 million people require treatment in low and middle-income countries, only 34% of these people are currently receiving ARVs.5 In 2010, only 50% of pregnant women living with HIV in sub-Saharan African received ARVs to prevent mother-to-child transmission. This trend of disparaging coverage is not new. The first medicine designed specifically to treat HIV, known as zidovudine or AZT was released in the United States in 1987.9 By 2002, 800,000 people worldwide were on ARVs. Unfortunately, less than 40% of people on ARVs resided in developing countries even though these countries accounted for 95% of global HIV infections.7 In comparison, ARVs are widely available in the developed world and almost universally available in Canada.10 The United Nations recently reported that a “tipping point” had been reached where the number of people receiving ARVs outpaced the number of new infections.1 This is dangerously misleading. The veritable “tipping point” should actually be defined when access to ARV outpaces total HIV infections and everyone living with HIV receives treatment. While at first glance, the breadth of statistics available seem impressive, closer examination shows that access to treatment is oftentimes limited and inadequate. Pharmaceutical companies, although responsible for developing these invaluable products, are also responsible for controlling access to treatment. Pharmaceutical companies embodying neo-colonialism by attempting to exploit and assimilate sub-Saharan countries into the capitalist market have severely restricted access to treatment. This limited access and neo-colonial ethic has exacerbated the epidemic by denying treatment to those clearly in need of ARVs. Pharmaceutical companies in conjunction with international intellectual property laws have ensured that developing countries remain dependent on the production of ARVs. This dependence has exacerbated the HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO) passed the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).11 All countries in the WTO, including 35 of 47 sub-Saharan countries, are bound by the TRIPS agreement.12 Each country is now required to grant patents for inventions “in all fields of technology” including pharmaceuticals, for 20 years without discrimination to availability.13 This allows companies holding drug patents to charge artificially high prices for the drug and ensure monopolies over their production. Generic drugs provided a possible alternative to brand name pharmaceuticals. Until 1995, India did not grand patents on pharmaceuticals and permitted reverse-engineering of generic drugs. Becoming known as the “pharmacy of the developing world”, India had until 2005 to comply with the TRIPS agreement.14 Drugs patented between 1995 and 2005 can be reverse-engineered in generic form as long as royalties are paid to the patent holders and drugs patented after 2005 cannot be made in generic form. Through these regulations, the TRIPS agreement directly discourages the production of generic medications. In 2001, the WTO signed the Doha Declaration to allow members to grant domestic compulsory licenses to protect the public health of their citizens.14 Unfortunately, countries attempting to procure these licenses faced enormous pressure from foreign governments and pharmaceutical companies. To illustrate, Thailand issued two compulsory licenses and in response, Abbott stopped launching drugs in Thailand and the US government downgraded Thailand’s trade status to poor intellectual property protection. In 2003, the WTO expanded the use of compulsory licenses to allow for the export of generic medicines to countries in crisis.14 Pressure from pharmaceutical companies backed by the US, ensured narrow interpretations of these new regulations to deter countries from applying to import generic drugs. The United States Trade Representative listed South Africa as a priority perpetrator after attempting to import generic drugs.14 Mandating the issuing of product patents has prioritized market dominance over public health and access to medications. The pharmaceutical companies strike again in neo-colonial fashion. These companies advocate for and employ international trade agreements to develop and sustain a global monopoly of ARVs. This allows these companies to limit the access of these essential medicines to the few who can afford them in an attempt to assimilate sub-Saharan countries into global markets. By producing and subsequently limiting access to essential medicines, pharmaceutical companies ensure the vulnerability and dependence of sub-Saharan countries. Although pharmaceutical companies are not directly responsible for the implementation of structural adjustment programs (SAPs), they have vested interests in reaping the rewards. As the majority of people in the developing world receive medications through government-sponsored programs, the state’s capacity to provide ARVs is crucial. SAPs have significantly impacted this capacity and pharmaceutical companies have profited. A global recession in 1973 left many developing countries in debt.15 Continual economic decline meant that developing nations had to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and eventually the World Bank to cover foreign debts. To receive this coverage, countries had to agree to the precondition of “stabilizing programs” and undergo drastic economic restructuring.15 These SAPs are violent to developing countries and ave only contributed to debt. This has severe downstream effects including worsening poverty. SAPs have left countries unable to fund HIV prevention programs. In 1993, the WHO estimated that a comprehensive HIV prevention program would cost $2.6 billion, saving $90 billion by 2020.15 The economic constraints of SAPs left countries unable to fund prevention programs and much of the direct cost of HIV now goes to treating HIV infections and consequently pharmaceutical companies. SAPs have mandates, which require countries to curb health services.15 This has forced developing countries to charge for previously free services, including accessing essential medicines. The pharmaceutical companies again, reap the rewards. This situation causes treatment stratification where only those who can afford treatment receive it. The preoccupation with international financial institutions’ desire to achieve economic balance has jeopardized the right to health of many in sub-Saharan Africa. SAPs and the compliance of pharmaceutical companies with these programs maintain the exploitation of the global South by the North. By utilizing the social and economic conditions created by SAPS, the pharmaceutical companies have limited access and ensured uneven distribution of ARVs. Sub-Saharan countries are left vulnerable and dependent. This exploitation and the attempted assimilation of sub-Saharan countries into western lifestyles of consumption again expose the neo-colonial project by pharmaceutical companies that has exacerbated the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

#### Any new “innovation” will be built on medical exploitation of the global periphery---and have zero utility/applicability to the needs of the global South

Lyons 8, PhD, School of Political and International Studies and the Globalisation Program, Flinders University (Tanya, Globalisation, Failed States and Pharmaceutical Colonialism in Africa,” Paper submitted for presentation to AFSAAP Annual Conference)

Monash University

Within the discourse of failed states, is the perennial debate about definitions of what makes a weak or failed state. The capacity of the state to protect its citizens from forces both within and outside its borders is one criterion relevant here. Another criterion is the economic and social vulnerability of the people. The significance of these two criteria of weak states in the age of globalization is because global corporations can take advantage of weak policies and institutions within that state in order to exploit the poverty and to be examined here the case of diseases of the people to use them as ‘guinea pigs’ in clinical drug trials, in many cases for drugs destined for the western market, for western illnesses. Indeed the pharmaceutical industry and its operations in developing countries have come to light in the wake of the success and publicity of the film The Constant Gardener (2005), based on John le Carre’s novel (2001) of the same name, and following from this, the release of Sonia Shah’s non-fiction version of the same issues in the Body Hunter: Testing New Drugs on the World’s Poorest Patients (2006). It will be argued here that this (dysfunctional) marriage between global corporations and weak states, especially across Africa, creates a form of ‘pharmaceutical colonialism’, that is enabled by the processes of globalization that impact upon the many vulnerable nations that have once endured colonization and now must survive a ‘new-colonialism’. This process, enhanced by globalization, can be clearly seen in the case which inspired John Le Carre’s fiction novel The Constant Gardener, the case of the clinical drug trials for Trovan (trovafloxacin), tested on children in Kano state, Nigeria in 1996. This exemplifies opportunities created by globalization for the benefit of pharmaceutical companies to profit from the African poverty. That is, the pharmaceutical company Pfizer exploited a poverty induced medical crisis in Nigeria to extract data and profits, in a medical experiment that left a number of children dead or seriously ill. This is typically a one-way colonial extraction. In 1996 there was an outbreak of meningitis in Kano state Nigeria, that affected thousands of children and Pfizer took advantage of this opportunity to test a new oral antibiotic called Trovan (Trovafloxacin). The problem was, according to SOMO, that “Pfizer arrived several weeks after Médecins Sans Frontières” creating some confusion about their role as doctors and researchers. The drug was tested on children without parents’ informed consent, patients were unaware of the experiment, and the trial was not approved in advance by an ethical review committee. Out of 190 children that were enrolled in the trial, five receiving trovafloxacin and six receiving the existing treatment ceftriaxone [the injectable Rocephin] died. Others suffered brain damage and paralysis1 As Chippaux has noted, the justifications for the study protocols were weak, because they “overlooked the fact that the cost of the product and the limited chances of its commercialization without state subsidy ma[d]e its use in Africa highly unlikely”2 According to Shah, there were also warnings from within Pfizer, about the effectiveness of an oral drug on these particular children who were already sick, not only with meningitis but other illnesses, because the pre-existing injectable drug Rocephin worked more rapidly3 . Despite the results indicating that study drug Trovan was no better than the preexisting drug Rocephin, the problem was that the researchers did not respect the rights of the participants, and as such, South African bioethicist Solomon Benetar has argued that this lack of respect is ‘colonial’4 , because despite the questionable ethical conduct of this trial in Nigeria, and an unresolved class action put by 30 Nigerian families against Pfizer, the US Food and Drug Administration accepted the data from this trial5 . From this example, we can ask if the big pharmaceutical companies and their contract research organizations (CROs), are exploiting the citizens of weak and/or developing states due to a failure or lack of ethical policies and rules designed to protect against unethical clinical drug trials? If big pharmaceutical companies can exploit the citizens of weak states, is this because globalization is a hindrance to state strength and of benefit only to global corporations? How can weak African states survive globalization, if globalization means ‘pharmaceutical colonialism’? Indeed is ‘pharmaceutical colonialism’ an indicator of weak or failed states in Africa? Or do African states support the intervention and investments by pharmaceutical companies trialing new drugs in their health systems? Does it make the state weak for approving clinical drug trials that would not be approved of in the western world, because they provided access to something (some drugs), which was better than nothing (no drugs)? Is this ‘better than nothing’ approach to health development enabling the Millenium Development Goals of Global Health for All?6 Or does it signify a patronizing and colonizing outcome for weak and developing states in the age of globalization? The concept ‘pharmaceutical colonialism’ surfaces clearly in the literature on these questions and themes (often no more than a simple headline used to capture attention, and more often it is an accusation flung at big pharmaceutical companies for their alleged unethical practices in developing countries). They are also criticized for creating an economic dependence on the west via the creation of a need for life saving drugs against illnesses of poverty, rather than more local remedies or strategies to alleviate poverty. It was an article written by Jean-Phillipe Chippaux entitled “Pharmaceutical Colonialism in Africa” published in Le Monde Diplomatique7 that appears to consolidate the evidence against pharmaceutical companies in their actions within Africa and other developing countries. While Chippaux has not been the first author to use this term8 , he does appear to be the first to coin the phrase in relation to clinical drug trials in Africa. Within the article he refers to the actions of pharmaceutical companies as ‘strategic imperialism’. Either of these terms indicates global power imbalances between developing countries’ peoples and global corporations that seek the former out for exploitation of one kind or another. Chippaux’s argument is straight forward: the developing world is now a place where pharmaceutical companies ignore ethical considerations and the health of patients. Without the informed consent of their subjects who receive only the most basic information and usually inadequate therapeutic supervision, they conduct clinical trials with limited benefits to specific patients or the local population as a whole.9

#### The World Computer superimposes a failed imagination of risk arbitrage onto society that will cause extinction.

Haiven 22, Research Chair in the Radical Imagination at Lakehead University, Canada. His books include Revenge Capitalism, Art after Money, Money after Art, Crises of Imagination, Crises of Power and The Radical Imagination. (Max, “Financialization and failure: Lessons from the Anxious University”, <https://maxhaiven.com/failure/> Accessed 2/24/22)—js

Finance, in a sense, represents capitalism’s form of partial but functional self-awareness. Of course, capitalism is not a living human being capable of self-awareness. Yet it is a system that, increasingly globally, is replete with autonomous feedback mechanisms, ways of knowing the world.

