# 1NC

## OFF

### \*\*\*1NC – T – Private Sector

#### First off is T-Private Sector

#### “The” refers to the entire group as a whole

Kentucky Supreme Court 3 (Opinion in Kotila v. Com., 114 SW 3d 226 - Ky: Supreme Court 2003. Google scholar caselaw, date accessed 9/26/21)

Whether a conviction under this statute requires possession of all (as opposed to any) of the chemicals or equipment necessary to manufacture methamphetamine under some manufacturing process is a matter of statutory construction. First, we examine the language of the statute, itself. United States v. Health Possibilities, P.S.C., 207 F.3d 335, 338-39 (6th Cir.2000) ("The starting point in a statutory interpretation case is the language of the statute itself."). Obviously, the multiple manufacturing methods and the availability of a broad range of readily available chemicals and equipment necessary for each manufacturing process militates against itemizing within the statute all of the possible chemical and equipment combinations by which methamphetamine could be manufactured. Nevertheless, KRS 218A.1432(1)(b) does not read "[p]ossesses chemicals or equipment," or "[p]ossesses some of the chemicals or equipment," or "[p]ossesses any of the chemicals or equipment." It reads "[p]ossesses the chemicals or equipment for the manufacture of methamphetamine." The presence of the article "the" is significant because, grammatically speaking, possession of some but not all of the chemicals or equipment does not satisfy the statutory language. "The" is "[u]sed as a function word before a plural noun denoting a group to indicate reference to the group as a whole." Webster's Third New International Dictionary 2369 (1993).

In decisions spanning three different centuries, the appellate courts of this Commonwealth have found use of the word "the" to have a significant effect upon meaning. See Revenue Cabinet v. Hubbard, Ky., 37 S.W.3d 717, 719-20 (2000) ("[U]se of the definite article `the' indicates that the statute refers to the entire body and not to discrete parts or components ...."); Cardwell v. Haycraft, Ky., 268 S.W.2d 916, 918 (1954) (the trial court's contributory negligence instruction was erroneous in that it contained the definite article "the" before the words "proximate cause" and "such language indicates that `the sole' rather than `a contributing' cause was meant."); Schardein v. Harrison, 230 Ky. 1, 18 S.W.2d 316, 319 (1929) ("[I]f the makers of the Constitution had intended to qualify the word `office' [in Ky. Const. § 161] they would have inserted the definite article `the' before `office.'") (quotation omitted); Sheriff of Fayette v. Buckner, 11 Ky. (1 Litt.) 126, 128 (1822) (holding that legislative act referencing "the clerk of the court" intended a particular clerk of court referenced elsewhere in the legislation). For similar interpretations by other jurisdictions, see, e.g., State Farm Fire & Cas. Co. v. Old Republic Ins. Co., 466 Mich. 142, 644 N.W.2d 715, 718 (2002); Patricca v. Zoning Bd. of Adjustment, 527 Pa. 267, 590 A.2d 744, 751 (1991); McClanahan v. Woodward Constr. Co., 77 Wyo. 362, 316 P.2d 337, 341-42 (1957); Williams v. McComb, 38 N.C. (3 Ired. Eq.) 450 (1844) ("[G]rammatically speaking, `The,' is a definite article before nouns, which are specific or understood, and is used to limit or determine their extent."). We are directed by the General Assembly to construe our statutes "according to the common and approved usage of language." KRS 446.080(4). Following that directive, we construe "the chemicals or equipment" to mean all of the chemicals or all of the equipment necessary to manufacture methamphetamine.

#### Private sector means all non-governmental persons or entities, including non-profits

Senate Report 95 (Senate Report. 104-1, “UNFUNDED MANDATE REFORM ACT OF 1995,” <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/104th-congress/senate-report/1> , date accessed 9/10/21)

"Private sector" is defined to cover all persons or entities in the United States except for State, local or tribal governments. It includes individuals, partnerships, associations, corporations, and educational and nonprofit institutions.

#### A topical aff could change a universally-applied standard, like the CWS [Consumer Welfare Standard]

Phillips 18, commissioner on the Federal Trade Commission. (Noah J. November 1, 2018, Before the Federal Trade Commission, “Competition and Consumer Protection in the 21st Century,” <https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/public_events/1415284/ftc_hearings_session_5_transcript_11-1-18_0.pdf>)

Our second topic today is the consumer welfare standard. And I think most folks even out in the public know, this is the standard that we use across the board, mergers and conduct in courts and at agencies, to judge anticompetitive conduct. It is not only a standard that we in the U.S. apply, it is a standard that is used by competition agencies around the world. It is an economically-grounded standard, and it requires that there be harm to consumers for conduct to be condemned. Mere harm to competitors is considered insufficient. So let me repeat that again. There has to be harm to consumers, not just competitors. The reason that is so, the reason harm to competitors is considered insufficient is because sometimes a less-efficient firm losing sales or market share to a cheaper, more innovative or efficient rival, can be and often is consistent with vibrant competition and with outcomes that benefit consumers. Courts and agencies have embraced this standard for decades. Today, there are two very important discussions going on about the consumer welfare standard, and they are happening simultaneously. And I think it is important that we understand that there are two conversations going on. One is a continuing discussion about how we apply the standard, regarding whether enforcement is at the appropriate level, whether it is properly targeted. This is an introspective question on some level, in which scholars, economists, practitioners, and enforcers all ask ourselves, are we bringing the right kinds of cases? Are we using the right kinds of evidence? Should we be doing more or less in certain places? The antitrust bar, the business community, and others benefit from this ongoing and active analysis. The second discussion happening now, and the one on which today’s consumer welfare standard panels will focus, is whether the standard is itself the right metric we ought to use in antitrust enforcement and in antitrust law; some argue that enforcement under the consumer welfare standard has failed because of the law, and accordingly, that we should reform the law.

#### Violation: the aff applies exclusively to conduct in the defense sector

#### Vote neg:

#### FIRST---limits and ground---the number of potential subsets is infinite---any industry, product, single companies, individuals---undermines clash. Only big affs have link uniqueness.

#### SECOND----precision---our interp has intent to define, exclude and is in legislative context.

### 1NC – K – Beller

**The world is structured by the World Computer, the system of computational racial capitalism that uses algorithmic techniques to commodify life. Information is produced through real abstraction that codify race, gender, and sexuality – that information structures productive thought to create value for capitalism.**

**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

#### ICT development is dependent on anti-Black labor practices, material extraction, and environmental destruction.

Noble 16, assistant professor in the Department of Information Studies in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. (Safiya Umoja, 2016, “A Future for Intersectional Black Feminist Technology Studies”, *Socialist & Feminist Online*, Issue 13.3-14.1, <https://sfonline.barnard.edu/traversing-technologies/safiya-umoja-noble-a-future-for-intersectional-black-feminist-technology-studies/>, accessed 8/26/2021)

\*\*\*note – underlined portion of the card has mention to sexual assault, it will not be highlighted.

The New Scramble for Africa: An Intersectional Analysis of the IT Sector

In the new scramble for Africa’s resources, transnational information and communication industries are racing to control the minerals and land needed for their aggressive expansion and growth—an echo of earlier colonial pursuits by European nations looking to open new markets for cotton and revitalize depressed Western economies.[20] Neocolonial processes remain intact, particularly in places like the Democratic Republic of Congo. That nation’s history of Western plunder began a century and a half earlier, under the rule of King Leopold II of Belgium, when its rubber and ivory resources were extracted for the manufacture of tires and condoms destined for the sprawling automobile and leisure culture of the United States.[21]

Efforts to reclaim autonomy over the Congo and its natural-resource riches were led in part by the pan-Africanist Patrice Lumumba, whose opposition to Belgian and US control of the Congo resulted in his assassination in 1961. This was but one of many efforts to subdue and effectively put down Black liberation movements on the continent of Africa. The foreclosing of African anti-colonial movements by Western state powers was mirrored in the US government’s simultaneously enacted Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), which systematically assassinated and jailed Black feminist and Black Power liberation and civil rights movement activists in the US from the 1960s to the 1980s. Many of these same strategies are being re-enacted in this historical moment under the USA Patriot Act. The North American activists targeted by COINTELPRO were seeking liberation from interlocking oppressions, and developed relationships of solidarity and mutual aid with many pan-Africanist movements. Since the 1940s, pan-Africanists had been actively engaging in conferences and knowledge production designed to unify the interests of oppressed peoples directly affected by imperialist projects around the globe. This is an important intellectual lineage from which intersectional feminist critiques and activism emerged, their origins evident in the statement issued in 1945 from the Fifth Pan-African Conference:

We condemn the monopoly of capital and the rule of private wealth and industry for profit alone. We welcome economic democracy as the only real democracy. Therefore we shall complain, appeal and we will make the world listen to the facts of our condition. We will fight every way we can for freedom, democracy and social betterment.[22]

These intellectual linkages of critique and resistance demonstrate the connection between colonial projects of the past to the neocolonial, transnational, and neoliberal projects of the contemporary moment. Indeed, the neocolonial projects that fuel extraction industries (and their concomitant environmental and human catastrophes) in places like the Congo today persist in a historical trajectory of global capital’s thirst for expansion at the expense of Black life. Pádraig Carmody details the colonial quest for rubber and ivory in the Congo that led to the slaughter of more than ten million people; Carmody estimates that another three to five million were killed from 1983 to 2003 in wars over minerals and the control of coltan.[23] Coltan, short for columbite-tantalite, is a mineral, more potent than steel which is needed for computers and electronics to release electrical charges in small capacitors.[24] Contemporary global communications infrastructure, including the internet and the billions of devices, appliances, electronics, and “things” connected to it, could not exist without cheap access to coltan. Nevertheless, the bloody “conflict mineral” wars over its control—the rape, violence, and loss of human life involved—are largely invisible byproducts to digital tech users in the West.

In the networked economy of resources needed for global communications infrastructure, Black lives are engaged in some of the most treacherous labor essential to the growth and proliferation of the internet. Capital’s organization in multi-tiered global supply chains[25] obfuscates the direct relationships between Black labor, child labor, civil war, rape, and a smartphone, laptop, or iPad. Electronics companies such as Google, Apple, Dell, Intel, Sony, Nokia, and Ericsson are heavily invested in the computer and electronics hardware manufacturing industries and need raw minerals such as coltan to produce components such as tantalum capacitors for microprocessor chips. But this labor is outsourced, and thus conveniently out of sight and out of mind, going to low-bidders who provide the cheapest labor under favorable neoliberal economic policies. These practices are consistent with other forms of racialized and outsourced internet labor, such as commercial content moderation for large internet companies.[26]

In a transnational and neoliberal context, such practices are not limited to sites located geographically outside the West. David Pellow and Lisa Sun-Hee Park have written a comprehensive study of the underside of Silicon Valley—touted as a panacea of innovation, wealth, and opportunity, when this is the reality only for a choice few.[27] Just as in other areas of the globe, the technology and communications industries headquartered in Silicon Valley achieve their capital accumulation at the expense of overuse and abuse of the environment, gross poverty, and health degradation as they rely on an invisible labor force of immigrants and others living in the transnational, racialized margins:

Power, privilege and wealth are relational, which often means that one person’s riches and leisure time are derived from another’s impoverishment and hard labor; one’s socioeconomic or racial/ethnic group’s access to safe, high-salary jobs and clean neighborhoods is frequently linked to another group’s relegation to dangerous, low-wage occupations and environmentally contaminated communities. This is the essence of environmental racism and environmental injustice: ecological policies and practices are characterized by unfair treatment, discrimination, and oppression.[28]

Intersectional analysis makes these relational elements visible and allows us to trace the connections forged by inequities of wealth and power that bind local communities to others around the globe. Taking an intersectional approach to the internet and its infrastructure bridges the African diaspora, to help us see where and how oppressions are operationalized in similar ways and in the service of shared agents or shared motivations. The internet and its infrastructure are implicated in cases such as the recent public health crisis in Flint, Michigan, where state and corporate abuses, in the interest of multinational companies heavily invested in the technology sector, resulted in poisoned water supplies. The web is functioning as a site of online hyper-surveillance and trolling of Black activists engaged in the #BlackLivesMatter movement in the US and beyond. It is fundamental to Wall Street, where, through the mortgage crisis and Great Recession of 2008, information technology and the gamification of financial markets led to the largest decimation of Black wealth in the history of the United States. It is central to the oppressive working conditions facing Congolese laborers engaged in mineral extraction, in mineral wars, and in creating the greatest site of sexual violence in the world, according to the United Nations. It is evident in the toxic waste sites on the west coast of Africa, in Ghana, where e-waste is shipped in from the West and dumped, poisoning land, water, people, and environments.