For Hayek (2007), perhaps the most brilliant 20th century capitalist theorist, free markets ideally represent a uniquely perfect knowledge systems. For Hayek, markets operate as price discovery mechanisms where competitive bidders collectively determine the true value of commodities, otherwise unknowable to any single actor. In this sense, markets are, writ large, as Beller (2021) suggests, a kind of world-encompassing meta-computer, constantly calculating (though a million independent, competitive bets) the world. In Martin’s (2015) reading of Hayek, capitalism with advanced financial markets is not only the fairest system, but also the truest. Though no individual can “know” the sublime market (and, indeed, failure to perfectly know the market is what, ironically, drives the differential behaviour of market actors of which the market is composed), the market has a kind of perfect, superhuman knowledge of the world.

In a similar but distinct fashion, and from the opposite side of the ideological spectrum from Hayek, Marxist geographer Harvey (2018) proposes that financial markets represent the central nervous system of capitalism. Financial markets, writ-large, take in market signals from around the world and, in response, send out prompts for investment and divestment, a process exacerbated and accelerated by recent advances in computing and telecommunications technology. Financial firms compete to study and evaluate firms, industries, sectors and whole nations, the better to speculate on their future fortunes and thereby determine where to advance or withdraw capital. I have suggested that, in contrast to the “central nervous system,” the metaphor of imagination may be more appropriate because it connotes the chaotic, conjectural and hallucinatory aspect of finance’s reckoning of the world (Haiven 2012). Approaching finance as capitals’ imagination also helps bring into focus the way that financial speculation relies on a multitude of acts of the individual human imagination, a position echoed by Beckert (2016) and Komporozos-Athanasiou (2021). My approach builds on Castoriadis’s (1997) framework which frames the imagination not as an individual quality of mind but as a material social force from which the institutions of social reality are crafted. In this sense describing finance as capital’s imagination seeks to identify the process by which it comes to understand and shape the world.

If finance represents capital’s means of self-reflexivity, then this imagination is constantly failing to accurately measure the meaningful value of things. It suffers from a debilitating and destructive solipsism, within which all worldly things are imagined exclusively in terms of risk, yield, and speculative profitability. It’s not simply that Financialized markets are constantly misvaluing stocks, bonds, derivatives, currencies and other assets; this is already part of the system: the failure of accurate measurement is key to many bedrock financial activities, like arbitrage. More importantly and damningly, financial market’s failure to properly imagine and value the world also jeopardizes human and environmental rights, communities and even the future of humanity itself. Functionally, it necessarily places the speculative concerns of a handful of major financial firms over material needs of millions, even billions of people. The financially-driven market’s imagination of the world is a fundamentally skewed one, but its power is such that, increasingly, the world is cut to measure its skewed imagination.

There is another, deeper failure of the imagination inherent to this situation. Financialization depends on most social actors, including notably those with political and economic power, internalizing finance’s imagination of the world and making it their own, the better to compete in a world financialization is creating. Frequently, major political and economic decisions are made based on a sense of inevitability, fatalism or a sense that no other options are possible, representing a profound failure of the imagination.

In sum, to identify finance as capital’s failed imagination of the world is to identify financialization’s reliance on the transformation of the human imagination, but also to contend with it as the means by which the system gains some measure of associative reflexivity. It’s not simply that how capital imagines the world is objectively wrong. That may be the case, but more dangerously still, its power is such that this mismeasured world in then instantiated in reality thanks to finance’s economic, political, social and cultural power.

#### The alternative is refusal---that produces derivative communism.

Beller 21 (Jonathan Beller = Professor of Humanities and Media Studies and Critical and Visual Studies at Pratt Institute, “Introduction:  The Social Difference Engine and the World Computer,” in *The World Computer: Derivative Conditions of Racial Capitalism*, Duke University Press, pp. 183-189 BEH)

Given the sea change in the nature of **languages and images** themselves— their wholesale transposition and transformation from a means of **representation to a means of production**— the difficulty here is both with the substrate of communication (its bits) and with the us- versus- them perspective: we want to ban advertisers, but today we must also confront the disturbing possibility that we are them. Remember, “they” **program** “our” language and “our” imagination, “we” speak **“their” thought**— indeed, that is our work, or rather our labor. What to do with the fact that “we have seen the enemy and he is us?” One could say, one could want to say, “I don’t care who you are: if you live in the first world, if you live in the Global North, then fuck you! You ain’t no victim, even if you’re sick.” But who would be saying that? Probably some other Northerner, writing about how culture or the Venice Biennale, as if it were, could or should be more than a lavish spectacle of global suffering staged for a cosmopolitan elite. As capital’s nations, banks, armies, schools, languages, newspapers, and films did to its colonies and colonial subjects, the current **institutions from states to computer**- media companies do to “us”: they command us to make ourselves over **in capital’s image** for their own profit through networked strategies of **expropriation and dispossession**. “We” do it to ourselves, and our representations of **self and other are designed to sell** a version of ourselves back to ourselves so that we can perform further work on what is now the raw material for the next iteration of images. Therein lies our ontological lack, an ontological lack of solidarity and of even the possibility for solidarity. Therein lies the desire for and indeed necessity **to become a plantation manager** — the word is overseer. Though it is beyond the scope of this essay, this digital neocolonialism that practically commands global Northerners to in one way or another accept Nazism and genocide with their cappuccino could be understood as being on a continuum with the internal colonization of Europe by the German banks— which depends of course on the **distributed production of a kind of neoliberal “realism**” that Mark Fisher (2009) called “**capitalist realism,”** and was only ever a hair’s breadth away from fascism. This fact of our investment in and by advertising, the conversion of the sign to what I call the “advertisign,” poses a genuine problem for theory— indeed an unprecedented one. This problem is particularly evident considering the material conditions (class, nationality, education, race, language, et c.) of the participants in the would-be counterhegemonic theoretical discussions of culture and policy that presuppose the books, computers, schools, and institutions that sustain these. Those within the circuit of these discussions have already passed through a homogenization process which **programs them in compatible systems languages**. **Without submitting ourselves** and our own aspirations to radical critique, without conducting a Gramscian inventory of our ostensibly internal constitutions, we run the risk of merely trying to set up a **competing corporation** with a new business model. The revolution will not **be televised**; decolonization **will not be a brand.** Any would-be anticapitalist “we” runs this risk of coopting and cooptation from the get-go, particularly if it does not think about the materiality of **social production** from top to bottom: class, yes, but also race, nation, gender, sexuality, ability, geolocation, historical stratification. The world’s postmodern poor, the two billion– plus living on two dollars a day, also lab or to survive in the material landscape organized by the post- Fordist social factory its **anti- Blackness, its Islamophobia, its endless and mutating racism** and imperialism. However, from the standpoint of capital, **the role of those at the bottom is to serve as substrate** for image- production and semiosis; not only in factories, cottage- industries, subsistence farming, and informal economies, but also as starving Advertisarial Relationshordes; “irrational,” criminalized or surplused populations; subject- objects for policing, encampment, and bombing; desperate refugees; and even as voids in the idea of the world—as sites of social death. Forgive me, but I’d wager that no one capable of understanding these words can claim full exemption from the indictment they issue regarding structural complicity with the production and reproduction of everyday life. Humans **are troped (via discourse and the screen) to organize military production**, national policy, internment camps and prisons, bourgeois imaginations, museum shows, corporate strategy, and market projections. Let us clearly state here that **any program** that does not admit this excluded **planet into dialogues** **that vitiate** the **monologues imposed by capitalist** informatics and advertisigns is still floating in the realm of the ruling ideas **and therefore participant in murder.** These ruling ideas are the ones whose density and weight, whose material support and very machinery, threaten to further crush the late- capitalist poor out of not just representation but out of existence. This erasure and disposability, imposed by systems of informatic inscription designed to absorbe very output of sense, is the achievement of the advertisarial relations endemic to computational racial capitalism. When information is an advertisement for itself that presupposes the operating system of the world computer as virtual machine, **banning what we recognize as advertising on the internet, even if an excellent beginning,** is just not adequate to address these issues of representation, social justice, planetary and climate racism, and emancipation. To summarize: the forms of sociality which are the conditions of possibility for the online, informatically organized r elations— best characterized as advertisarial — run through e very sector and register of planetary life. The internet, while recognizable as an effect and a cause of the current form of **planetary production and reproduction**, cannot be considered in isolation as a **merely technical platform or set of platforms if its historical role is to be properly understood.** To take the internet as an autonomous technological force results in a species of platform **fetishism that disavows both the histories and material conditions** of its emergence, conditions that are, in short, those of screen culture and racial capitalism; this is to say that it, the internet, is the very means by which the capitalist suppression of global democracy (which is emphatically, economic democracy as well) has been accomplished and continues. If the internet is autonomous, it is because it expresses the autonomization of the value form. As noted previously, **with the hijacking of communications** and **semiotic infrastructures** by racial capitalism, the medium is the message and **the message is murder.** To ban advertising on the internet would be a good start— but what if the whole thing is advertising? **One reading of** what I have said thus far might suggest that, giv**en the expropriation of the cognitive- linguistic, our volition is overtaken by capital logic;** and given our inability to cogitate in any way that is genuinely resistant to capitalist expropriation, coercion, strictly speaking, **is no longer necessary to impose cooperation for capitalist production.** We “want” to cooperate productively, our desire— which, from the dispossession of even language and mind constitutes ourselves as subjects in the media ecology of the capital is t technical image, that is, in and through the organization of digital information—**is itself an iteration of capital, a script of becoming predestined to become capital**. The old language scored by the new image machines and their extractive algorithms locally organizes cooperative subjects who want to cooperate with vectoral capitalization. **We want to provide content in order to derive currency and survive.** Our solidarity on the internet produces more internet. Thus, in a certain way— and particularly since **we no longer properly have any thoughts of our own—we all collaborate in a world organized by images and screens, thereby participating more or less mindlessly in the seamless realization and triumphant apotheosis of the programming business.** However, I am sorry to have to report that the dystopian vision **here is not quite as bucolic as even this** already dreary picture of unwitting and irredeemable pulverization and servitude. While I do see that representation and semiotics have been increasingly flattened à la Orwell and Marcuse by a vast internalization of the apparatuses of oppression ( in which “**thought” is the** [productive] thought **of the [capitalist**] Party and “**repressive desublimation**” is an engine of capitalist- fascist **production)** the “old problems” like the hierarchy of class have not gone away; neither have racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and fascist nationalisms ceased playing their roles to create vectors of privilege for white male– identifying aspiration. Indeed, most thought today, such that it is, is all about maintaining hierarchical society. **The thinking runs thus**: capital is nature, capital is eternal, capital is information is nature. Or, in a more pedestrian mode: **human beings are naturally acquisitive and competitive**, economic growth and technological advancement mean progress, **this tech provides**, **or almost provides,** a color- , gender- , and religion- blind society, and so on— and one must advance one’s place in it by any (crypto- or not- s o- cryptofascist**) means necessary.** Of course, there exists better thinking out there. Mia Mingus: “As organizers, we need to think of access with an understanding of disability justice, moving away from an equality based model of sameness and ‘we are just like you’ to a model of disability that embraces difference, confronts privilege and challenges what is considered ‘normal’ on every front. We don ’t want to simply join the ranks of the privileged; we want to dismantle those ranks and the systems that maintain them” (Mingus 2011, cited in Puar 2017: 16). However, there is **broad- band, ambient programming that facilitates assuming neo- liberal** and full-on **fascist subjective sovereignty**. This programming seeks triumphant brushes with plenitude (communion with the big Other, as distinct from the racial or otherwise other, becomes the ego- ideal) , and this same programming is violent, competitive, hateful, mean- spirited, and alienating when embraced—at the same time that it is also cooperative, simpering, and abject. Servitude, even when automatic and mostly unconscious, is unhappy and, as we can see any day from the daily news, utterly pathological and sick. Of course, this diagnosis represents a huge generalization, but despite its broad-brushing lack of subtlety we may find that such a schizoid oscillation between entitled adjudicator and abject supplicant sums up the contours of your average reality televisions how or comments section on YouTube. It is Bateson’s (2000) and Deleuze and Guattari’s (1977) schizophrenic, caught in the double- bind, who has become the capitalist norm— the one who struggles to negotiate in the form of contradictory signals the aporias of hierarchical society, while reproducing it, and all the while experiencing their own psychic dissolution as an injunction to create. 3 With this schizoid capture in mind, let me then develop my question about the internet— “ What if it is all advertising?”—in the framework of post- Fordist production. The argument is that, in the context of virtuosity and the expropriation of the cognitive- linguistic by computational racial capital, sociality itself has become advertisarial, a ceaseless waging of capitalized exploits designed to garner attention and value for oneself and one’s capitalistic. This situation represents— indeed imposes— a derivative logic, a logic **in which every action** is a hedge, a kind of risk management devoted to maximize a return. In addition to the fractalization of fascism, in which agency is manifest as a profile that has aggregated the attention of others, advertising has worked its way into the sign itself, into the image, and into data visualization, and it has generated the advertising . All signs become points of potential cathexis, derivative positions on the underlier that is social currency and ultimately value. This new type of sign is not simply the brand but also an element of vectoral language (Wark 2007): functionalized words in a production channel, engaging in the micromanagement of desire, the production of new needs, and the capturing of the imagination, all in order to induce linguistic and behavioral shifts in the attention of others while aggregating their attention for oneself— t urning their heads with an interface. This combination of the manipulation of market conditions (that is, everyday life) through techniques of risk management is no longer merely the province of advertising but of so- called tuman interactivity 188 Chapter 4(what was once just communication and before that culture), now become adversarial through and through. From Smythe’s claim in the “Blindspot” essay (1977) that all leisure time has become lab or time, to Virno’s (2004) notion of virtuosity, we have seen aspects of this model for the capitalist overdetermination of apparently unremunerated time before. However, here— with the financialization of expression—we clearly grasp that the financialization of everyday life means also the convergence of semiotics and financial derivatives. Given the thoroughgoing intensification of vectoral, and in fact matrixial, signs, we need to investigate its implications in the context of a discussion of radical media practice. I will make two additional points here before shifting gears and turning at the end of this chapter to what I identify as an aesthetics of survival—an aesthetics that emerges from within the matrix of adversarial, schizoid capture. The final chapter of this volume will endeavor to extend aspects of such socio aesthetic forms, those resistant to computational racial capitalism, to new notions of radical finance and the possibility of platform communism. If, as was already becoming true in the cinematic mode of production, the dominant means of representation have become the dominant means of production, the questions of and models for political agency are radically transformed, and the urgent need to decolonize communication and decolonize finance presents itself. Future communication will require a cybernetic approach, and, as wes hall argue, this cybernetic approach will necessarily be financial, though it will be reaching toward a different order and different mode of production. Like communism, because it will need to be communist, it will see economic transformation of the material relations of production and reproduction as essential to the revolution. It will draw on the repressed and extracted cognitive- linguistic resource of the racialized and other wise marginalized and configure ways to make our voices matter both as meaning and as tools for the reorginzation of the material world and the social relations therein prescribed. Language and images are neither inside nor outside; they are part of the general intellect— currently they are at once media of thought and of capital. We also know that languages and images are not isolable, meaning that they are not and have never been stand- alone entities but rather exist in relation to their media, their platforms, which are again inseparable from society and its institutions. Furthermore, each platform relates to another platform. Paraphrasing McLuhan, we could even say that the “content” of a media platform is another platform. Thusly the general intellect is inseparable from its media platforms and their financials. We see that the general intellect, once largely held in common, is increasingly being privatized; the very media of our thought belong to someone else . This expropriation of the media commons is precisely the precondition of the real subsumption of society 189 Advertisarial Relationsby capital. It is an extension of the ongoing expropriation begun by primitive accumulation and money as capital, and it has been accomplished through the financialization of media as platforms of extraction. The ramification of mediation by computation and information has resulted in its convergence into formats offering derivative exposure to underliers that are the expressive vitality and futurity of our communication. We therefore no longer have any organic relation to the materials for thought itself (sincerity has become a myth, at least in the medium- term of most circles)— t he words, images, and machines we require to think, to express ourselves, to interact, and to know have been ripped from the species and privatized via the longue durée of dissymmetrical exchange. We work on the words and images, but as numbers they belong to someone else. The media themselves have become forms of capital— forms of racial capital— and our usage of these media means that we work to add value that valorizes capital, for the capitalist and within a relation designed as much as possible to guarantee that our creative acts necessarily occur as dissymmetrical exchange with capital. I write this book in a discourse that does not just not belong to me because it is shared, but in a discourse that is increasingly the property of a set of institutions— publishers, journals, universities— that all have their eye on the bottom line. The means by which we most intimately know the world, ourselves, and our desires (our images and words) are themselves vectors of capitalization intent upon converting our very life- process into surplus value (which is to say value for capital). We need strategies that will seize the means of production and create a reverse subsumption of affect, intellect**, knowledge**, **capability, communication, and community.** When all media have converged as economic media, it is **economic media that must be re- engineered**. When all media have converged as economic media, it is economic media that must be re- engineered. Again, I think this subsumption of cognitive and affective capacity, the quasi-automating (scripting) of productive labor for capital, is what Stiegler means by the proletarianization of the nervous system—which would include the proletarianization of the pathways of feeling and thought. Our affective capacities are put to alienated and alienating work in the social factory, and their product too is alienated, producing ever-intensifying and ever-accumulating dispossession and disempowerment as the dialectical antithesis of its simultaneous production of unprecedented wealth and power for the cyborg avatars of the great media conglomerates. Intellect and emotional intelligence, the product of thousands of years of species- becoming, is being strip-mined so that extraction machines may continue their furious innovation to further discount people. I write this book aware of the pressure to think it just right, to at once extend thinking in order to command attention and produce new needs, but also to delimit it, to control myself, and to put the reins on whatever counterpower may rage within my body, because academia can tolerate only so much “bullshit” and no more. Yes sir, I’ll be careful not to cross that line, but a word to the woke: the bullshit is the best part. From a historical perspective, this encroachment on the means of representation—that Banksy and I and a billion others join the silenced majority in opposing—indicates that the individual subjective agent, itself a platform for sociality that developed with the rise of capitalism (as the subject who relates to other subjects in the market, the bearer of the commodity and thus its thought), is nearly **defunct.** As has been noted previously, in a world where life processes are stripped, ripped apart, rebundled, and sold as derivative exposures, the individual subject is an outmoded technology despite the fact that it still appears as a skeuomorph in certain updated technosocial apparatuses—like the latest forms of films, games, influencers, and versions of national politics that proffer invitations to momentary individualistic identification for the dividual purpose of providing a sense of familiarity and orientation. While palliative for some in small doses, such individuality is no longer a viable (which is to say, sustainable) fantasy. The real thought is that of the infrastructure, of the AI that codes our meat and scripts our sheets. Sure I take up the mantle for a few moments each day to appear as the agent of this text, suiting up as the operator of an intellect that might be adequate to the informatic shit-storm of racist, capitalist, imperialist, patriarchal, for-profit assaults, but then I drop off into an ocean of petty concerns, food shopping, and home repairs. And even when I say “I,” to perform as the nexus of all this insight, I also know that it’s hardly me talking. I’m just curating at the gates of shit that needs to be said, and hopefully titrating to let the right stuff through. That’s part of my politics though Dog knows that I could create a more lucrative named-professor type profile with just a little more discipline, a bit more self-interested adherence to the protocols of the academy’s factory code. Instead, there is the effort to overturn, to be or at least to live something beyond being the scribe of the world computer, to at once witness the drama of the emergence of the intelligence of commodification, testify to its outrage, and intimate the possibility of its overthrow. Such would be the art of this text, practiced at the limits of disciplinarity and of subjectivity, guaranteed by nothing and no one. The expiration of the subject form, imminent since the subject’s first intimation of mortality—and made structurally mandatory by Freud and especially, with the full-blown rise of the sign at the moment of it radical marginalization by visuality, by Lacan—is not necessarily a cause for lament, despite the increasingly intense fading of its incalculable beauty, its sad reduction to cliché. From a political perspective, it means that within each concrete individual body the presumed continuity of the individual is riddled with contradictory and indeed unassimilable indicators; it means also that there exists in differing quantities and qualities capitalist and noncapitalist striations or sectors. Hallways of emptiness, but also hallways of love. Like bundled assets, the mind-body is tranched by executable logics organized by a calculus of risk available to investors. There are, to be a bit simplistic, **aspects of desire that are** programmed (indeed farmed) to produce practices that function in perfect accord with capitalist accumulation strategies (individualizing or schizoid) and aspects of **desire that are atavistic or collectivist**, utopian, communist, or maybe even just plain lonely, and, in short, subprime. In reality, of course, desire is more singular than even such formalizations might indicate. Insert your favorite snippet of poetry here. Hortense Spillers in “All the Things You Could Be by Now If Sigmund Freud’s Wife Was Your Mother” (1997) invokes “the Dozens” and the music of and like that of Charles Mingus (152–3), to make present an “interior intersubjectivity”(140) testifying to the rich unaudited psychic life of what might today be called Blackness. There are vast resources beyond the easy resolution of hegemonic hermeneutics whether deployed by institutionally validated psychoanalysis or compressed by current systems of informatic extraction. In agreeing with Freud that consciousness makes up a small part of mental life when compared to the preconscious, the unconscious, dreams, and so on, but in rejecting the normative assumptions and disavowals (including his own Jewishness) that situate Freud and the psychoanalytic discourse that will become part of European and U.S. bourgeois society, Spillers recognizes a vast store of mental life and the possibility of listening anew. However, when speaking of politics now, we therefore necessarily speak of the abstract forms available for the conceptualization and deployment of concrete emergences whether referring to haecceities that are innumerable or collective forms of existence and psychic life actively mediating between “the one” and “the ‘masses’ ” (141). Let us listen anew. Acknowledging that we ultimately and if possible immediately want to “marry our thought” (Wynter 1994b: 65) to the wealth of subaltern forms of life and the care of the bios, allow me then to put the situation of the post- Fordist subject thusly: in Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Lenin (1939) showed how imperialist dividends complicated class issues in England, since many people, otherwise part of the working class, got a share of the dividends of imperialism by clipping the coupons of their investments in racist, exploitative British enterprises across the globe. Today this race-based class fractionalization is fully internalized in the Global North; on our iPads built by Chinese slaves from blood metals extracted from the Congo, we may momentarily feel like biomorphically unmarked nobles in the global cosmopolis; while on the job market or when simply seen in our raced and gendered embodiments, we are abjects. Materially and intellectually we are nodal points on a global network. The signal oscillates between narcissistic megalomania and utter abjection and can be affected by a billion parameters taking us from melancholia to outrage. **Thus, even the concrete individual is composed of class fractions, race fractions, gender fractions.** In the form of signs, we clip coupons that validate our investments. The language of object-identification, we observe here, cannot really keep up with the fluctuations resulting from the throughput of code as we work to identify and disidentify our agency. Can we audit a different mode of emergence, a different futurity than one inexorably overcoded by capital? Of course this is still somewhat simplistic and also class-specific, as many (billions even) never get to participate as an enfranchised global citizen in any aspect or moment of life, even if the lived experience of these same billions is radically overdetermined by the class(es) from which they are excluded.4 The gilded poverty of the enfranchised, as opposed to the mere poverty of the rest, is now a measure of connectivity. A more complete view is that we are the product of the world system and thus everything we are has been produced vis-à-vis globalization, and therefore everything bears the trace of the system in its entirety (again, in varying proportions). This conceptualization of concrete individuals (bodies) as global communitarian products forced to varying degrees into templates of individualized risk by capitalist states, is not to erase class; however, it suggests that, just as Fanon saw the great European metropoles as the product of third world labor, we are all products of the worst conditions prevailing in the Global South and around the planet. Global inequality is internal to **our being**. It is us. How then does one (such a one who is relatively enfranchised by the derivative language of texts such as this one) inventory those relations and produce them as formations of solidarity rather than as disavowed residuum? Is there another data-sphere, a communist one? Can we build communist interfaces, networks, **and finance?** How would **we register,** track, amplify, and render actionable the communitarian affinities, **solidarities, obligations, and debts**, the resources in the wake of too many genocides to count, that in actual practice **underpin the official economy,** collective life, and whatever authentic hope is left to our species? Perhaps we have arrived at a question worthy of theory: Is there, could there be communist algorithms? Communist derivatives? Derivative communism? We are looking for that path. To add to my point about the shifting, distributed character of political actors—that goes so far as to suggest that we can no longer think only of actors but rather must think of vectors and fields in addition to thinking of the resources developed in cultures of survival—I will make a second observation. **A political intervention** in the advertisarial relations that have this planet heading toward environmental doomsday requires not only revolutionary policy but revolutionary culture. (I defer further discussion of a third requirement, revolutionary finance, to the final chapter.) This culture must take into account that, for many on this planet, Armageddon is not the future but an **ongoing constant**. My call here (which should not be entirely unfamiliar, as it gives petit bourgeois intellectuals something important to do) is to (re)politicize semiotic and affective structures and practices, including and perhaps especially those we might control, for example our own utterances—our expression. Of course, to call them “our own” seems to contradict what I’ve said about the expropriation of the cognitive- linguistic and the intensification of aphanisis by visual, verbal, and digital media derivatives, but it is here precisely that we confront one of the significant material contradictions of our time: who or what speaks in us? This question, which I shorthand using the phrase the politics of the utterance and which you can experience palpably right now (as you endeavor to think), seems to me to insist that **our idea-making** must actively produce its solidarity with the dispossessed. We must struggle for the **radical constellation.** The question concerning the politics of the utterance, asked here in a strange passage of this text through a beyond-academic terrain, a moonless forest the traversal of which may or may not at this point lead us back to the plot, also raises the question of becoming, as well as the questions of agency and of action within the capitalist image— programmable images, racializing and racist images that, in the terms we have set out, are functionally omnipresent. Continuous media throughput has generated a capitalist imaginary structuring both language function and imaging processes, coordinated at scales and by calculative logics that exceed individual comprehension. Though the occasion is upon us, **we must struggle for space and time to think. We must** open a spread on which to bet against the dominant order. We glimpse, and we feel, that to insist upon the unremitting relevance of both culture-making and of cross-cultural transnational solidarity helps **to avoid platform fetishism** because it sees the internet and its machines not as a set or collection of autonomous technologies but as a historically emergent system of value-expropriative communication and organization, built directly upon older but nonetheless contemporaneous forms of inequality, including but not limited to historically emergent techniques of gendering, racialization, and imperialism, and embedded in the living flesh of the world. All of this calculative interconnectivity and networked agency implies, contradictorily, in fact, that the internet is not all advertising—but neither is advertising all advertising. It is also murder and struggle. Banksy knows that. The advertisarial relation is the programmatic relation encrypted in the apparatuses of capital: the war of each against all, taken all the way from finance, computation, and surveillance to the speech act and the imagination in accord with the autopoietic algorithm of the distributed Leviathan. Marx himself saw capitalism as vampiric, and today’s processes of **capitalization are even more totalitarian**, more widely distributed, and more blood-, life-, and indeed soul-sucking than even in prior eras—though such comparisons **don’t do those killed by past iterations of capitalism any good.** Despite the disavowals to the contrary, we recognize that capital needs labor, needs metabolic time more desperately and more voraciously than ever before (what else is biopolitics?) and, furthermore, that it wages war on life-time on all fronts, in order to secure labor power, its product and basis, at a discount. The pyramids of inequality become internal fractals, and even as the base broadens, the tip with the all-seeing eye (that is not a subject) ascends ever higher. **We do not** yet **know what can be destroyed** or indeed built with the massive appropriation of Banksy’s rocks, but we do know that at present **there is** total war against our using them to build anticapitalist, nonhierarchical, horizontal, solidary sociality. The refusal or détournement **of capital’s encroachment** **is** itself a creative act. Perhaps we have only **begun to glimpse what** a total **refusal might achieve.**