These connections need to be made in order to understand the tradeoffs and true costs that come with the overemphasis, financially and in policy, on digital technologies and internet infrastructures. Communications scholar Robert Mejia has critiqued the multiple ways in which electronics and communications devices and infrastructures have material consequences with potent environmental impacts. He notes:

it is imperative that media and cultural studies scholars offer an account of how the 3.7 million gallons of water used per day by Intel in Hillsboro, Oregon, and the millions more used elsewhere, contribute to an ecology hospitable to infectious disease and its natural reservoirs… Knowing that an estimated 632,000 pounds of mercury were disposed of in United States’ landfills between 1997 and 2007, from just discarded personal computers alone, and that about 130 million cellphones are thrown away each year.[29]

The consequences of these ecological disasters are not equitably applied to everyone. The study of the materiality of the internet includes thinking through the specific contexts of who is affected by the social, environmental, economic, and policy arrangements of the digital.[30]

Intellectual investments in thinking of the internet and the digital as disembodied and ephemeral—as if they have no materiality—come at a great cost of erasure and denial. Jean-François Blanchette has written one of the most detailed critical accounts of the development of computing—including the ways in which information is processed, networks are developed and managed, and fiber infrastructure is built and maintained—in order to dislodge the idea that the internet and computing are immaterial or abstract.[31] An intersectional examination of the global information infrastructure underscores that it is predicated upon a complex, globalized, and fundamentally material economy of resource extraction and human labor, from Congolese labor to extract minerals, to Chinese labor working for poverty wages at Foxconn to make Apple’s iPhones, to the exclusion of African American labor from high-wage IT jobs in the United States, to Ghanaians sifting through electronic trash and toxic waste.

#### The new “cold war” battle for tech supremacy with China is a race manufactured to cover up US digital colonialism — only movements against capitalism can reign in US imperialism and prevent the aff’s impact.

Kwet 21, PhD in Sociology from Rhodes University and is a Visiting Fellow of the Information Society Project at Yale Law School (Michael, March 4th, “Digital colonialism: The evolution of US empire,” *The Transnational Institute*, <https://longreads.tni.org/digital-colonialism-the-evolution-of-us-empire>, Accessed 07-08-2021)

A Chinese or US digital empire?

In the West, there is a lot of chatter about “a new Cold War,” with the US and China battling it out for global technological supremacy. Yet, a close look at the tech ecosystem shows that US corporations are overwhelmingly dominant in the global economy.

China, after decades of high growth, generates around 17 percent of global GDP and is predicted to overtake the US by 2028, feeding into claims that American empire is on the decline (a narrative that was previously popular with the rise of Japan). When measuring the Chinese economy by purchasing power parity, it is already larger than the US. However, as economist Sean Starrs points out, this wrongly treats states as self-contained units, “interacting as billiard balls on a table.” In reality, Starrs contends, American economic dominance “hasn’t declined, it globalized.” This is particularly true when looking at Big Tech.

In the post-WWII period, corporate production was spread across transnational production networks. For instance, in the 1990s, companies like Apple began outsourcing electronics manufacturing from the US to China and Taiwan, exploiting sweatshop workers employed by companies like Foxconn. US tech transnationals often design the IP for, say, high-performance router switches (e.g. Cisco) while outsourcing manufacturing capacity to hardware manufacturers in the South.

Starrs profiled the world’s top 2,000 publicly traded companies, as ranked by Forbes Global 2000, and organized them according to 25 sectors, showing the dominance of US transnationals. As of 2013, they dominated in terms of profit shares in 18 of the top 25 sectors. In his forthcoming book American Power Globalized: Rethinking National Power in the Age of Globalization, Starrs shows that the US remains dominant. For IT Software & Services, US profit share is 76 percent versus China’s 10 percent; for Technology Hardware & Equipment, it is 63 percent for the US versus 6 percent for China, and for Electronics, it is 43 and 10 percent, respectively. Other countries, such as South Korea, Japan and Taiwan, often fare better than China in these categories as well.

Portraying the US and China as equal contenders in the battle for global tech supremacy, as is often done, is therefore highly misleading. For example, a 2019 United Nations “Digital Economy” report states that: “Geography of the digital economy is highly concentrated in two countries” — the United States and China. But the report not only ignores factors identified by authors like Starrs it also fails to account for the fact that most of China’s tech industry is dominant inside China, save a handful of major products and services, such as 5G (Huawei), CCTV cameras (Hikvision, Dahua), and social media (TikTok), which also hold large market shares abroad. China also has substantial investments in some foreign tech firms, but this hardly suggests a genuine threat to the dominance of the US, which has a much larger share of foreign investments as well.

In reality, the US is the supreme tech empire. Outside of US and Chinese borders, the US leads in the categories of search engines (Google); web browsers (Google Chrome, Apple Safari); smartphone and tablet operating systems (Google Android, Apple iOS); desktop and laptop operating systems (Microsoft Windows, macOS); office software (Microsoft Office, Google G Suite, Apple iWork); cloud infrastructure and services (Amazon, Microsoft, Google, IBM); social networking platforms (Facebook, Twitter); transportation (Uber, Lyft); business networking (Microsoft LinkedIn); streaming entertainment (Google YouTube, Netflix, Hulu), and online advertising (Google, Facebook) — among others.

The upshot is, whether you are an individual or a business, if you are using a computer, American companies benefit the most. They own the digital ecosystem.

Political domination and the means of violence

The economic power of US tech giants goes hand-in-hand with their influence in the political and social spheres. As with other industries, there is a revolving door between tech executives and the US government, and tech corporations and business alliances spend a great deal lobbying regulators for policies favorable to their specific interests — and digital capitalism in general.

Governments and law enforcement agencies, in turn, form partnerships with tech giants to do their dirty work. In 2013, Edward Snowden famously revealed that Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, PalTalk, YouTube, Skype, AOL, and Apple all shared information with the National Security Agency via the PRISM program. More revelations followed, and the world learned that data stored by corporations and transmitted over the internet is sucked into enormous government databases for exploitation by states. Countries in the South have been targets of NSA surveillance, from the Middle East to Africa and Latin America.

Police and the military also work with tech corporations, who are happy to cash fat checks as providers of surveillance products and services, including in countries across the South. For example, through its little-known Public Safety and Justice Division, Microsoft has built an extensive partnership ecosystem with “law enforcement” surveillance vendors, who run their tech on Microsoft cloud infrastructure. This includes a city-wide command-and-control surveillance platform called “Microsoft Aware” that was purchased by police in Brazil and Singapore and a police vehicle solution with facial recognition cameras that has been rolled out in Cape Town and Durban, South Africa.

Microsoft is also deeply involved with the prison industry. It offers a variety of prison software solutions that cover the entire correctional pipeline, from juvenile “offenders” to pretrial and probation, through jail and prison, as well as those released from prison and put on parole. In Africa, they partnered with a company called Netopia Solutions, which offers aPrison Management Software (PMS) platform that includes “escape management” and prisoner analytics.0

While it is not clear where exactly Netopia’s Prison Management Solution is deployed, Microsoft stated that “Netopia is [a Microsoft partner/vendor] in Morocco with a deep focus on transforming digitally, government services in North and Central Africa.” Morocco has a track record of brutalizing dissidents and torturing prisoners, and the US recently recognized its annexation of Western Sahara, in contravention of international law.

For centuries, imperial powers tested technologies to police and control their citizens on foreign populations first, from SirFrancis Galton’s pioneering work on fingerprinting applied in India and South Africa, to America’s combination of biometrics and innovations in managing statistics and data management that formed the first modern surveillance apparatus to pacify the Philippines. As historian Alfred McCoy has shown, the collection of surveillance technologies deployed in the Philippines offered a testing ground for a model which was eventually brought back to the United States for use against domestic dissidents. Microsoft and its partners’ high-tech surveillance projects suggest that Africans continue to serve as a laboratory for carceral experimentation.

Conclusion

Digital technology and information plays a central role in politics, economy, and social life everywhere. As part of the American empire project, US transnational corporations are reinventing colonialism in the South through their ownership and control of intellectual property, digital intelligence, and the means of computation. Most of the core infrastructure, industries, and functions performed by computers are the private property of American transnational corporations, who are overwhelmingly dominant outside US borders. The largest firms, such as Microsoft and Apple, dominate global supply chains as intellectual monopolies.

An unequal exchange and division of labor ensues, reinforcing dependency in the periphery while perpetuating mass immiseration and global poverty.

Instead of sharing knowledge, transferring technology, and providing the building blocks for shared global prosperity on equal terms, the rich countries and their corporations aim to protect their advantage and shake down the South for cheap labor and rent extraction. By monopolizing the core components of the digital ecosystem, pushing their tech in schools and skills training programs, and partnering with corporate and state elites in the South, Big Tech is capturing emerging markets. They will even profit from surveillance services provided to police departments and prisons, all to make a buck.

#### Cyberwar is a capitalist myth the 1AC uses to hoard intellectual property among the global elite and stifle “hacktivists” resisting capitalist globalization.