#### That’s a form of crisis thinking which exposes local class contradictions and denies the lingua franca of the commodity-form.

Cubitt 3-7-22, Professor of Screen and Cultural Studies at the University of Melbourne (Sean, “Turning Disaster into Crisis”, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13678779221084720>. Accessed from KU Libraries: 3/21/2022)—js

No wonder, then, that truth has evaporated in a world whose economic infrastructure is dedicated to ensuring that no future worth the name ever arrives. This is the real disaster of informatics and derivatives. Critical thinking is thinking of, in, through and as crisis, as turning point and as the prelude for action. Crisis thinking is thinking about crisis but also thinking as crisis. Our borders are in crisis, but not yet the right crisis. Borders are closed to people but never to money. Commodities are mobile but, as intellectual property, ideas struggle to be shared. The privilege granted to the wealthy extends beyond permissions to travel through quarantine borders. We are certainly not all in this together: there is no singular humanity under capital, and even less so in an era of hegemonic transition. One of the features distinguishing (post)coloniser and (post)colonised is the far greater proximity of colonial subjects to the effects of the pandemic. This itself is a token that globalisation describes the condition of the global elites and, more importantly, the capitalist system that maintains them, compared to the local condition of the disaster-prone poor. The refugee camps of Cox's Bazaar offer no escape routes like those available to Americans fleeing the US West Coast forest fires of 2021.

The economic and thus cultural abstraction of capital of and from natural processes (Sohn-Rethel, 1978: 61) may prove catastrophic in the medium term, but its local effects are disastrous in the short. Critical thinking observes this as a crisis in the partition of the world, and seeks critical action, on the lines drawn up in the Porto Alegre manifesto, as the basis for an alter-globalisation – not another world-system but a planetary alliance of dispersed local forces. At present, local languages must translate into and from the demands of the hegemonic tongue, the lingua franca of money. The global abstraction of the universal medium of exchange, divorced from the human-natural ecology of the local, wins out, but at the same time the globalising processes of capital are incomprehensible without the intensity of local experience (cf. Cubitt, 2020). Worse still, ‘the global gaze that constructs, marginalizes and then induces the resistance of local actors’ (Fogel 2004: 122) only induces global elites to favour local entreprises seeking to benefit from globalisation rather than listening to those harmed by it. When local resistance takes the form of vaccine refusal, the local suffers more than the global, but both suffer. It is only at the local scale that human and environmental reconnect, unless further divided by global resource and knowledge extraction, making the diversity of localities a vital part of the global commons, where currently it is reduced to the universal equivalents of consumer ‘demand’ and cash.

The pandemic demonstrates what information capital had already shown us about human lives beyond what they offer up by way of data: that the remainder of human living is surplus to requirements. Human bodies, except as disciplined machineries of consumption and efficient sources of information, have become environmental, and capital treats them as it does the natural world. Critical thinking of and through crisis therefore must demonstrate the failure of a capitalist epistemology based on the exclusion of natural-human ecologies. The waste of human and natural life is integral to capital's functioning, the externality it needs for cost-free exploitation. But as waste, the human-natural environments act as the unconscious of capital, just as indigenous knowledges act as the unconscious of the dominant discourse of global systems.

Disaster capitalism aims to extract profit from difference, but the differences it seeks out are only comprehensible in its terms when they are reduced to information, a global abstraction. For that to happen it must ignore local experience, including its foundations in the experience of space as locality. Similarly, it reduces the continuity of time to discursive discontinuities, units of exploitable difference, which, since they must be reduced to universal equivalence of money, no longer include the reach of experience of time, only the perpetual present of profit. The mode of difference that disaster capital profits from actually erases the differences it exploits, the uniqueness and continuity of place and time, by translating them into its universal code. The political aspect of political economy provides for administrative abstraction of localities, from municipalities to nation states and regional blocs. Even when a municipality is seized by progressive political forces, enforced boundaries ensure it remains within the administrative abstraction, subject to the indifferent differences that make profit possible. Just as it devastates the planet it depends on, capital devastates the local in pursuit of present profit. Thus, by treating disasters as unique events, capital eliminates the dimensions of historical change, so averting the crisis that perpetually underpins its process.

Against the abstraction of localities by disaster capital's universalising ethos and teleology, crisis thinking exposes the local that capital abandons in order to enhance and encourage the conditions of crisis that capital itself produces. The pandemic as capital construes it is a driver for spending. For crisis thinking, it is an occasion for denying the universalist language of information capital, the commodity form, and the trade in chaos. Porto Alegre began the process of making a commons composed of localities and local struggles capable of planetary action, but never abstracting itself above the lived differences that compose the actual world. Far less often quoted than its opening phrase, Bateson's definition speaks of ‘differences that make a difference in a later state of affairs’ (Bateson, 1973: 428, my emphasis). We have felt like lockdowns hit the pause button on history: turning disaster into crisis hits fast forward.

## Case

### Advantage 3

#### Discourses of contagion are not purely rhetorical but instigate material, political, social violence through a devaluation of contagious entities as non-living. Creating state interventions to quarantine and eliminate infectious bodies – produces distance that justifies violence against the Other.

**Nixon and Servitje 16** (Kari, English Professor, Southern Methodist University. Lorenzo, Department of English, University of California Riverside). 2016. January 21, 2018. ISBN 978-1-137-52140-8 ISBN 978-1-137-52141-5. DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-52141-5///BS

As shown here, contagious entities (which can be broadly defined as parasitic, including viruses) are seen as “less-than-living” or “non-living” because they are deemed not fully independent, complete, self-contained, productive, and hence governable. Accordingly, the **humans likened to such contagious entities in this paradigm are also regarded as less productive**, less useful, **less manageable, less human, and thus less living.** Dubbed as **microbial foes, bodies that evade** the biopolitical principle of **political obedience and economic productivity are identified, traced, contained, eliminated** if necessary, and thus managed. In his analysis of parasite as a political concept, Ander M. Gullestad (2011) points to Ayn Rand’s use of the parasite metaphor in her speech on February 9, 1961, in which she argued that “only rational, productive, independent men in a rational, productive, free society” are of value, while those who receive social benefits are “parasites, moochers, looters, brutes and thugs” who have “no value to a human being” and “[treat a society] as a sacrificial animal and penalizes him for his virtues in order to reward them for their vices” (emphasis original). In Rand’s view, an altruistic society is one that costs independent men’s lives to save interdependent beings. However, as David Harvey (2007) reveals, neoliberalization (of which Rand provided a philosophical justification) has relied on invasive state interventions for its maintenance and expansion and has never been able to fulfill its own ideology of independent, laissez-faire capitalism in reality. This hierarchical, self-contained view of the “human” and “life” is the fundamental problem in contagion discourses, as it directly influences who will **survive and who will be deemed as the threat to the survival of humanity**. Once certain beings are categorized as less-than-human, less-than-living, or “moochers,” it is not difficult to imagine how those beings would be treated by supposedly fully human beings in times of crisis. This is especially problematic because it is precisely the mechanism by which people who are at the bottom of the hierarchy of “humanness” are treated as pathogens, threatening the existence and progress of the human species. Priscilla Wald (2007) shows how the dominant “outbreak narrative” typically represents infectious microbes as monstrous invaders coming from elsewhere. In such narratives, communicable diseases almost always escape and leak from an otherized space, whether it be a “primordial” forest in Africa or a duck farm in Asia where humans live too close to the animals, to a perfectly sanitized “first-world” country, “threatening to transform a contemporary ‘us’ into a primitive ‘them’” (p. 45). As Cindy Patton (2002) painstakingly shows, **such rhetoric** and stock narratives, however, **never remain in pure figures of language, but hold concrete effects in biological, social, economic, and political arenas.** Driven by the myth of the surviving fittest in perpetual danger of others, people’s worth is often measured by their distance from what the human is supposedly not: animal, colored, women, foreign, primitive, queer, pervert, or sick. Such otherized bodies are treated as colonies, always “presumed to be infectious” and thus constantly posing danger to the colonizer, “presumed open to infection” (p. 39). Humanness, not only life, is also colonially imagined as an independent, self-contained unit that is both precariously defined and endangered by its others. Yet, as Le Corbusier’s “cellular” blocks have shown, the assumed independence of individual units in a system is most likely based on concealed dependence on the neglected parts of the system. Hierarchical distinction and segregation between different units promise efficiency and sanitization at the expense of social and moral contact. Whether the spatial separation is among different social functions or degrees of pollution, it has implications beyond its physical iterations. Creating physical and social distance is the first step in creating psychological distance between the self and the other. The segregation of the “less-than-human” bodies and the division of labor render oppression on those bodies invisible and concealed, which naturalizes and perpetuates such oppression further. Zygmunt Bauman (1989) remarks that morality is “inextricably tied to human proximity,” as physical distance creates moral indifference to and negligence of the consequences of our actions and social structure (pp. 192–3). In his view, the Holocaust concentration camps were the epitome of the dark side of modern space organization based on separation and efficiency. In a modern, rationalized society, human actions can have greater effects via technological advancement, whereas the consequences of the actions become invisible and remote (p. 193). Bauman rightly reckons modern weapons the “most obvious example of the technique which places the victims out of sight, and hence renders them inaccessible to moral assessment” (p. 193). In the era of drone wars, the technology of killing can distance drone operators from the consequences of their actions thousand miles away, estimating “collateral damage” only with some remote footage on their computer screens with a strange resemblance to playing role-playing video games. Strangely, this technology of death is now seen as a strategy of life. As modern regimes began to assume the role of the “managers of life and survival,” exercising power at “the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population,” wars became “waged on behalf of the existence of everyone [and] entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital” (Foucault 1990 , p. 137). Similar to the countless wars declared to protect the lives of “us” at the expense of “them,” outbreaks of communicable diseases have also been active sites of struggle where the dominant hierarchy of life is both reproduced and contested. In such struggles, **the hierarchization of the “human” or the “living” has directly influenced the question of who should live or die under which conditions.**

#### No extinction from disease.

Barratt 17, PhD in Pure Mathematics, Lecturer in Mathematics at Oxford, Research Associate at the Future of Humanity Institute. (Owen Cotton-Barratt et al, “Existential Risk: Diplomacy and Governance”, pg. 9, <https://www.fhi.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Existential-Risks-2017-01-23.pdf>)

1.1.3 Engineered pandemics

For most of human history, natural pandemics have posed the greatest risk of mass global fatalities.37 However, there are some reasons to believe that natural pandemics are very unlikely to cause human extinction. Analysis of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list database has shown that of the 833 recorded plant and animal species extinctions known to have occurred since 1500, less than 4% (31 species) were ascribed to infectious disease.38 None of the mammals and amphibians on this list were globally dispersed, and other factors aside from infectious disease also contributed to their extinction. It therefore seems that our own species, which is very numerous, globally dispersed, and capable of a rational response to problems, is very unlikely to be killed off by a natural pandemic.

One underlying explanation for this is that highly lethal pathogens can kill their hosts before they have a chance to spread, so there is a selective pressure for pathogens not to be highly lethal. Therefore, pathogens are likely to co-evolve with their hosts rather than kill all possible hosts.39

### Advantage 2

#### Incarceration is the primary tool for antitrust enforcement in the U.S.

Buretta 22, Attorney with Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP , (John with John Terzaken, The Cartels and Leniency Review: USA, https://thelawreviews.co.uk/title/the-cartels-and-leniency-review/usa)

The statutory basis for the prohibition on cartel activity in the United States is the Sherman Antitrust Act, 15 USC Section 1, which states, in the pertinent part, that 'Every contract, combination, in the form of trust or otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce among the several States, or with foreign nations, is declared to be illegal'.2 Federal law, as well as most state statutes, provides for criminal and civil sanctions and applies to both corporations and individuals. Within the categories of conduct that violate Section 1, only some of them, including agreements to fix prices, rig bids or allocate markets, are regularly punished criminally. These three specific types of agreements are prosecuted criminally because they are regarded as particularly harmful to competition. As the language of Section 1 implies, a criminal offence under the Sherman Act requires an agreement between horizontal competitors. Most agreements between competitors that directly affect prices are unlawful and can be the basis for criminal prosecution. Agreements to control the outcome of a public or private bidding process or not to compete in a particular geographical or product market may also create criminal liability. Such agreements need not be explicit, as in the form of a written contract. An agreement can be demonstrated as long as there is a sufficient 'meeting of the minds' to conduct an anticompetitive course of action. Such an agreement may be proven by direct or circumstantial evidence. Under Section 1, a corporation may be fined up to US$100 million or twice the gain from the illegal conduct or twice the loss to the victims.3 The Antitrust Division of the US Department of Justice (the Antitrust Division or the Division), which is the principal government enforcer of the prohibition, increasingly seeks the latter penalty in its larger cases. A corporation convicted of cartel conduct may also be debarred from participation in federal contracts, potentially a crippling sanction in some industries. Individuals may be fined up to US$1 million and face prison sentences of up to 10 years.4 Average sentences in the past 10 years have been 18 months;5 the highest sentence yet imposed is 60 months.6 The Antitrust Division insists upon a prison term for every individual defendant, including any foreign national, who pleads guilty to a Section 1 violation.