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CLASS CYBERWAR The world market is, however, not just a site of state conflict. It is also a vast field of frictions, sometimes explosive, sometimes silent, between capital and labor— ­an arena of class war. To miss this aspect of cyberwar is to fall into a conventional view of international politics as a chess game between competing national powers (Bonefeld 2006). Behind and within the contests of contending states lies a deeper set of conflicts; subtending and shaping the geopolitics of cyberwar is its role in the war of capital and labor, and in this war, too, virtual weaponry is wielded by both sides. The transfer of computers and networks from their military incubators to the civilian workplaces of North America and Europe was spurred by economic crisis. By the 1970s, the strike power of Fordist industrial workers was driving wage and welfare gains even as intercapitalist international competition was intensifying. With a relentless logic, the Pentagon’s new technologies, developed to fight state socialism, were switched to the home front. Cybernetic class war, waged from above, automated many manufacturing and office jobs; sent others offshore via telecommunication-­ controlled supply chains; and redirected profits to a financialization dependent on electronic stock markets, computer risk modeling, and high-­ speed algorithmic trading (Schiller 1999; Dyer-­ Witheford 2015). Over some forty years, capital’s “cybernetic offensive” ( Tiqqun 2001) broke the factory bases of the relatively well-­ waged mass worker of the planetary Northwest. There have been many Marxist attempts to describe the new, post-­ Fordist class composition that emerged. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) suggest the mass worker has been replaced by “immaterial labor” involved in digital networks. We are critical of this formulation; it overlooks both the shift of industrial labor to Asia (where it drove China’s rise as a great power) and the generation of “surplus populations” thrown out of work in Rust Belt cities or inhabiting regions largely bypassed by digital supply chains, such as large sectors of Africa and the Middle East (Dyer-­Witheford 2015). But in regard to cyberwar, the “immaterial labor” thesis is important, because it highlights the centrality to digital conflict of a new type of technoscientific labor that saw itself not as “worker” but as “hacker.” 13 Military production was the birthplace of the hacker. The famous “hacker ethic” of innovation, openness, empowerment, and belief that “information wants to be free,” with its libertarian scorn of bureaucratic regimentation and corporate “suits,” was the ethic of experimental systems administrators and adventurous graduate students working on U.S. Defense Department university contracts (Levy 1984; Himanen 2002; Wark 2004). This young and overwhelmingly male hacker workforce (and its legends) flowed out into a still largely Pentagon-­ bankrolled Silicon Valley and thence into a wider digital economy. As it did so, hacking split into different lines. The dominant line was corporate, professional, and entrepreneurial. It led, via Bill Gates’s assertion of intellectual property rights in software, not only to Microsoft but onward to the corporate empires of Apple, Google, and Facebook. A minority trajectory pursued free software, cypherpunk encryption, digital commons, and the noncommercial distribution of network protocols. A third, subterranean break-­ off took hacking to profitable crime, raiding for credit card numbers, bank access, industrial secrets, and saleable software, a project that would attain a global scale. These threads constantly entangled with one another, frustrating attempts to find in the hacker a consistent politics, be it progressive or reactionary. 14 All have a place in the history of cyberwar. Commercialized and professionalized hacker labor and entrepreneurialism drove software and network companies fueled by military contracts. Criminal hacking, though pursued and prosecuted by national security states’ policing arms, also supplies these states’ cyberwar with black market weapons, such as previously unrecognized software vulnerabilities known as “zero-­ day exploits” or dual-­ purpose criminal– military ­ botnets. It also entered into an ambivalent revolving-­ door relation with cybersecurity firms, fluidly swapping black and white hacker hats. And from the minor line of free software and cypherpunk activism, and its meeting with antiauthoritarianism politics, came the connection between hacking and oppositional social movement: “hacktivism” (Greenberg 2012). The first of successive “firebrand waves of digital activism” (Karatzo-gianni 2015) sprang up in the 1990s within an alter-­ mondialisme protesting the negative consequences of neoliberal globalization. Primarily a North American and European movement, but with major connections to India and Latin America, counterglobalization brought the immaterial labor of antiauthoritarian hackers into contact with the very material concerns of industrial workers losing their jobs and peasants losing their land. One of its starting points was the use of computer networks by insurgent Mayan Zapatistas to publicize their armed resistance to free trade agreements between Mexico and the United States. The famous announcements by RAND consultants John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt (1993, 1996) that “cyber war is coming,” an early warning to the U.S. state that computer networks could be a medium of popular mobilization, were inspired by the eruption of “Zapatistas in cyberspace.” Digital circulation of Subcommandate Marcos’s poetic calls for resistance to neoliberal policies worldwide galvanized a “cyberleft” (Wolfson 2014) enabled by the increasing availability of personal computers and internet connections and the online experiences of young people versed in video games, music piracy, and the World Wide Web. Summit-­busting demonstrations, from Seattle to Genoa, were accompanied by indie media centers, the digital relay of information among activists, and distributed denial-­ of-­ service (DDoS) attacks on corporate and state websites. Julian Assange honed his hacking skills as an “alter-­globalist.” Electronic civil disobedience, digital whistleblowing, and virtual organizing wove what Harry Cleaver (1995) termed an “electronic fabric of struggle.” Then the tide of alter-­ globalization suddenly ebbed. The main cause was the chilling effect of the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the subsequent “war on terror.” The decline of the cyberleft also, however, coincided with the U.S. dot-­com crash of 2000, in which attempts at corporate appropriation of the net expired in a sea of red ink and stock market scams, as innumerable sketchy start-­ ups failed to find a business model to capture networkers used to free content. This crash might have strengthened the anticapitalist movement. It was, however, contained by the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank’s drastic lowering of interest rates (a measure that would later boomerang in the much larger housing crash of 2008). In the dual meltdown of “dot-­coms” and “dot-­communists,” the former recovered first. The crisis of U.S. digital capital winnowed winners and losers from the excess of a speculative boom, refining the strategies of fresh entrants to the field and inaugurating a new phase of internet history. After a short hiatus, cybernetic capital rebuilt, with a new business model, “Web 2.0” (O’Reilly 2005). The technologies that enabled this transformation had strikingly varied origins, coming from both sides of capital’s class cyberwar. Twitter has its origins in TXTMob, an application first developed by the Institute for Applied Autonomy for the self-­organized coordination of protestors at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston and the Republican National Convention in New York City (Radio Netherlands 2013). On the other hand, Google Maps grew out of the acquisition of Keyhole, a small Silicon Valley company supported by venture capital from the CIA’s venture capital front company In-­Q-­Tel that worked to “develop fast, accurate and searchable digital maps for the US Armed Forces” (Powers and Jablonski 2015, 84). As Mariana Mazzucato (2013) has shown, the research behind almost every component of Apple’s iPods, iPhones, and iPads was funded almost exclusively by government agencies, predominantly by the U.S. Department of Defense: in 2014, “the parent company of Siri’s creator, which was acquired by Apple in 2010, still [got] over half of its revenue from the Department of Defense” (Bienaimé 2014). The outcome of capital’s omnivorous appetite for innovation was a dramatic revision of digital political economy and usage. The key was recuperation of internet aspects that had frustrated the dot-­coms and energized the cyberleft: popular preference for conversations over published content and free over paid content. In Web 2.0, these seemingly subversive elements were mobilized for accumulation. The digital enterprise was reconceptualized as not “publisher” but “platform,” managing proprietorial software that offered users a launch point and tools for structured but self-­ directed network activities (Bratton 2016). Monitoring and measurement of these activities supplied data for the algorithmic targeting of advertisements. Google, Facebook, and Twitter were flagships, but other businesses adopted elements of the model: Apple made its hardware a platform for apps and music; Amazon algorithmically recommended an ever-­mounting heap of retail products. As oppositional energies declined, and “platform capitalism” (Srnicek 2016) burgeoned, driven by the free labor of user-­ provided content and the big-­ data flows of surveilled self-­ revelation, leftist digital optimism was replaced by Jody Dean’s (2009) diagnosis of a “communicative capitalism” fully capable of commodifying the compulsive loops of so-­ called social media. It was therefore startling when the economic crisis of 2008 brought a return of class struggle cyberwar. Wall Street’s subprime mortgage crisis, relayed around the world by some of the most advanced computer networks in existence, had brought the global economy to a brink from which it was only hauled back by the massive state intervention of bank bailouts and austerity budgets. Responses from below differed in specific zones of the world market. Nevertheless, by 2011, Eurozone anti-­austerity revolts, strike waves in China, the Arab Spring, and a sequence of “take the square” occupations that spread from Madrid to New York and Oakland and, later on, to Rio, Istanbul, and Kyiv constituted a new wave of social struggles. These tumults displayed the new class composition of digital capitalism: the layers of surplus populations (dramatized in the suicide of Mohamed Bouazizi, the impoverished street vendor whose death catalyzed popular revolt in Tunisia); the youths in edufactories and “the graduate student without a job” (Mason 2012); the neoindustrial proletarians leaping from dormitories in Foxconn plants; and the myriad precarious, low-­wage workers who filled squares from Cairo to New York. In many different, and specific to their, locales, the revolts could nonetheless be traced to common threads of indignation at oligarchy, corruption, inequality, and precarity. No aspect of these movements attracted more attention than the protestors’ use of social media, mobile communication, and digital networks. Reportage of Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube “revolutions” has certainly fetishized this activity (Dyer-­ Witheford 2015). Nonetheless, the 2011 unrests did occur within global populations for whom the use of networks, computers, and, especially, mobile phones was becoming ever more widespread, and who put them to use in rebellious demonstrations, riots, and assemblies. Observers such as Paolo Gerbaudo (2012) and Linda Herrera (2014) have convincingly described the importance of social media “take the square” occupations in Cairo, Madrid, New York, and elsewhere, in terms of the issuing of calls to occupation, logistical organization, circulation of news, and links into mainstream media coverage. The 2011 struggles also involved major leaks and hacks explicitly regarded by both the perpetrators and enraged state authorities as a form subversive cyberwar (Greenberg 2012). These included the disclosures of WikiLeaks (Assange 2012) and its battles against the retaliatory actions of the U.S. state; the DDoS counterstrikes in support of WikiLeaks by Anonymous (Coleman 2015); and other interventions, such as those of RedHack in Turkey in support of the Taksim Square occupation in Istanbul. The protagonists included defectors from the now digitized military– ­ industrial complex, such as Chelsea Manning and, later, Edward Snowden; veterans of hacker subcultures, such as Assange; and a younger generation of dissidents familiar with chat rooms, digital pranking, music piracy, and ready-­made hacking tools, such as those used by Anonymous (Deterritorial Support Group 2012). The groups involved in leaking and hacking sometimes gave direct support to street protests, as Anonymous did to the uprising in Tunisia ( Jordan 2015). More generally, there was a strong resonance between hacker activities and popular outrage against unaccountable, venal power; Anonymous’s masks appeared on streets and squares from Cairo to New York to Istanbul, becoming the most general icon of revolt.

#### The United States is a revisionist power. Concerns of Chinese tech dominance are rooted in orientalist Sinophobia.

**Nair 18** , founder and CEO of the Global Institute For Tomorrow (GIFT), an independent think tank based in Hong Kong. (Chandran, 12/21/2018, “Why Asia Should Be Worried By America’s Bullying of China,” *The Diplomat*, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/12/why-asia-should-be-worried-by-americas-bullying-of-china/> Date Accessed: 3/19/2021)

Imagine a scenario where a senior American business executive is suddenly detained overseas, at the behest of the Chinese government, which accuses him or her of violating its national security. American and Western media would undoubtedly express outrage and have a field day bashing China.

Yet when the equivalent happened last week with Canada’s detention of Huawei’s chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, on behalf of the United States, questions about the arrest’s legitimacy, or the presence of political motives behind it, were largely absent.

This is not to argue that Meng is completely innocent of breaking American law. But it is important to note that the right to this extraterritorial behavior is asymmetric: only the United States is allowed to wield it “legitimately.” No other country, such as Malaysia, which is trying to recover 1MDB-related money from Goldman Sachs, can dare to act in this way. If other nations tired of U.S. judicial bullying – and there are many – start to retaliate by detaining Americans and citizens of its Western allies, things could become very messy, very quickly.

But Meng’s arrest leads to a different question. Despite protests to the contrary, the United States made a choice to escalate tensions by taking this action. Why?

Some have connected Meng’s arrest to the wider trade tensions between China and the United States. Huawei had already been accused by Western politicians of being a front for the Chinese government, and it has been denied access to Western markets. Given that technology is one of the few areas where the West is still clearly dominant, people have viewed this pressure as strategic economic leverage.

But this misses a more fundamental cause for the worries about China, which now spread beyond trade and economics. Articles about China’s technology and surveillance, such as its “social credit system,” worry about a techno-dystopia, despite similar surveillance being done in Western countries (and by their own tech companies). The United States has expressed concern about the activities of university students from China, while Australian politicians have spent months debating “foreign influence” in their domestic politics: a rather poorly veiled reference to China.

A good case study is Google’s cancelled re-entry into China with a Chinese-compliant version of Google search. This was met with controversy both by Western media and Google’s own employees. This is partly the company’s own fault, due to its loud and public withdrawal from China almost 10 years ago. But similar concessions by Google in smaller countries have not sparked such controversy; only China has. Interestingly, a Chinese version of Google might actually be of value to Chinese people, as local search engines like Baidu have been plagued with scandal, hoaxes, and frauds. But the fear that Western observers have about China means that this benefit could be denied them.

One could argue that this is part and parcel of the usual geopolitical conflict between an incumbent power and a rising one, or that they are merely representations of how the economic relationship between China and the West continues to change.

But the source of suspicion is deeper and often not spoken about. For a long time, “American exceptionalism” (and “Western exceptionalism” in general) has been based on the idea that the American or Western culture, way of life, and values are superior. One could perhaps see racial supremacist undertones in these beliefs as well. After all, these were the same sentiments that permeated the colonial era and were used to explain away or justify the shameful excesses of colonialism.

It is clear that neither the United States nor Europe is mentally prepared for the prospect of another country, especially a non-Western one, being successful, let alone overtaking the West. This is particularly true for China: a country long viewed as backward but which has now succeeded while following its own political, economic, and cultural model. For the first time in two centuries a non-Western nation with a wholly different political system is challenging the West, and this is causing great anguish.

“American exceptionalism” is threatened when a country with different values does well. We first saw this in the 1980s: anti-Japan sentiment was sparked when Japanese companies started to buy American cultural symbols. This worry was reflected in American popular culture, best shown in any depiction of an American future dominated by Japanese companies. But this sentiment was nowhere near the level we can see today regarding China. Even the most liberal of Western media outlets have found it near impossible to portray China in a balanced way, finding it difficult to remove their inherent comfort with deep-rooted Western ideas and framings, and to confront their own prejudices.

The United States and the West by extension cannot accept China’s success on its own terms and this permeates almost all segments of society. This is one issue on which there is bipartisan support in the United States. The fear of China and the rest is real. They cannot just accept that China’s success says nothing about how Western countries should govern themselves. Instead, China’s model must be proven incorrect, by ignoring its successes in poverty reduction, education, and economic development and focusing on other issues.

There are hard lessons and warnings for here for developing countries, especially large ones finding their rightful place in the community of nations. People assume that the rise of other large developing nations, such as India, Indonesia, or Nigeria, will not be as disruptive as China’s, perhaps due to the belief that they would “balance” China or would not threaten to disrupt the international order. But this betrays a Western need to oppose China at all costs. Other countries need to be aware that they might be next if they begin to demand a say in world affairs. A rising India could be next.

If the roots of American-Chinese tensions come from something other than just geopolitics or economics, then the ascent of these large developing countries may not be as smooth as they hope. This would be due to the Western, U.S.-led opposition to the “rise of the others,” something the world has not seen in over two centuries. It is this that could well define and shape geopolitics in the 21st century. Denying that this sentiment exists and drives foreign policy would be to play into the hands of those who wish to preserve a Western world order at all costs.

One question many Americans asked themselves in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks was “Why do they hate us?” One wonders if people in China are asking themselves the same thing. They may not like the answer they get back.

#### Risk management induces volatility upon billions to produce stability for the security state and capitalism. That ensures extinction by warming.

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Innovation organized by entrepreneurs of the self, of the cyberself, creates possibilities for arbitrage on those super-sets of labor-time, attention and life-time; and all the while, everyday risk management is underpinned and indeed anchored by the calculus of genocide. From the binary of the A-bomb to IBM’s punch-carding of the Nazi Holocaust, from the calculus of sovereign debt to that of social media, the lives of people (in Nagasaki, in Auschwitz, in Furguson), become the substrate that registers the meaning of the compute—at least the meaning as far as they may have been concerned. So many are posited as but renewable pawns in an endless game, and the game goes on. Dispossession and genocide, and the capacity to wreak these, guarantee the liquidity of the financial system by guaranteeing that there will always be some billions willing or forced to do anything for its money and the access to information, to informed matter and therefore to life that it provides. In our era, we see clearly that, under capital, the “stability” imposed by systemic integrations and its programs of finance, surveillance, security, mediation, and so on produces ever greater volatility, and we see that this volatility risk can be bought and sold; it can be cut up, bundled, bought, and resold, priced as content-indifferent numbers based upon volatility indices. Meanwhile the markets roil, dispossession rages, and the planet boils.

As history could confirm, by the mid-twentieth century, the complexity of the techniques for the management of societies, from markets to warfare, from media to cybernetics, and now from social media to the derivatives created by synthetic finance, all required discrete state machines to store and manage the pertinent inventories, schedules, and programs--their valuable information. Though usually thought of as properly belonging to the history of science, communication, mathematics, or computation, the socioeconomic endeavors composing the history of the discrete state machine and its ever more supple functionality are to be thought as part of the increasing complexity of capitalist abstraction and thus the abstraction of social relations. They are the elaboration of real abstraction, the expansive formalization of the field of exchange taking place “behind the backs” of living people. These socioeconomic endeavors such as Google, Facebook, the security state, are the effective occupation of the space and time at all scales by the logistics of exchange and its expanding field of production.

Datalogical representation is already risk management. Management, efficiency, optimization; Foucault’s entrepreneur of the self; and even Brian Massumi and Erin Manning’s “more than human of the human” all recognize a technological paradigm of control operating in and through (and as) the individual (Massumi 2018). We may also observe that the techno-logic of capitalism built upon efficiency—the maximum exploitation of the laboring substrate to meet the demands of the falling rate of profit—prevails across all organizational scales, from the individual to the laboratory to the university to the jail, the township, the state, and the nation-state. In “cultural” spaces, representative agents (a.k.a. subjects) manage and aggregate resources, offering themselves as profiles or brands that are themselves not only marketable, but marketable as derivative exposure to their underliers: their audiences, networks, assets, and currencies. I “friend” you to add you to me, to gain exposure to your network, to add you to my portfolio I am an “influencer.” “Culture,” too, understood as a semi-autonomous domain separable from materiality and technology, can today only be a fetish—another case of platform fetishism—because the generalization of computing means that culture as the connective, communicative tissue of the sociosemiotic is ever more subject to the granularization and grammartization of commodification on the “object’ side (and, its other aspect, the fractalization of fascism on the “subject” side) in what, from a global standpoint, is a racial capitalist sociocybernetic bio-techné. Such is “culture” today—an expression of an overall informationalization of social relations subject to historically imposed computability. Cultural form, computable because inseparable from computation, heretofore always a way of connecting to (or disconnecting from) a multiplicity of networks, is now itself a derivative—a social derivative. Its derivative condition explains what was known as “the postmodern condition,” and is instituted by the universal expansion of the factory code toward the total colonization of space, time, representation, and mind: sociality itself in the largest sense.

That the principles of the ordination of matter, being, time, and value by number (or of publics by statistics, and/or of opinions by likes) were perceived to be universal, that is, generally applicable to all phenomena, was more than convenient. It was, as we have said, colonial. It was racializing and gendering. It was capacitating and maiming (Puar 2017). The math, though famously “content-indifferent,” was never value free. Nor were the devices, from desktops to mainframes, from bombers to smartphones, that it spawned. As Diane Nelson (2015: 56) writes in *Who Counts?*, her astonishing ethnography of Mayan number systems and genocide and, also and as importantly, her scathing ethnography of western mathematics and genocide, “Double-entry bookkeeping is also an ‘ethnomathematics,’ but one with an army.” Double-entry bookkeeping was also a proprietary technique; its truth claims, in the form of accounts, implied pathways of control and functionality that served as conduits for capitalization and colonization. It was a system of representation that repressed noise (context) to clearly resolve the value signal called price in a calculus of profit and loss. In our own period, where we see very clearly (simply by looking at the business pages or, for that matter, the culture pages in any newspaper) that contemporary global capitalism is in lockstep with computation, we might expect that the politico-economic meaning of computation as an emergent order of proprietary organization is becoming clear. As new and powerful terms such as *platform sovereignty* (Bratton 2016), *algorithmic governance,* and *the society of metadata* or “*metadata society*” (Pasquinelli 2018) indicate, it appears that it is the information itself that has (or indeed is) value. But the argument here is that it is only valuable within the framework of computation, and indeed within the framework of computational racial capital—at least thus far. Information is the result of that framework; it is an ethno-graphic (not just anthropocentric) instantiation composed from, in, and on states of matter. The framework, a computational infrastructure that is also primarily fixed capital, emerges in conjunction with the myriad phenomena that are now treated informatically; the apparatus is the other side of the supposedly raw material of information. Information is and can only be a relation. The clear implication of this argument is that, just as a DVD presupposes a technical world that can record it and make it play, the very presence of “information” implies the background armature of computation as a mechanism of perception and organization that is fundamentally social and historical. This background armature of perception and organization further indicates the background armature of racial capital as the primordial condition—the meta-machine architecture—of the present system of accounts. We note, and not only in passing, that this way of narrating the epic poem of AI puts anti-Blackness, slavery, settler colonialism, indentured servitude, imperialism, sexism, proletarianization, racial capitalism, and the active organization of oppression for profit at the epistemic center of a computer that could be called world history. It is computation that perceives information, and it is capital expansion that requires the perceptual-instrumental process endemic to quantification, digitization, and computation. The entire system has its conditions of possibility and derives both its significance and its character from the history of capital accumulation, that is itself theft and only theft, and which is, to defer again to the chorus: colonialism, slavery, white heteropatriarchy, imperialism, globalization, financialization, and genocide.

**The alternative is to reject the affirmative in favor of a cognitive strike. Refusal is a creative act that enables us to reimagine cybernetic forces of racial capitalism and create space for communist solidarities. We control uniqueness – capitalism is creating ongoing Armageddon.**

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.**

## On

### Semiconductors

#### The AFF employs a militarized discourse of cybersecurity — that inflates threats and ignores dangerous vulnerabilities

-- ict: information and communication technology

Myriam Dunn **Cavelty 12**, lecturer for security studies and a senior researcher in the field of risk and resilience at the Center for Security Studies, "The militarisation of cyber security as a source of global tension," STRATEGIC TRENDS 2012: Key Developments in Global Affaris ed. by Daniel Möckli, Center for Security Studies, p. 114-21, fwang