#### Incarceration is an act of dehumanization

McLeod 15, Associate Professor, Georgetown University Law Center. (Allegra, Prison Abolition and Grounded Justice, <https://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2502&context=facpub>)

Violence and Dehumanization Prisons are places of intense brutality, violence, and dehumanization.70 In his seminal study of the New Jersey State Prison, The Society of Captives, sociologist Gresham M. Sykes carefully exposed how the fundamental structure of the modern U.S. prison degrades the inmate’s basic humanity and sense of selfworth.71 Caged or confined and stripped of his freedom, the prisoner is forced to submit to an existence without the ability to exercise the basic capacities that define personhood in a liberal society.72 The inmate’s movement is tightly controlled, sometimes by chains and shackles, and always by orders backed with the threat of force;73 his body is subject to invasive cavity searches on command;74 he is denied nearly all personal possessions; his routines of eating, sleeping, and bodily maintenance are minutely managed; he may communicate and interact with others only on limited terms strictly dictated by his jailers; and he is reduced to an identifying number, deprived of all that constitutes his individuality.75 Sykes’s account of “the pains of imprisonment”76 attends not only to the dehumanizing effects of this basic structure of imprisonment—which remains relatively unchanged from the New Jersey penitentiary of 1958 to the U.S. jails and prisons that abound today77—but also to its violent effects on the personhood of the prisoner: [H]owever painful these frustrations or deprivations may be in the immediate terms of thwarted goals, discomfort, boredom, and loneliness, they carry a more profound hurt as a set of threats or attacks which are directed against the very foundations of the prisoner’s being. The individual’s picture of himself as a person of value . . . begins to waver and grow dim.78

#### Dehumanization weigh like nuclear war, environmental destruction and genocide – makes them all inevitable.

Berube 97   
(David, Comm@South Carolina, Nanotechnology Magazine, "Nanotechnological Prolongevity: The Down Side," June/July<http://www.cla.sc.edu/ENGL/faculty/berube/prolong.htm>, posted on <http://www.inkwater.com/net-benefits/printthread.php?s=17417e75c3a3fbf37a1f5c11956b4f1bandthreadid=1987andperpage=30andpagenumber=2>)

Assuming we are able to predict who or what are optimized humans, this entire resultant worldview smacks of eugenics and Nazi racial science. This would involve valuing people as means. Moreover, there would always be a superhuman more super than the current ones, humans would never be able to escape their treatment as means to an always further and distant end. This means-ends dispute is at the core of Montagu and Matson's treatise on the dehumanization of humanity. They warn: "its destructive toll is already greater than that of any war, plague, famine, or natural calamity on record -- and its potential danger to the quality of life and the fabric of civilized society is beyond calculation. For that reason this sickness of the soul might well be called the Fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse.... Behind the genocide of the holocaust lay a dehumanized thought; beneath the menticide of deviants and dissidents... in the cuckoo's next of America, lies a dehumanized image of man... (Montagu & Matson, 1983, p. xi-xii). While it may never be possible to quantify the impact dehumanizing ethics may have had on humanity, it is safe to conclude the foundations of humanness offer great opportunities which would be foregone. When we calculate the actual losses and the virtual benefits, we approach a nearly inestimable value greater than any tools which we can currently use to measure it. Dehumanization is nuclear war, environmental apocalypse, and international genocide. When people become things, they become dispensable. When people are dispensable, any and every atrocity can be justified. Once justified, they seem to be inevitable for every epoch has evil and dehumanization is evil's most powerful weapon.

# 2NC

#### 1---Global inequality is increasing---structural adjustment policies and net outflows have reversed progress and stagnated growth.

Hickel et al. 18, Jason Hickel: Anthropologist, author, and fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He serves on the Labour Party Task Force on International Development and works as Policy Director for The Rules collective. Nima Shirazi: Editor at Muftah, a digital foreign affairs magazine, and co-host of the media criticism podcast, Citations Needed. Adam Johnson: Host, The Appeal podcast. Media analyst at FAIR.org and host of the Citations Needed podcast (November 28th, “Episode 58: The Neoliberal Optimism Industry,” *Citations Needed*, https://citationsneeded.medium.com/episode-58-the-neoliberal-optimism-industry-and-development-shaming-the-global-south-cf399e88510e, Accessed 09-25-2021)

Nima: Can you dig a little deeper into, based on your work Jason, how the terms “development” and “growth” are really, not only misunderstood, but often deliberately misrepresented both in a political context and also throughout the media, like who do these misperceptions benefit?

Jason Hickel: So I think that there’s a narrative out there that poor countries are basically effectively catching up to rich countries, right? Because we know that, there’s China and they’re becoming a powerful player in the world stage and so on. And we’re seeing people lift out of poverty in China and India also, you know, a booming tech industry and whatnot. So clearly, you know, the gap between the rich and the poor on the global stage is shrinking. This is the dominant narrative we have. And unfortunately it’s simply not true. There are, in fact, was a period when that gap was shrinking, in the immediate postcolonial decades in the 1960s and the 1970s when newly independent governments were rolling out progressive economic reforms using Keynesian policy, protecting their economies with tariffs, using subsidies to promote infant industry developments, etcetera, etcetera. But, you know, and using land reform and labor laws to improve wages and so on. But these policies turned out to be a threat to Global North investors. Which, during the colonial years had enjoyed really easy access to cheap labor and raw materials and so on in those countries. And that was being cut off. And so they responded during the 1980s and 1990s by rolling back those progressive policies through structural adjustments imposed by the World Bank and the IMF, right? Which basically forced Global South countries to privatize public assets, to get rid of tariff barriers and subsidies, to cut spending on education and healthcare. Like all of the crucial elements necessary for real developments were basically denied to Global South countries. The vast majority of them at least. So that’s not true of East Asia and in China, and as a consequence, that region of the world did remarkably well, but what we see in the rest of the world is that the per capita income gap between the Global North and the Global South has tripled since 1960 in real terms and shows no sign of slowing down. I mean, there’s basically been, on per capita level, virtually stagnation in the Global South since the 1980s. And that’s, you know, that’s really not part of our narrative and that’s something that is a structural consequence of the way that the economy was organized during those decades.

Nima: Yeah. I think that actually leads into something that I’ve been so fascinated about while reading your work, which is that the conception that wealthy countries, countries that have historically colonized most of the world are now in a position to give back, right? To, to help out through aid or debt relief or whatever poorer countries in the Global South. So can you tell us how that view of things, that colonialism is a thing of the past that there’s no more extraction or exploitation, but now rather resources are flowing North to South from rich to poor, can you tell us how that might not exactly be true?

Jason Hickel: The dominant narrative development is that rich countries became rich kind of by their own hard work, their good institutions, their scientific inventions and so on, and poor countries are poor and remain poor because they have whatever bad governance or corruption, or maybe they’re lazy or have backwards cultural values in the more racist sense of the narrative, etcetera. But the idea is that rich countries, because they have this surplus, they’re able to sort of reach across the divide and give generously of their surplus to help poor countries up the development ladder. What I argue is that this narrative gets virtually everything about the story wrong, right? First of all, the determinants of success and failure in various countries around the world can’t be entirely attributed to only internal conditions, right? We live in a global economic system. We have done since at least the past 500 years since the onset of colonialism, and so we have to think about how the rules of that economy, of that global economic system affect the outcomes that we see around the world, right? You know, of course, that’s very easy to see during the colonial period, during the structural adjustment period in the 1980s and 1990s as well. And we can see it very clearly now in the way that capital flows around the world, right? And so if we look at total flows of money around the world right now, between the Global North and the Global South, we see something quite remarkable. This is using 2012 data, which is the last data that we have on this. But in 2012, developing countries received a total of $2 trillion US dollars in total inflows from the Global North, right? That includes aid, foreign investments, loans, remittances, everything, every bit of money, which is a lot, but in the same year, some $5 trillion flowed the other direction from South to North. So in that year there were $3 trillion in net outflows from South to North, so the South is in fact a net creditor to the North rather than the other way around. So we might be able to say that it’s, in fact, the Global South that’s developing the North rather than the North developing the South. And that really does flip the aid narrative on its head. And if we compare those outflows to aid, what we see is that for every dollar of aid that the South receives from the North, they lose $24 in net outflows, which is a tremendous reversal of the way we normally think about the situation. There’s lots of ways we can see this kind of reverse flow happening that are important to pay attention to. So one of course is the most obvious one, which is, you know, interest payments on exportable debts, which in and of itself outstrips the global aid budget, you know, almost twice over. But then we also have profit repatriation for multinational companies from host countries back to where they’re listed, which is about $500 billion per year. Sometimes even outstrips foreign direct investment flows themselves, but probably the biggest single cause of this in that outflow situation is illicit financial flows, which are largely through, you know, for the sake of tax evasion by multinational companies who are using basically tax havens and secrecy jurisdictions which are almost entirely in Global North countries controlled by Global North governments in order to secret money out of developing countries into Western bank accounts.

#### 2---Poverty is increasing because of capitalism---they put a happy face on colonialism.

Hickel 19, An academic at the University of London and a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (Jason, January 29th, “Bill Gates says poverty is decreasing. He couldn’t be more wrong,” *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/29/bill-gates-davos-global-poverty-infographic-neoliberal>, Accessed 07-12-2021)

There are a number of problems with this graph, though. First of all, real data on poverty has only been collected since 1981. Anything before that is extremely sketchy, and to go back as far as 1820 is meaningless. Roser draws on a dataset that was never intended to describe poverty, but rather inequality in the distribution of world GDP – and that for only a limited range of countries. There is no actual research to bolster the claims about long-term poverty. It’s not science; it’s social media.

What Roser’s numbers actually reveal is that the world went from a situation where most of humanity had no need of money at all to one where today most of humanity struggles to survive on extremely small amounts of money. The graph casts this as a decline in poverty, but in reality what was going on was a process of dispossession that bulldozed people into the capitalist labour system, during the enclosure movements in Europe and the colonisation of the global south.

Prior to colonisation, most people lived in subsistence economies where they enjoyed access to abundant commons – land, water, forests, livestock and robust systems of sharing and reciprocity. They had little if any money, but then they didn’t need it in order to live well – so it makes little sense to claim that they were poor. This way of life was violently destroyed by colonisers who forced people off the land and into European-owned mines, factories and plantations, where they were paid paltry wages for work they never wanted to do in the first place.