The militarisation of cyber security is first and foremost based on the belief in a massive threat of a large-scale cyber attack. There are two aspects to this perception: In the first subsection, it is shown how and why the past and current level of the threat is overrated. The second subsection places the future likelihood of cyber war into perspective. It shows that now and in the future, the probability of a large-scale attack is very low. The third subsection looks at an additional reason for how widespread the fear of cyber war has become: Most countries simply follow the threat perception and reasoning of the US, even though the strategic context and disparity in power positions warrant a different threat assessment. The fourth subsection finally criticises the widespread use of vocabulary that is full of military analogies. Such vocabulary insinuates a reality governed by the traditional logic of offense and defence – a reality that does not exist. Even worse, it is decoupled from the reality of the threat and the possibility for meaningful countermeasures and is complicit in solidifying the militarisation of cyber security. An overrated threat There is no denying that different political, economic, and military conflicts have had cyber(ed) components for a number of years now. Furthermore, criminal and espionage activities involving the use of computers happen every day. It is a fact that cyber incidents are continually causing minor and only occasionally major inconveniences: These may be in the form of lost intellectual property or other proprietary data, maintenance and repair, lost revenue, and increased security costs. Beyond the direct impact, badly handled cyber attacks have also damaged corporate (and government) reputations and have, theoretically at least, the potential to reduce public confidence in the security of Internet transactions and e-commerce if they become more frequent. However, in the entire history of computer networks, **there are no examples of cyber attacks that resulted in actual physical violence** against persons (nobody has ever died from a cyber incident), and only very few had a substantial effect on property (Stuxnet being the most prominent). So far, cyber attacks have not caused serious long-term disruptions. They are risks that can be dealt with by individual entities using standard information security measures, and their overall costs remain low in comparison to other risk categories such as financial risks. **These facts tend to be almost completely disregarded in policy circles.** There are several reasons why **the threat is overrated**. First, as combating cyber threats has become a highly politicised issue, official statements about the level of threat must also be seen in the context of competition for resources and influence between various bureaucratic entities. This is usually done by **stating an urgent need for action** and describing the overall threat as big and rising. Second, psychological research has shown that risk perception, including the perception of experts, is highly dependent on intuition and emotions. Cyber risks, especially in their more extreme form, fit the risk profile of so-called ‘dread risks’, which are perceived as catastrophic, fatal, unknown, and basically uncontrollable. **There is a propensity to be disproportionally afraid of these risks despite their low probability,** which translates into pressure forregulatoryaction of all sorts and the willingness to bear high costs of uncertain benefit. Third, **the media distorts the threat perception** even further. There is **no hard data** for the assumption that the level **of cyber risks is actually rising** – beyond the perception of impact and fear**.** Some IT security companies have recently warned against overemphasising sophisticated attacks just because we hear more about them. In 2010, only about 3 per cent of all incidents were considered so sophisticated that they were impossible to stop. The vast majority of attackers go after low-hanging fruit, which are small to medium sized enterprises with bad defences. These types of incidents tend to remain under the radar of the media and even law enforcement. Cyber war remains unlikely Since the potentially devastating effects of cyber attacks are so scary, the temptation is very high not only to think about worst-case scenarios, but also to give them a lot of (often too much) weight despite their very low probability. However, most experts agree that strategic cyber war remains **highly unlikely** in the foreseeable future, mainly due to the uncertain results such a war would bring, the lack of motivation on the part of the possible combatants, and their shared inability to defend against counterattacks. Indeed, it is hard to see how cyber attacks could ever become truly effective for military purposes: It is exceptionally difficult to take down multiple, specific targets and keep them down over time. The key difficulty is proper reconnaissance and targeting, as well as the need to deal with a variety of diverse systems and be ready for countermoves from your adversary. Furthermore, nobody can be truly interested in allowing the unfettered proliferation and use of cyber war tools, least of all the countries with the offensive lead in this domain. Quite to the contrary, strong arguments can be made that the world’s big powers have an overall strategic interest in developing and accepting internationally agreed norms on cyber war, and in creating agreements that might pertain to the development, distribution, and deployment of cyber weapons or to their use (though the effectiveness of such norms must remain doubtful). The most obvious reason is that the countries that are currently openly discussing the use of cyber war tools are precisely the ones that are the most vulnerable to cyber warfare attacks due to their high dependency on information infrastructure. The features of the emerging information environment make it extremely unlikely that any but the most limited and tactically oriented instances of computer attacks could be contained. More likely, computer attacks could ‘blow back’ through the interdependencies that are such an essential feature of the environment. Even relatively harmless viruses and worms would cause considerable random disruption to businesses, governments, and consumers. This risk would most likely weigh much heavier than the uncertain benefits to be gained from cyber war activities. Certainly, thinking about (and planning for) worst-case scenarios is a legitimate task of the national security apparatus. Also, it seems almost inevitable that until cyber war is proven to be ineffective or forbidden, states and non-state actors who have the ability to develop cyber weapons will try to do so, because they appear cost-effective, more stealthy, and less risky than other forms of armed conflict. However, **cyber war should not receive too much attention** at the expense of more plausible and possible cyber problems**.** Using too many resources for highimpact, low-probability events – and therefore having less resources for the low to middle impact and high probability events – does not make sense, neither politically, nor strategically and certainly not when applying a cost-benefit logic. Europe is not the US The cyber security discourse is American in origin and American in the making: At all times, the US government shaped both the threat perception and the envisaged countermeasures. Interestingly enough, there are almost no variations to be found in other countries’ cyber threat discussions – even though the strategic contexts differ fundamentally. **Many of the assumptions at the heart of the cyber security debate are shaped by the fears of a military and political superpower**. The US eyes the cyber capabilities of its traditional rivals, the rising power of China and the declining power of Russia, with particular suspicion. This follows a conventional strategic logic: The main question is whether the cyber dimension could suddenly tip the scales of power against the US or have a negative effect on its ability to project power anywhere and anytime. In addition, due to its exposure in world politics and its military engagements, the US is a prime target for asymmetric attack. The surely correct assumption that modern societies and their armed forces depend on the smooth functioning of information and communication technology does not automatically mean that this dependence will be exploited – particularly not for the majority of states in Europe. The existence of the cyber realm seems to lead people to assume that because they have vulnerabilities, they will be exploited. But in security and defence matters, careful threat assessments need to be made. Such assessments require that the following question be carefully deliberated: ‘Who has an interest in attacking us and the capability to do so, and why would they?’ For many democratic states, particularly in Europe, the risk of outright war has moved far to the background and the tasks of their armies have been adapted to this. Fears of asymmetric attacks also rank low. The same logic applies to the cyber domain. The risk of a warlike cyber attack of severe proportions is minimal; **there is no plausible scenario for it**. Cyber crime and cyber espionage, both political and economic, are a different story: They are here now and will remain the biggest cyber risks in the future. The limits of analogies Even if the cyber threat were to be considered very high, the current trend conjures up wrong images. Analogies are very useful for relating non-familiar concepts or complex ideas with more simple and familiar ones. But when taken too far, or even taken for real, they begin to have detrimental effects. Military terms like ‘cyber weapons’, ‘cyber capabilities’, ‘cyber offence’, ‘cyber defence’, and ‘cyber deterrence’ suggest that cyberspace can and should be handled as an operational domain of warfare like land, sea, air, and outer space (cyberspace has in fact been officially recognised as a new domain in US military doctrine). Again, this assumption clashes with the reality of the threat and the possibilities for countermeasures. First, calling offensive measures cyber weapons does not change the fact that hacker tools are not really like physical weapons. They are opportunistic and aimed at outsmarting the technical defences. As a result, their effect is usually not controllable in a military sense – they might deliver something useful or they might not. Also, even though code can be copied, the knowledge and preparation behind it cannot be easily proliferated. Each new weapon needs to be tailored to the system it is supposed to attack. Cyber weapons cannot be kept in a ‘silo’ for a long time, because at any time, the vulnerability in the system that it is targeted at could be patched and the weapon would be rendered useless. Second, thinking in terms of attacks and defence creates a wrong image of immediacy of cause and effect. However, high-level cyber attacks against infrastructure targets will likely be the culmination of long-term, subtle, systematic intrusions. The preparatory phase could take place over several years. When – or rather if – an intrusion is detected, it is often impossible to determine whether it was an act of vandalism, computer crime, terrorism, foreign intelligence activity, or some form of strategic military attack. The only way to determine the source, nature, and scope of the incident is to investigate it. This again might take years, with highly uncertain results. The military notion of striking back is therefore useless in most cases. Third, deterrence works if one party is able to successfully convey to another that it is both capable and willing to use a set of available (often military) instruments against the other side if the latter steps over the line. This requires an opponent that is clearly identifiable as an attacker and has to fear retaliation – which is not the case in cyber security because of the attribution problem. Attribution of blame on the basis of the cui bono logic is not sufficient proof for political action. Therefore, deterrence and retribution do not work in cyberspace and will not, unless its rules are changed in substantial ways, with highly uncertain benefits. Much of what is said in China and in the US about their own and the other’s cyber capabilities is (old) deterrence rhetoric – and must be understood as such. The White House’s new International Strategy for Cyberspace of 2011 states that the US reserves the right to retaliate to hostile acts in cyberspace with military force. This ‘hack us and we might bomb you’ statement is an old-fashioned declaratory policy that preserves the option of asymmetrical response as a means of deterrence, even though both sides actually know that following up on it is next to impossible. Fourth, cyberspace is only in parts controlled or controllable by state actors. At least in the case of democracies, power in this domain is in the hands of private actors, especially the business sector. Much of the expertise and many of the resources required for taking better protective measures are located outside governments. The military – or any other state entity for that matter – does not own critical (information) infrastructures and has no direct access to them. Protecting them as a military mandate is impossible, and conceiving of cyberspace as an occupation zone is an illusion. Militaries cannot defend the cyberspace of their country – it is not a space where troops and tanks can be deployed, because the logic of national boundaries does not apply.

#### Refuse military-strategic expert-ist discourse pervading military presence– it’s a self-referential, financially incentivized machine of falsehood that makes incalculable violence invisible to Westerners, generating abject misery.

Morrissey 11 [John, professor of geography at the National University of Ireland, “Architects of Empire: The Military–Strategic Studies Complex and the Scripting of US National Security,” *Antipode*, Volume 43, Issue 2, pages 435–470, March 2011]

Henri Lefebvre may have been writing in 1974 but his perceptive thoughts are perhaps as vital today as ever. The “specialized knowledges” of the “military–strategic studies complex” have long been patronized, prioritized and actioned by the US military. The cosy “collusion” between the Pentagon and military–strategic studies has been instrumental in the contemporary “production of military space”. Reductive scriptings of national security, abstracted geopolitical visions and dreams of empire have collectively served to occlude geographies of the “lived experience” (Chandrasekaran 2006; Packer 2005). As Bradley Klein (1994:3) reminds us, “questions of war and peace are too important to leave to students [and practitioners] of Strategic Studies”. Strategic studies knowledges have long been “above lived experience”, yet their power has been instrumental in unleashing catastrophe, terror and abject misery for the very people whose lives they are “above”. But clearly there is “catastrophe” for “us” too: the catastrophe of being overwhelmed by the collusion of power and knowledge, the catastrophe of the militant and deeply unequal world in which we live and the catastrophe of inaction—politically, discursively and otherwise.

But of course there has been action, with some of the most significant resistance taking place outside the academy, such as that seen in the unprecedented global protests against the Iraq War in February and March 2003, and continued anti-war activism worldwide since then. Geographers and other academics have of course been variously actively involved. Within the academy, geographers have illuminated key aspects of the US-led war against “militant Islam”, including its place-making strategies, its territorial responses to terrorist attacks and its exceptional legal and biopolitical geographies (Coleman 2003; Elden 2007; Morrissey 2011; Reid-Henry 2007). Others have revealed the imperial historical geographies of contemporary geopolitics, and signalled its geoeconomic underpinnings (Cowen and Smith 2009; Harvey 2003; Kearns 2006; Smith 2003a). In addition, geographers have depicted the violent geographies of recent western military interventions (Dalby 2006; Flint 2005; Graham 2005; Gregory and Pred 2007). And focus has been placed too on the state discourses of military power and broader imaginative and affective geographies legitimating that violence (Bialasiewicz et al 2007; Hannah 2006; Ó Tuathail 2003; Woodward 2005). Such counter-geographies are important, yet their disruptive power, as Matthew Sparke notes (2007:347), is perhaps ultimately “practically limited”. In spite of the above work, and after a cultural turn in the US military that has produced a “powerful rhetorical effect” that justifies “more killing to stop the killing” (Gregory 2008a:21), reductive vernaculars, reifying essentialist tropes of terror, threat, correction and security still prevail and discursively underpin the war in Iraq and broader war on terrorism. The military–strategic studies complex plays a central role in advancing such discourses, and possesses vital forums through which to enunciate their endgame: legitimized state violence. I want to conclude more positively, however, by suggesting ways to effectively oppose them.