In other words, Roser’s graph illustrates a story of coerced proletarianisation. It is not at all clear that this represents an improvement in people’s lives, as in most cases we know that the new income people earned from wages didn’t come anywhere close to compensating for their loss of land and resources, which were of course gobbled up by colonisers. Gates’s favourite infographic takes the violence of colonisation and repackages it as a happy story of progress.

But that’s not all that’s wrong here. The trend that the graph depicts is based on a poverty line of $1.90 (£1.44) per day, which is the equivalent of what $1.90 could buy in the US in 2011. It’s obscenely low by any standard, and we now have piles of evidence that people living just above this line have terrible levels of malnutrition and mortality. Earning $2 per day doesn’t mean that you’re somehow suddenly free of extreme poverty. Not by a long shot.

Scholars have been calling for a more reasonable poverty line for many years. Most agree that people need a minimum of about $7.40 per day to achieve basic nutrition and normal human life expectancy, plus a half-decent chance of seeing their kids survive their fifth birthday. And many scholars, including Harvard economist Lant Pritchett, insist that the poverty line should be set even higher, at $10 to $15 per day.

So what happens if we measure global poverty at the low end of this more realistic spectrum – $7.40 per day, to be extra conservative? Well, we see that the number of people living under this line has increased dramatically since measurements began in 1981, reaching some 4.2 billion people today. Suddenly the happy Davos narrative melts away.

Moreover, the few gains that have been made have virtually all happened in one place: China. It is disingenuous, then, for the likes of Gates and Pinker to claim these gains as victories for Washington-consensus neoliberalism. Take China out of the equation, and the numbers look even worse. Over the four decades since 1981, not only has the number of people in poverty gone up, the proportion of people in poverty has remained stagnant at about 60%. It would be difficult to overstate the suffering that these numbers represent.

This is a ringing indictment of our global economic system, which is failing the vast majority of humanity. Our world is richer than ever before, but virtually all of it is being captured by a small elite. Only 5% of all new income from global growth trickles down to the poorest 60% – and yet they are the people who produce most of the food and goods that the world consumes, toiling away in those factories, plantations and mines to which they were condemned 200 years ago. It is madness – and no amount of mansplaining from billionaires will be adequate to justify it.

#### Transition solves.

Kallis et al. 20, ICREA Professor at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Autonomous University of Barcelona, With: Susan Paulson, Giacomo D’Alisa, Federico Demaria (Giorgios, “The case for degrowth in a time of pandemic,” *openDemocracy*, 5/14/2020, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/case-degrowth-time-pandemic/>)

The pandemic has lain bare the fragility of existing economic systems. Wealthy nations have more than enough resources to cover public health and basic needs during a crisis, and could weather declines in non-essential parts of the economy by reallocating work and resources to essential ones. Yet the way current economic systems are organized around constant circulation, any decline in market activity threatens systemic collapse, provoking generalized unemployment and impoverishment. It doesn’t have to be this way. To be more resilient to crises – pandemic, climatic, financial, or political – we need to build systems capable of scaling back production in ways that do not cause loss of livelihood or life. We make the case for degrowth. Conservative outlets such as [Forbes](https://www.forbes.com/sites/wlf/2020/04/29/still-against-degrowth/), the [Financial Times](https://www.ft.com/content/0b171892-8afd-11ea-9dcb-fe6871f4145a), or the [Spectator](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-coronavirus-crisis-reveals-the-misery-of-degrowth-), have been pronouncing that the coronavirus crisis reveals “the misery of degrowth”. But what is happening during the pandemic [is not degrowth](https://twitter.com/DegrowthMemes/status/1255783275987177473). Degrowth is a project of living meaningfully, enjoying simple pleasures, commoning, sharing and relating more with others, and working less, in more equal societies. The goal of degrowth is to purposefully slow things down in order to minimize harm to humans and earth systems and to reduce exploitation. The current situation is terrible, not because carbon emissions are declining, which is good, but because many lives are lost; it is terrible not because GDPs are going down, to which we are indifferent, but because processes in place to protect livelihoods when growth falters are grossly insufficient and unjust. We would like to see societies become slower by design, not disaster. This pandemic is a growth-induced disaster, harbinger of more to come. Drives for growth have accelerated global flows of material and money, paving the way for lightning-fast circulation of bodies and diseases. The economic policies and social arrangements proposed by degrowth offer ways to make such situations more liveable and just, to emerge stronger and better post-crisis, and to reorient practices and politics towards care and community solidarity. The end of growth will not necessarily involve a smooth transition. It may very well be unplanned, unwilled, and messy, in conditions not of our own choosing. Conditions like the ones we are living through now. History often evolves with punctuations; periods of seeming paralysis can reach a tipping point, when unexpected events open new possibilities and violently close others. The COVID-19 pandemic is such an event. Suddenly, things take radical new directions, and the unthinkable becomes thinkable, for better or for worse. Severe economic depression led to Roosevelt’s New Deal, and also to Hitler’s Third Reich. What are the possibilities and dangers now? Amid this pandemic, many scientific, political, and moral authorities are communicating the message that caring for people’s health and wellbeing should come before profit, and that is great. A resurgence of a care ethic that we advocate in our forthcoming book [The Case for Degrowth](https://politybooks.com/bookdetail/?isbn=9781509535620) is evident in the willingness of people to stay home to protect their elders, and in the spirit of duty and sacrifice among care and health workers. Of course, many stay home also because they fear the virus and worry about themselves, or to avoid police fines. And many care workers go to work because they must earn a living. Acting collectively against crises, pandemic, or climate change requires such combinations of sacrifice and solidarity, self and collective interest, government interventions and people’s participation. Deep inequalities are coming into play in new ways. Residents of some countries are suffering different, and sometimes more severe, hardships than those of others, as are those who are deprived of full citizenship in prisons, migrant labor camps, and refugee settlements. Within each country, actors differentiated by gender, racial, socioeconomic, and occupational positions suffer different vulnerabilities in the face of the disease, and of the economic downturns that follow. Data from countries around the world show that [COVID tends to be much more severe and deadly in men](https://www.livescience.com/why-covid-19-more-severe-men.html) than in women. US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show a disproportionate burden of illness and death among [racial and ethnic minority groups](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html). Nurses, health aids, and caretakers, positions in which women prevail, are especially vulnerable to infection. As are millions of men working in essential jobs including sanitation, trucking, taxi-driving, and meat packing. These jobs, in very large majority performed by men, were already among the most dangerous occupations before adding exposure to coronavirus. While some have the luxury of sheltering at home, others must choose between unemployment without an adequate safety net and working at jobs that expose them to the coronavirus. Yet, unless whole populations are protected, not even the wealthiest are fully safe from contagion. In this crisis, like others before, [people have mobilized and self-organized](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/mar/31/virus-neighbours-covid-19) where businesses and governments have failed to provide for their needs – from mutual aid groups delivering food and medicines for elders, to groups of doctors, engineers, and hackers collaborating to 3-D print components for oxygen ventilators, to students babysitting the children of doctors and nurses. The proliferation of caring and commoning endeavors, which form the bedrock of the degrowth societies we envision, are all the more commendable given the contagious nature of the virus. After the pandemic is over, and the difficult path of economic reconstruction starts, this resurgent dynamism of commoning and care will be vital. Positive impulses among individuals and grassroots networks are necessary but not sufficient for sustained change. We need governments to secure healthcare for all, protect the environment, and provide economic safety nets. [The degrowth-supporting policies](https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/can-we-prosper-without-growth-10-policy-proposals/) we advocate were necessary before the pandemic, and are more so during and after: a Green New Deal and public investment program, work-sharing, a basic care income, universal public services, and support for community economies. So is the reorganization of public finance through measures including carbon fees, caps on wealth and high incomes, taxes on natural resource use, and pollution. Whereas degrowth debates have traditionally focused on demobilizing resource-intensive and ecologically damaging aspects of current economies, [pandemic responses](https://tribunemag.co.uk/2020/03/the-anti-wartime-economy) deal with demobilizing those aspects not immediately essential for sustaining life. We coincide in facing the fundamental challenge of managing political economies without growth during and after the pandemic: how to demobilize parts of the capitalist economy while securing the provisioning of basic goods and services, experimenting with resource-light ways of enjoying ourselves, and finding collective meanings in life. Radical proposals are already being considered and selectively adopted across the political spectrum as they provide concrete solutions amid the pandemic. Companies and governments have reduced working hours and implemented work-sharing; different forms of basic income are being debated; financial measures have been instituted to subsidize workers in the quarantine period and after businesses close; an international campaign for [care income](https://globalwomenstrike.net/) has been launched; governments have engaged the productive apparatus to secure vital supplies and services; and moratoriums are being considered or imposed on rent, mortgage, and debt payments. There is growing understanding that vast government spending will be required. The world will change after the pandemic, and there will be struggles over which paths to take. People will have to fight to direct change toward more equitable and resilient societies that have gentler impacts on humans and natural environments. Powerful actors will try to reconstitute status quo arrangements, and to shift costs to those with less power. It takes organizing and a confluence of alliances and circumstances to ensure that it won’t be the environment and the workers who pay the bill, but those who profited most from the growth that preceded this disaster. [Degrowth is not forced deprivation](https://vocabulary.degrowth.org/), but an aspiration to secure enough for everyone to live with dignity and without fear; to experience friendship, love, and health; to be able to give and receive care; to enjoy leisure and nature, and to legitimize a life that it is also an experience of interdependence and vulnerability. This goal will not be met by subsidizing fossil fuel companies, airlines, cruise ships, hotels, and tourism mega-businesses. Instead, states need to finance Green New Deals and rebuild their health and care infrastructures, creating jobs in a just transition to economies that are less environmentally damaging. As oil prices fall, fossil fuels should be taxed heavily, raising funds to support green and social investments, and to provide tax breaks and dividends to working people. Rather than using public money to bail out corporations and banks, we urge the establishment of a [basic care income](https://comune-info.net/reddito-di-cura/) that will help people and communities to reconstruct their lives and livelihoods. These fundamental questions related to the strategies for socio-ecological transformation will be at the center of the [international Vienna degrowth conference](https://www.degrowthvienna2020.org/en/landing-page/) taking place as an online event in late May 2020. A good starting point are the principles for the recovery of the economy and the basis of creating a just society contained in the open letter [‘Degrowth: New Roots for the Economy’](https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/degrowth-new-roots-economy/). This crisis arguably opens up more dangers than it does possibilities. We worry about the politics of fear that the coronavirus pandemic engenders, the intensification of surveillance and control of peoples’ movements, xenophobia and blame of others, as well as home isolation that curbs commoning and political organizing. Once measures such as curfews, quarantines, rule-by-decree, border controls, or election postponements are taken, they can easily become part of the arsenal of political possibility, opening dystopian horizons. To counter these risks, degrowth motivates and guides us to re-found societies on the commons of mutual aid and care, orienting collective pursuits away from growth and toward wellbeing and equity. These are not just lofty aspirations; in our forthcoming book [The Case for Degrowth](https://politybooks.com/bookdetail/?isbn=9781509535620) we identify everyday practices and concrete policies to start building the world we want today, together with political strategies to support synergy among these efforts in the construction of equitable and low-impact societies. This book is unlike any other on degrowth, in that it is the first to try to address the hard question of ‘how to’ in the current political conjuncture. Before the pandemic, we had to work hard to convince people of the case for degrowth. Our job may be somewhat easier now amid such tangible evidence that the current system is crumbling under its own weight. As we embark on the second major global economic crisis in a dozen years, perhaps some of us will be more willing to question the wisdom of producing and consuming more and more, just to keep the system going. The time is ripe for us to refocus on what really matters: not GDP, but the health and wellbeing of our people and our planet.

# 1NR

#### Constructing foreign countries as unsafe for “Us,” the Westerners, due to disease allowed for colonization by Western medicine.

Bankoff 01 (Gregory, Professor of Modern History at the University of Hull, “Rendering the World Unsafe: 'Vulnerability' as Western Discourse”, <http://www.geo.mtu.edu/volcanoes/06upgrade/Social-KateG/Attachments%20Used/Vulnerability.WesternDiscourse.pdf>)

The process by which large areas of the globe were rendered unsafe to Europeans pre­dates the nineteenth century but a systematically constructed paradigm, based on consistent argument and substantiated by empirical investigation that depicts certain areas of the world as particularly deleterious to human health, had to await the scientific advances of the new century. David Arnold describes how the growth of a branch of Western medicine that specialized in the pathology of 'warm climates' was a conspicuous element in the process of European contact and colonization from the earliest years of overseas exploration. More than a mere chronology of scientific discovery that drew attention to the medicinal characteristics of new plants, therapeutic practices and esoteric knowledge, he refers to the manner in which Western medicine came to demarcate and define parts of world where these 'warm climate' diseases were prevalent (Arnold, 1996: 5-6). Here it is the role of the medical practitioner as colonial rather than simply medical expert, where his long-term attitudes to distinctive indigenous societies and distant geographical environments proved instrumental in how such lands came to be conceptualized.

**Their disease discourse links foreignness with diseases and facilitates a racist ends-based othering of the global south – reject this racist representation.**

**Lewis 7** (Bradley, MD, PhD, is Assistant Professor at New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study with affiliated appointments in the Department of Psychiatry and the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis, “The New Global Health Movement: Rx for the World?” *New Literary History*, Volume 38, Number 3, Summer 2007, pp. 459-477, Muse)

Of course, Rx was made for popular audiences in the U.S. and so in its populist format, some may argue, it is more likely to reproduce these kinds of stereotypes than other more professional or expert discourses. This does not mean, however, that other medical discourses are devoid of these problematic “othering” stereotypes. All discourses deployed by the global health movement—whether they are political statements or funding agendas or the finite descriptions of disease behaviors in scientific papers—are mediated by the culture, society, and politics in which they are produced. Intentionally or not, they reproduce and relocate cultural, societal, and political ideas and constructions, including problematic constructions of the contagious foreign “other.”¶ The association of “foreignness” with contagion has long been established in scientific discourses. As Cindy Patton observes, the conflation of foreigners and “immigrants” with germs has been apparent since the emergence of “germ theory” in the late 1800s: a theory which was compounded by the emergence of immunology and virology in the twentieth century.36 This theory, and its more modern incarnations, represents germs—or, more belatedly, viruses—as “foreign,” “dangerous,” “contagious,” and a threat to the “pristine, clean, uninvaded, untouched” body; a body which itself is commonly figured as “the ‘virgin’ land of the new world.”37¶ Scientific discourses associated with HIV/AIDS—such as immunology and epidemiology—offer recent examples of the way these constructions continue to be reproduced. Immunologic discourses frequently deploy a language of “foreignness and invasion” in their accounts of HIV infection.38 Emily Martin cites one popular textbook that describes the process of “foreign antigen recognition” as the “human body’s police force” being “programmed to distinguish between bona fide residents and illegal aliens.”39 Epidemiological discourses on HIV/AIDS have simi- larly reinvigorated these stereotypes when they have designated entire populations—such as Haitians or sub-Saharan Africans—as “risk groups.” The near consensus among AIDS immunologists and epidemiologists that Africa is the primary site of HIV also powerfully reinstalls the link between foreignness and contagion.¶ Whether latent or manifest, such exclusionary “othering” and racist stereotypes keep being reinstated, even by the world health advocates (such as the makers of Rx) and scientists who are concerned with saving the globe against disease and ill health. If the global health movement does not take this into account it may well, in McFadden’s words, reproduce the very relations of exploitation, supremacy, and servitude underlying the social and survival crises that currently face our world.

#### Drug prices aren’t responsible for high healthcare spending

Lieberman 20, \*Steve M. Lieberman, MA, MPhil, non-resident fellow in economic studies at the Center for Health Policy, Schaeffer Initiative for Innovation in Health Policy, Brookings Institution. \*\*Paul B. Ginsburg, PhD, Chair in Health Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution and directs the USC-Brookings Schaeffer Initiative for Health Policy. He is also professor of health policy at USC and the director of public policy at the USC Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics. \*\*\*Kavita K. Patel, MD, MSHS, a nonresident fellow at the Brookings Institution and a primary care physician. (11-25-2020, "Balancing Lower U.S. Prescription Drug Prices And Innovation – Part 2", *Health Affairs*, https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/hblog20201123.114048/full/)

Despite concerns that deep price cuts would harm innovation, participants also acknowledged the imperative to slow U.S. spending growth, not just for drugs but for health care overall, as the nation spent almost 18 percent of gross domestic product on health care in 2018. Spending on retail prescription drugs (at 11 percent of personal health care spending in 2018) is still a relatively small slice of overall U.S. health care spending, and multiple participants argued that squeezing drug prices in isolation will do little to solve the overall cost and quality problems in U.S. health care. “Nobody tells you about the lousy [U.S. health care] delivery. We're down around the Dominican Republic in terms of outcomes…. It's really disastrous in terms of cost,” a participant said.

#### Fines enable police to surgically target defendants of color, justify incarceration, and fund systems of predatory extraction

Clair 22, \*Matthew Clair, PhD, Assistant Professor of Sociology and (by courtesy) Law @ Stanford. \*\*Amanda Woog, JD, Executive Director @ the Texas Fair Defense Project. (Forthcoming 2022, Uploaded 2-13-2021, “Courts and the Abolition Movement”, *California Law Review*, Vol. 110, No. 1, <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3785373>)

Part C: Predation and Profit

In addition to controlling marginalized groups, criminal courts also impose sanctions that exploit and profit from these very groups.85 The for-profit bail industry and legal financial obligations (such as court fines and fees) are state-sanctioned forms of predatory extraction that uniquely target poor and marginalized communities. Social scientific research confirms how the criminal courts profit from poor communities of color in unconstitutional and unjust ways.

Criminal courts impose legal financial obligations (LFOs) on defendants that provide revenue to local and state governments and profits to businesses: “[F]ines and fees can be seen not just as burdens imposed as sanctions but as elements of a variegated palette of extractive relations and practices associated with the criminal justice system […] convert[ing] the needs, vulnerabilities, and aspirations of subjugated populations into revenue opportunities for state and market actors.”86 LFOs include “fines, fees, surcharges, [and] restitution” that courts directly impose as punishment for an offense (such as a traffic violation), restoration of an alleged harm or violation (such as payment to victims), or requested payment for services provided by the court (such as fees for court-appointed legal representation).87 LFOs disproportionately burden communities of color, given racialized police practices, such as traffic stops and arrests,88 as well as court practices that uniquely burden the poor, such as late fees, additional fees for entering a payment plan, and warrants issued for nonpayment.89 In theory low-income people have constitutional protections to keep courts from enforcing obligations that a person cannot afford; in reality judges rarely waive LFO debt, and it is common practice for judges to issue warrants and keep people in jail because they are unable to pay.90

When a person cannot pay their LFOs, courts use the punitive tools of the state, such as warrants and incarceration, to coerce payment or punish people for nonpayment, routinely violating the constitutional rights of poor people charged with crimes. Despite the Supreme Court having long held that “the State … may not … imprison a person solely because he lacked the resources to pay [a fine or restitution],”91 courts across the country, and every day, jail people if they cannot pay a traffic ticket or other court fine or fee, 92 forcing families to skip rent or meals to come up with payment, or have their loved one languish in jail. A person who cannot pay might find an attorney to represent them free of cost, but this is rare. Most courts do not provide lawyers to people charged with “fine-only” crimes even if the court jails the person for not paying.93

State and local governments, including court systems, have used LFOs to boost revenue. In the wake of the police killing of Michael Brown in 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri, and the subsequent protests and unrest, the Department of Justice (DOJ) investigated the city’s courts and police. The DOJ investigation concluded that “Ferguson’s law enforcement practices are shaped by the City’s focus on revenue rather than by public safety needs.”94 City officials explicitly asked police to increase ticket enforcement to make up for tax shortfalls. Moreover, the city’s municipal court routinely issued arrest warrants for failures to pay fines in relation to minor offenses, such as traffic violations. These practices overwhelmingly targeted Black residents; the DOJ reported, “African Americans are 68% less likely than others to have their cases dismissed by the court, and are more likely to have their cases last longer and result in more required court encounters. African Americans are at least 50% more likely to have their cases lead to an arrest warrant, and accounted for 92% of cases in which an arrest warrant was issued by the Ferguson Municipal Court in 2013.” A separate report by Arch City Defenders found that in one year, the Ferguson municipal courts disposed of three warrants per resident.95 People were routinely jailed for failing to pay fines and fees. In New Orleans, fines and fees issued and enforced by courts in turn feed and prop up the courts, funding 99% of the traffic court budget.96 These exploitative and punitive practices targeted these cities’ Black residents. 97 They are also hardly unique to these jurisdictions: in 2018, Texas courts issued warrants for unresolved Class C misdemeanors, mostly traffic tickets, and more than 500,000 people used jail time to resolve their tickets.98