As an academic working in political geography, a key starting point of resistance for me is the careful detailing of the largely unseen inner workings of empire in our contemporary world, ultimately in order to be better able to resist it (which is what this paper has been about). That resistance can manifest itself in counter-scriptings in a variety of contexts, from lecture halls to town halls, from academic journals to online blogs. And in a variety of public forums, many geographers have played, and continue to play, important roles in critiquing the war on terror and advancing more nuanced, reasoned and humane geographies and histories of Islam and the Middle East (Gregory 2005). Such academic and public intellectual work can also crucially liaise with, learn from, and be transformed by grassroots activists in peace and social justice movements throughout the world.44 And linking to their work in our teaching especially has more power than perhaps we sometimes realise; especially given the multimedia teaching and learning tools available today.45

A recent Antipode special issue saw a number of insightful reflections on the possibilities of “practising public scholarship”[volume 40(3), 2008]. The contributors outline various ways in which critical geographies can support and enable political and social activism. In addition, Don Mitchell makes an important point in reminding us that academic “intellectual” and “bureaucratic” work are also “vital parts of any activism” (Mitchell 2008:448). Disrupting and countering the abstracted geopolitical scriptings of strategic studies can take on a variety of forms. But both inside and outside the academy, a key intellectual task, I think, is theorizing anti-imperialism—both historically and in our contemporary moment. Effective counter-discourses for our time must surely incorporate the lessons learned from the anti-imperial/anti-colonial struggles of history—from Ireland to India, from Algeria to Vietnam. Appellations like “insurgents” do the same discursive work today as the historical preference “rebels” did in reductively demonizing whole populations and delegitimizing their right to resistance. But more importantly, perhaps, they serve too to disengage us from unpacking the discourses and practices of contemporary anti-imperialism. Yet historical contexts of resistance have much to offer if our endgame is articulating critical and humane geographies of our contemporary world. And this is a crucial challenge, given the sheer pervasiveness of strategic geopolitical discourses that negate human geographical realities. Such scriptings are not only intellectually unconvincing; they are dangerous and hugely consequential.

In seeking to avoid dangerously reductive accounts of the world, geography for me has always had a particular responsibility and strength. In understanding conflict, past and present, discourse has perpetually played a troubled role. In reading the current proliferation of “geopolitical discourse”, it is useful to bear in mind history's multiple reminders of the impossibilities of “colonial discourse” (Morrissey 2010). There is a need to spatialize and locate the material and corporeal geographies of war; not just its imaginative geographies. The spaces and agency of resistance or so-called “insurgency” in the war on terror, for example, are little theorized and frequently not even recognized; reflecting a power relations of knowledge familiar to any student of colonial history. This remains a key challenge for critical accounts of our contemporary geopolitical world. That said, however, connecting what James Sidaway calls the “banal geopolitics” of militarism to its brutal consequences will always be an urgent task too (Sidaway 2001, 2008). And the dots can be joined.

The military–strategic studies complex in contemporary America is a powerful producer of banal geopolitics, patronized and prioritized geographical knowledge and ultimately actionable geostrategic intelligence. Its experts and advocates are both architects of empire and apologists for its consequences. Their dominant national security discourse is about positing legitimized, aggressive US military action against the threat of irrational terrorism emanating from the Middle East; it is about presenting the USA as the guardian of global economic health; and it is about imperial ambition too. This paper has sought to expose the military–strategic studies complex as playing a central role in support of that imperial ambition and in the advancement of its aggressive geopolitics. I hope it has signalled too the imperative of resistance. In the face of ubiquitous scriptings of insecurity, war and geopolitics in our contemporary world, the task of both exposing the geoeconomic stakes and insisting on real places with real people, with bodies and rights just like us, is as urgent as ever.

# 2nc

#### Hate crimes DA — China threat discourse fuels material violence against Asian Americans. Voting aff can’t influence policy, but voting neg can prevent violent ideas from spreading in academic spaces.

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Introduction

In the early weeks of the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States, President Trump put out many mixed messages, but he remained consistent with one—that China was to blame for the spread of the virus. Repeatedly, he insisted on calling the novel coronavirus "the Chinese virus," despite mounting public criticism against the racialization of the deadly pathogen. Many noted the inflammatory nature of this anti-Asian rhetoric. During this same period, reports ranging from verbal abuse to intimidation to physical assault against people of Asian descent documented the sudden rise of anti-Asian hate crimes in the United States and globally. According [End Page 421] to Human Rights Watch, an Asian woman in Brooklyn, New York, suffered a racially motivated acid attack, and in Texas, a Burmese American man and his two children were stabbed by a man who claimed he thought the family was "Chinese and infecting people with the coronavirus."1 The Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council in the United States reported over one thousand cases of anti-Asian incidents in a two-week period in March 2020.2 Outside the United States, a Singaporean student in the United Kingdom was violently kicked and punched by an angry group of men after they uttered, "we don't want your coronavirus in our country" (my emphasis).3 In Australia, a survey taken by the community group Asian Australian Alliance recorded a total of 178 reports of anti-Asian incidents in two weeks, ranging from racial slurs to physical assault.4 Though President Trump has dropped the "Chinese virus" for "kung flu" and tweeted on March 23 that "It is very important that we totally protect our Asian American community . . . the spreading of the virus is NOT their fault," it seems that Sinophobia and racial violence against Asian Americans have been unleashed.

Make no mistake, as long as President Trump continues to take a confrontational stance, using the rhetoric of blame against China with the intention to punish it with new sanctions, tariffs, and even the cancellation of U.S. debt obligations,5 the racial aggressions against Asian Americans will continue to rise, if not intensify. By now, it is widely accepted that the novel coronavirus emerged first in Wuhan, and scientists believe that the zoonotic disease might have jumped from animals to humans at Wuhan's Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, a wet market where vegetables, seafood, meat, and a small number of exotic wildlife were sold. Despite this, on April 30, President Trump casually offered a new theory, which Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeted: that COVID had originated in the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which houses a biosafety level-4 lab, and that the virus might have "leaked" from that lab. The implicit suggestion is that China had either intentionally bioengineered the novel coronavirus to cause massive destruction, thereby attributing malice, or carelessly leaked the virus due to scientific negligence, thereby attributing incompetence. In either case, these kinds of unsubstantiated speculations work to further stoke anger and disdain against the Chinese state. More disturbingly, they traffic in the idea of China as a biotechnology threat, resonating with pre-existing filmic representations of futuristic dystopian worlds.

The immediate and unqualified responses from the scientific community reveal the danger of these potentially incendiary speculations. Responding swiftly, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued a press release the morning of April 30 stating that "The Intelligence Community . . . concurs with the wide scientific consensus that the COVID-19 [End Page 422] virus was not manmade or genetically modified . . ." (my emphasis).6 Within days, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, Dr. Anthony Fauci, attested that the virus "could not have been artificially or deliberately manipulated."7 These assertions sought to extinguish any attribution of malice to the Chinese state. Even with firm contestation, however, the very invocation of the idea of biotechnology warfare has tapped into and perhaps even fueled our existing techno-Orientalist anxieties.

As the COVID pandemic story transpires in real time, engulfing the entire global community, taking unexpected twists and turns, making divergences and transgressions, we have become increasingly aware that the layers of entanglements cannot be easily parsed out, nor will we know anytime soon how and when the story will end. We offer a query into how we might assess and make sense of the intensifying Sinophobia and xenophobia in this current context. To do so, we must resist the temptation to confine our analysis to the narrow parameters of the pandemic. Rather, we insist on examining the rise of anti-Asian aggression within the concomitant vectors of the pandemic, the escalation of the U.S.-China trade war, and the growing concerns about cyber- and techno-security. Here we assert that the ideology of yellow peril set within a techno-Orientalist imaginary is powerfully animating the racial form and racial affect mediating the multiple terrains of public health, technology, global trade, and national security. While it is tempting to treat this historical conjuncture as extraordinary, it is crucial that we situate the current unfolding within the long history of Asian racialization, one that indexes the abiding tension between the political impetus to define national belonging and the shifting economic imperatives of the nation-state.8

In this essay, we examine the techniques and effects of race-making in this current moment, while linking them to historical antecedents, in order to illustrate the persistence of the yellow peril ideology as it is being configured through a techno-Orientalist imaginary where China is posited as the chief enemy-threat. What follows is an analysis of how Chinese alterity as national security threat is being simultaneously constructed and disciplined in the different but related arenas of the pandemic, science, and technology.

The Contemporary Racial Repertoire of the "China/Chinese" Threat

The outbreak of the pandemic could not have had worse timing (as if it could be timed), but timing is critically important here. Its emergence amid the ongoing intensive trade war between the United States and China is significant [End Page 423] in that the prevailing tensions between the two countries and the discourses of Chinese unfair trade competition, scientific espionage, and technological surveillance frame the reception of the pandemic. One may argue that President Trump's insistence on blaming China for the spread of the deadly virus is yet another tactic in his administration's sustained attempt to quell China's economic power at the same time that it provides a foil to distract from—and a scapegoat to blame for—the economic and public health crisis in which we find ourselves.

At this particular juncture, we unfortunately have been inundated with media coverage of a plethora of accusations and actions launched against China and Chinese Americans. Within the past two years, we have witnessed the implementation of trade sanctions and tariffs against China, the removal of prominent Chinese American scientists from research institutions, and the severing of nationwide economic transactions with certain China-based telecommunications corporations, with Huawei Technologies Company being the most notable. All these have been advanced in the name of national security. The discursive formation and the representational devices that have been used to justify these state directives play a critical role in constructing the People's Republic of China (PRC) as culprit and as America's enemy number one. These constructions, some of which will be examined in this essay, are layered upon one another, each building and elaborating on the last, and each invoking and simultaneously inciting a different set of anxieties that lie within the broader repertoire of China/ Chinese as threat. Indeed, the inundation of media about China makes it difficult, if not impossible, to decipher truth from falsehood, myth from reality, rhetoric from evidence. Our task here is not to weigh the truth-value of these representations but to treat them as ongoing contests embedded in power and to draw out their material effects. It is worth noting that while the explicit target of U.S. state aggression has been the mainland Chinese state or the PRC, the actual effects are much more wide-ranging and extend into everyday aggressions against all those who present as East Asian American.

In our examination of the variegated representations of China/Chinese, we suggest that the longstanding ideology of "yellow peril" remains not just pertinent, but extremely forceful in constructing a multifaceted repertoire of Chinese state threat and, by extension, of Chinese/Asian American threat. What is particular about this recent iteration of yellow peril is its configuration through the lens of techno-Orientalism, a framework that is primarily used to examine the explicitly fictional genres of novels, videogames, and films but that we now assert as being actively deployed in this current historical conjuncture. [End Page 424]

#### 1—Capitalism turns every impact and causes exploitation in the global south – it’s try or die.

Foster 19, Sociology Professor @ Oregon (John Bellamy, February 1st, “Capitalism Has Failed—What Next?” *The Monthly Review*, Volume 70, Issue 9, <https://monthlyreview.org/2019/02/01/capitalism-has-failed-what-next/>, Accessed 06-30-2021)

Less than two decades into the twenty-first century, it is evident that capitalism has failed as a social system. The world is mired in economic stagnation, financialization, and the most extreme inequality in human history, accompanied by mass unemployment and underemployment, precariousness, poverty, hunger, wasted output and lives, and what at this point can only be called a planetary ecological “death spiral.”1 The digital revolution, the greatest technological advance of our time, has rapidly mutated from a promise of free communication and liberated production into new means of surveillance, control, and displacement of the working population. The institutions of liberal democracy are at the point of collapse, while fascism, the rear guard of the capitalist system, is again on the march, along with patriarchy, racism, imperialism, and war.

To say that capitalism is a failed system is not, of course, to suggest that its breakdown and disintegration is imminent.2 It does, however, mean that it has passed from being a historically necessary and creative system at its inception to being a historically unnecessary and destructive one in the present century. Today, more than ever, the world is faced with the epochal choice between “the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large and the common ruin of the contending classes.”3

Indications of this failure of capitalism are everywhere. Stagnation of investment punctuated by bubbles of financial expansion, which then inevitably burst, now characterizes the so-called free market.4 Soaring inequality in income and wealth has its counterpart in the declining material circumstances of a majority of the population. Real wages for most workers in the United States have barely budged in forty years despite steadily rising productivity.5 Work intensity has increased, while work and safety protections on the job have been systematically jettisoned. Unemployment data has become more and more meaningless due to a new institutionalized underemployment in the form of contract labor in the gig economy.6 Unions have been reduced to mere shadows of their former glory as capitalism has asserted totalitarian control over workplaces. With the demise of Soviet-type societies, social democracy in Europe has perished in the new atmosphere of “liberated capitalism.”7

The capture of the surplus value produced by overexploited populations in the poorest regions of the world, via the global labor arbitrage instituted by multinational corporations, is leading to an unprecedented amassing of financial wealth at the center of the world economy and relative poverty in the periphery.8 Around $21 trillion of offshore funds are currently lodged in tax havens on islands mostly in the Caribbean, constituting “the fortified refuge of Big Finance.”9 Technologically driven monopolies resulting from the global-communications revolution, together with the rise to dominance of Wall Street-based financial capital geared to speculative asset creation, have further contributed to the riches of today’s “1 percent.” Forty-two billionaires now enjoy as much wealth as half the world’s population, while the three richest men in the United States—Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett—have more wealth than half the U.S. population.10 In every region of the world, inequality has increased sharply in recent decades.11 The gap in per capita income and wealth between the richest and poorest nations, which has been the dominant trend for centuries, is rapidly widening once again.12 More than 60 percent of the world’s employed population, some two billion people, now work in the impoverished informal sector, forming a massive global proletariat. The global reserve army of labor is some 70 percent larger than the active labor army of formally employed workers.13

Adequate health care, housing, education, and clean water and air are increasingly out of reach for large sections of the population, even in wealthy countries in North America and Europe, while transportation is becoming more difficult in the United States and many other countries due to irrationally high levels of dependency on the automobile and disinvestment in public transportation. Urban structures are more and more characterized by gentrification and segregation, with cities becoming the playthings of the well-to-do while marginalized populations are shunted aside. About half a million people, most of them children, are homeless on any given night in the United States.14 New York City is experiencing a major rat infestation, attributed to warming temperatures, mirroring trends around the world.15

In the United States and other high-income countries, life expectancy is in decline, with a remarkable resurgence of Victorian illnesses related to poverty and exploitation. In Britain, gout, scarlet fever, whooping cough, and even scurvy are now resurgent, along with tuberculosis. With inadequate enforcement of work health and safety regulations, black lung disease has returned with a vengeance in U.S. coal country.16 Overuse of antibiotics, particularly by capitalist agribusiness, is leading to an antibiotic-resistance crisis, with the dangerous growth of superbugs generating increasing numbers of deaths, which by mid–century could surpass annual cancer deaths, prompting the World Health Organization to declare a “global health emergency.”17 These dire conditions, arising from the workings of the system, are consistent with what Frederick Engels, in the Condition of the Working Class in England, called “social murder.”18

At the instigation of giant corporations, philanthrocapitalist foundations, and neoliberal governments, public education has been restructured around corporate-designed testing based on the implementation of robotic common-core standards. This is generating massive databases on the student population, much of which are now being surreptitiously marketed and sold.19 The corporatization and privatization of education is feeding the progressive subordination of children’s needs to the cash nexus of the commodity market. We are thus seeing a dramatic return of Thomas Gradgrind’s and Mr. M’Choakumchild’s crass utilitarian philosophy dramatized in Charles Dickens’s Hard Times: “Facts are alone wanted in life” and “You are never to fancy.”20 Having been reduced to intellectual dungeons, many of the poorest, most racially segregated schools in the United States are mere pipelines for prisons or the military.21

More than two million people in the United States are behind bars, a higher rate of incarceration than any other country in the world, constituting a new Jim Crow. The total population in prison is nearly equal to the number of people in Houston, Texas, the fourth largest U.S. city. African Americans and Latinos make up 56 percent of those incarcerated, while constituting only about 32 percent of the U.S. population. Nearly 50 percent of American adults, and a much higher percentage among African Americans and Native Americans, have an immediate family member who has spent or is currently spending time behind bars. Both black men and Native American men in the United States are nearly three times, Hispanic men nearly two times, more likely to die of police shootings than white men.22 Racial divides are now widening across the entire planet.

Violence against women and the expropriation of their unpaid labor, as well as the higher level of exploitation of their paid labor, are integral to the way in which power is organized in capitalist society—and how it seeks to divide rather than unify the population. More than a third of women worldwide have experienced physical/sexual violence. Women’s bodies, in particular, are objectified, reified, and commodified as part of the normal workings of monopoly-capitalist marketing.23

The mass media-propaganda system, part of the larger corporate matrix, is now merging into a social media-based propaganda system that is more porous and seemingly anarchic, but more universal and more than ever favoring money and power. Utilizing modern marketing and surveillance techniques, which now dominate all digital interactions, vested interests are able to tailor their messages, largely unchecked, to individuals and their social networks, creating concerns about “fake news” on all sides.24 Numerous business entities promising technological manipulation of voters in countries across the world have now surfaced, auctioning off their services to the highest bidders.25 The elimination of net neutrality in the United States means further concentration, centralization, and control over the entire Internet by monopolistic service providers.

Elections are increasingly prey to unregulated “dark money” emanating from the coffers of corporations and the billionaire class. Although presenting itself as the world’s leading democracy, the United States, as Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy stated in Monopoly Capital in 1966, “is democratic in form and plutocratic in content.”26 In the Trump administration, following a long-established tradition, 72 percent of those appointed to the cabinet have come from the higher corporate echelons, while others have been drawn from the military.27

War, engineered by the United States and other major powers at the apex of the system, has become perpetual in strategic oil regions such as the Middle East, and threatens to escalate into a global thermonuclear exchange. During the Obama administration, the United States was engaged in wars/bombings in seven different countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan.28 Torture and assassinations have been reinstituted by Washington as acceptable instruments of war against those now innumerable individuals, group networks, and whole societies that are branded as terrorist. A new Cold War and nuclear arms race is in the making between the United States and Russia, while Washington is seeking to place road blocks to the continued rise of China. The Trump administration has created a new space force as a separate branch of the military in an attempt to ensure U.S. dominance in the militarization of space. Sounding the alarm on the increasing dangers of a nuclear war and of climate destabilization, the distinguished Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved its doomsday clock in 2018 to two minutes to midnight, the closest since 1953, when it marked the advent of thermonuclear weapons.29

Increasingly severe economic sanctions are being imposed by the United States on countries like Venezuela and Nicaragua, despite their democratic elections—or because of them. Trade and currency wars are being actively promoted by core states, while racist barriers against immigration continue to be erected in Europe and the United States as some 60 million refugees and internally displaced peoples flee devastated environments. Migrant populations worldwide have risen to 250 million, with those residing in high-income countries constituting more than 14 percent of the populations of those countries, up from less than 10 percent in 2000. Meanwhile, ruling circles and wealthy countries seek to wall off islands of power and privilege from the mass of humanity, who are to be left to their fate.30

More than three-quarters of a billion people, over 10 percent of the world population, are chronically malnourished.31 Food stress in the United States keeps climbing, leading to the rapid growth of cheap dollar stores selling poor quality and toxic food. Around forty million Americans, representing one out of eight households, including nearly thirteen million children, are food insecure.32 Subsistence farmers are being pushed off their lands by agribusiness, private capital, and sovereign wealth funds in a global depeasantization process that constitutes the greatest movement of people in history.33 Urban overcrowding and poverty across much of the globe is so severe that one can now reasonably refer to a “planet of slums.”34 Meanwhile, the world housing market is estimated to be worth up to $163 trillion (as compared to the value of gold mined over all recorded history, estimated at $7.5 trillion).35

The Anthropocene epoch, first ushered in by the Great Acceleration of the world economy immediately after the Second World War, has generated enormous rifts in planetary boundaries, extending from climate change to ocean acidification, to the sixth extinction, to disruption of the global nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, to the loss of freshwater, to the disappearance of forests, to widespread toxic-chemical and radioactive pollution.36 It is now estimated that 60 percent of the world’s wildlife vertebrate population (including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish) have been wiped out since 1970, while the worldwide abundance of invertebrates has declined by 45 percent in recent decades.37 What climatologist James Hansen calls the “species exterminations” resulting from accelerating climate change and rapidly shifting climate zones are only compounding this general process of biodiversity loss. Biologists expect that half of all species will be facing extinction by the end of the century.38

If present climate-change trends continue, the “global carbon budget” associated with a 2°C increase in average global temperature will be broken in sixteen years (while a 1.5°C increase in global average temperature—staying beneath which is the key to long-term stabilization of the climate—will be reached in a decade). Earth System scientists warn that the world is now perilously close to a Hothouse Earth, in which catastrophic climate change will be locked in and irreversible.39 The ecological, social, and economic costs to humanity of continuing to increase carbon emissions by 2.0 percent a year as in recent decades (rising in 2018 by 2.7 percent—3.4 percent in the United States), and failing to meet the minimal 3.0 percent annual reductions in emissions currently needed to avoid a catastrophic destabilization of the earth’s energy balance, are simply incalculable.40

Nevertheless, major energy corporations continue to lie about climate change, promoting and bankrolling climate denialism—while admitting the truth in their internal documents. These corporations are working to accelerate the extraction and production of fossil fuels, including the dirtiest, most greenhouse gas-generating varieties, reaping enormous profits in the process. The melting of the Arctic ice from global warming is seen by capital as a new El Dorado, opening up massive additional oil and gas reserves to be exploited without regard to the consequences for the earth’s climate. In response to scientific reports on climate change, Exxon Mobil declared that it intends to extract and sell all of the fossil-fuel reserves at its disposal.41 Energy corporations continue to intervene in climate negotiations to ensure that any agreements to limit carbon emissions are defanged. Capitalist countries across the board are putting the accumulation of wealth for a few above combatting climate destabilization, threatening the very future of humanity.

#### No decoupling — data that accounts for offshoring and rebound effects prove energy efficiency is getting worse. Staying below 1.5° is biophysically impossible under capitalism.

Albert 20, M.D. @ John Hopkins. BA in Evolutionary Biology (Michael, April, The Dangers of Decoupling: Earth System Crisis and the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’, *Global Policy*, Volume 11, Issue 2, DOI: 10.1111/1758-5899.12791)

Unfortunately for the ecomodernists, degrowth scholars and ecological economists have begun to poke holes in their optimistic assessments. Their response can be summarized according to three key counter-arguments: (1) the evidence that ecomodernists provide for relative decoupling is flawed and limited at best; (2) their evidence for the possibility of absolute decoupling is even weaker; and (3) even if absolute decoupling was possible in principle, there is even weaker evidence that this could occur with the necessary speed to stabilize the earth system before reaching irreversible tipping points.

First, claims that rich countries have seen relative or even absolute decoupling of economic growth from domestic material consumption have been shown to focus solely on correlations between national GDP and material throughput while ignoring the material-energetic costs embodied in imported consumer goods. For example, Thomas Wiedmann and colleagues show that while the EU, the US, and Japan have grown economically while stabilizing or even reducing domestic material consumption, a broader analysis of their material footprint embedded in their imports shows that it has kept pace with GDP growth. They conclude that ‘no decoupling has taken place over the past two decades for this group of developed countries’ (Wiedmann et al., 2015, p. 6273). Focusing on the global economy as a whole, Krausmann et al. show that its resource intensity improved over the course of the 20th century, though the early 21st century has seen a faster rate of growing resource consumption than global economic growth (cited in Hickel and Kallis, 2019). Thus, as Kallis and Hickel (Kallis and Hickel, 2019, p. 4; italics added) explain: ‘Global historical trends show relative decoupling but no evidence of absolute decoupling, and twenty-first century trends show not greater efficiency but rather worse efficiency, with re-coupling occurring’.

Second, given the limited evidence for even relative decoupling, it is little surprise that the evidential basis on which claims for the possibility of absolute decoupling rest is even flimsier. In the most comprehensive summary of the modeling evidence to date, Hickel and Kallis (2019) show that even the most optimistic scenarios fail to prove the possibility of absolute decoupling. For example, a modeling study by Schandl et al. (2016) shows that in a ‘high efficiency’ scenario, one that combines a high and rising carbon price plus a doubling in the rate of material efficiency improvement, global resource use grows more slowly (about a quarter the rate of GDP growth) but steadily to reach 95 billion tons in 2050, while global energy use grows from 14,253 million tons of oil equivalent in 2010 to 26, 932 million in 2050. The authors therefore conclude: ‘While some relative decoupling can be achieved in some scenarios, none would lead to an absolute reduction in ... materials footprint’ (Schandl et al., 2016, p. 8). A high efficiency scenario modeled by the UNEP comes to even less optimistic conclusions (with global resource use rising to 132 billion tons in 2050), since it incorporates the ‘rebound effect’ in which efficiency improvements lead to increased consumption due to resulting price reductions (Hickel and Kallis, 2019). In short, as they conclude, these ‘models suggest that absolute decoupling is not feasible on a global scale in the context of continued economic growth’ (Hickel and Kallis, 2019, p. 6).

Third, the critics show that even if absolute decoupling (from both emissions and total environmental impact) were possible in principle, this would need to occur fast enough to prevent transgression of ecological tipping points. Just focusing on the climate problem, the 2018 IPCC report claims that emissions must be reduced 7 per cent annually to reach net zero by 2050 in order to achieve the 1.5 C target, whereas they must reduce 4 per cent annually to reach net zero by 2075 for a shot at the 2 degree target (IPCC, 2018, p. 15). However, even under optimistic assumptions (e.g. a near-term implementation of a high and rising carbon price, alongside heroic carbon intensity improvements), studies suggest that annual declines of 3–4 per cent might be the fastest rate possible assuming continued economic growth (Hickel, 2019). Thus, it would most likely be impossible to meet the 1.5 C target in a context of continuous compound growth. While the 2 degree target might be feasible in this context (assuming implementation of a globally coordinated program starting in 2020), many argue that the IPCC’s estimates downplay the existence of positive feedbacks in the earth system (e.g. Steffen et al., 2018), and thus more rapid emissions cuts might be needed even for 2 degrees. On top of this, economic growth must also be decoupled from impacts on other ‘planetary boundaries’ that may have already been overshot, especially land-use change and biodiversity loss (Raworth, 2017). A number of ecologists believe that to bring humanity back into a ‘safe operating space’, total resource consumption should be reduced from roughly 70 to 50 gigatons per year (Hoekstra and Wiedmann, 2014), while a ‘half earth strategy’ should be implemented that protects 50 per cent of the planet’s surface from direct human interference (up from roughly 18 per cent today) (Wilson, 2017), possibly by 2050 to prevent tipping points in biodiversity loss and land-use change (Hickel and Kallis, 2019). Even if these claims are exaggerated, the magnitude of the overall decoupling challenge remains clear. It would mean that total resource consumption and land use needs to shrink, remain stable, or only increase moderately (depending on our assumptions regarding the further stress (if any) that planetary boundaries can handle) even as the total output of the global economy triples by 2060. It is thus not hyperbole to say, as Boris Frankel puts it, that this goal of absolute decoupling is ‘overwhelmingly staggering in its ambition and historical novelty’ (Frankel, 2018, p. 127).

#### Extinction – no adaptation, feedback loops

Peter Kareiva 18, Ph.D. in ecology and applied mathematics from Cornell University, director of the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA, Pritzker Distinguished Professor in Environment & Sustainability at UCLA, et al., September 2018, “Existential risk due to ecosystem collapse: Nature strikes back,” Futures, Vol. 102, p. 39-50

In summary, six of the nine proposed planetary boundaries (phosphorous, nitrogen, biodiversity, land use, atmospheric aerosol loading, and chemical pollution) are unlikely to be associated with existential risks. They all correspond to a degraded environment, but in our assessment do not represent existential risks. However, the three remaining boundaries (climate change, global freshwater cycle, and ocean acidification) do pose existential risks. This is because of intrinsic positive feedback loops, substantial lag times between system change and experiencing the consequences of that change, and the fact these different boundaries interact with one another in ways that yield surprises. In addition, climate, freshwater, and ocean acidification are all directly connected to the provision of food and water, and shortages of food and water can create conflict and social unrest.¶ Climate change has a long history of disrupting civilizations and sometimes precipitating the collapse of cultures or mass emigrations (McMichael, 2017). For example, the 12th century drought in the North American Southwest is held responsible for the collapse of the Anasazi pueblo culture. More recently, the infamous potato famine of 1846–1849 and the large migration of Irish to the U.S. can be traced to a combination of factors, one of which was climate. Specifically, 1846 was an unusually warm and moist year in Ireland, providing the climatic conditions favorable to the fungus that caused the potato blight. As is so often the case, poor government had a role as well—as the British government forbade the import of grains from outside Britain (imports that could have helped to redress the ravaged potato yields).¶ Climate change intersects with freshwater resources because it is expected to exacerbate drought and water scarcity, as well as flooding. Climate change can even impair water quality because it is associated with heavy rains that overwhelm sewage treatment facilities, or because it results in higher concentrations of pollutants in groundwater as a result of enhanced evaporation and reduced groundwater recharge. Ample clean water is not a luxury—it is essential for human survival. Consequently, cities, regions and nations that lack clean freshwater are vulnerable to social disruption and disease.¶ Finally, ocean acidification is linked to climate change because it is driven by CO2 emissions just as global warming is. With close to 20% of the world’s protein coming from oceans (FAO, 2016), the potential for severe impacts due to acidification is obvious. Less obvious, but perhaps more insidious, is the interaction between climate change and the loss of oyster and coral reefs due to acidification. Acidification is known to interfere with oyster reef building and coral reefs. Climate change also increases storm frequency and severity. Coral reefs and oyster reefs provide protection from storm surge because they reduce wave energy (Spalding et al., 2014). If these reefs are lost due to acidification at the same time as storms become more severe and sea level rises, coastal communities will be exposed to unprecedented storm surge—and may be ravaged by recurrent storms.¶ A key feature of the risk associated with climate change is that mean annual temperature and mean annual rainfall are not the variables of interest. Rather it is extreme episodic events that place nations and entire regions of the world at risk. These extreme events are by definition “rare” (once every hundred years), and changes in their likelihood are challenging to detect because of their rarity, but are exactly the manifestations of climate change that we must get better at anticipating (Diffenbaugh et al., 2017). Society will have a hard time responding to shorter intervals between rare extreme events because in the lifespan of an individual human, a person might experience as few as two or three extreme events. How likely is it that you would notice a change in the interval between events that are separated by decades, especially given that the interval is not regular but varies stochastically? A concrete example of this dilemma can be found in the past and expected future changes in storm-related flooding of New York City. The highly disruptive flooding of New York City associated with Hurricane Sandy represented a flood height that occurred once every 500 years in the 18th century, and that occurs now once every 25 years, but is expected to occur once every 5 years by 2050 (Garner et al., 2017). This change in frequency of extreme floods has profound implications for the measures New York City should take to protect its infrastructure and its population, yet because of the stochastic nature of such events, this shift in flood frequency is an elevated risk that will go unnoticed by most people.¶ 4. The combination of positive feedback loops and societal inertia is fertile ground for global environmental catastrophes¶ Humans are remarkably ingenious, and have adapted to crises throughout their history. Our doom has been repeatedly predicted, only to be averted by innovation (Ridley, 2011). However, the many stories of human ingenuity successfully addressing existential risks such as global famine or extreme air pollution represent environmental challenges that are largely linear, have immediate consequences, and operate without positive feedbacks. For example, the fact that food is in short supply does not increase the rate at which humans consume food—thereby increasing the shortage. Similarly, massive air pollution episodes such as the London fog of 1952 that killed 12,000 people did not make future air pollution events more likely. In fact it was just the opposite—the London fog sent such a clear message that Britain quickly enacted pollution control measures (Stradling, 2016). Food shortages, air pollution, water pollution, etc. send immediate signals to society of harm, which then trigger a negative feedback of society seeking to reduce the harm.¶ In contrast, today’s great environmental crisis of climate change may cause some harm but there are generally long time delays between rising CO2 concentrations and damage to humans. The consequence of these delays are an absence of urgency; thus although 70% of Americans believe global warming is happening, only 40% think it will harm them (http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us-2016/). Secondly, unlike past environmental challenges, the Earth’s climate system is rife with positive feedback loops. In particular, as CO2 increases and the climate warms, that very warming can cause more CO2 release which further increases global warming, and then more CO2, and so on. Table 2 summarizes the best documented positive feedback loops for the Earth’s climate system. These feedbacks can be neatly categorized into carbon cycle, biogeochemical, biogeophysical, cloud, ice-albedo, and water vapor feedbacks. As important as it is to understand these feedbacks individually, it is even more essential to study the interactive nature of these feedbacks. Modeling studies show that when interactions among feedback loops are included, uncertainty increases dramatically and there is a heightened potential for perturbations to be magnified (e.g., Cox, Betts, Jones, Spall, & Totterdell, 2000; Hajima, Tachiiri, Ito, & Kawamiya, 2014; Knutti & Rugenstein, 2015; Rosenfeld, Sherwood, Wood, & Donner, 2014). This produces a wide range of future scenarios.¶ Positive feedbacks in the carbon cycle involves the enhancement of future carbon contributions to the atmosphere due to some initial increase in atmospheric CO2. This happens because as CO2 accumulates, it reduces the efficiency in which oceans and terrestrial ecosystems sequester carbon, which in return feeds back to exacerbate climate change (Friedlingstein et al., 2001). Warming can also increase the rate at which organic matter decays and carbon is released into the atmosphere, thereby causing more warming (Melillo et al., 2017). Increases in food shortages and lack of water is also of major concern when biogeophysical feedback mechanisms perpetuate drought conditions. The underlying mechanism here is that losses in vegetation increases the surface albedo, which suppresses rainfall, and thus enhances future vegetation loss and more suppression of rainfall—thereby initiating or prolonging a drought (Chamey, Stone, & Quirk, 1975). To top it off, overgrazing depletes the soil, leading to augmented vegetation loss (Anderies, Janssen, & Walker, 2002).¶ Climate change often also increases the risk of forest fires, as a result of higher temperatures and persistent drought conditions. The expectation is that forest fires will become more frequent and severe with climate warming and drought (Scholze, Knorr, Arnell, & Prentice, 2006), a trend for which we have already seen evidence (Allen et al., 2010). Tragically, the increased severity and risk of Southern California wildfires recently predicted by climate scientists (Jin et al., 2015), was realized in December 2017, with the largest fire in the history of California (the “Thomas fire” that burned 282,000 acres, https://www.vox.com/2017/12/27/16822180/thomas-fire-california-largest-wildfire). This catastrophic fire embodies the sorts of positive feedbacks and interacting factors that could catch humanity off-guard and produce a true apocalyptic event. Record-breaking rains produced an extraordinary flush of new vegetation, that then dried out as record heat waves and dry conditions took hold, coupled with stronger than normal winds, and ignition. Of course the record-fire released CO2 into the atmosphere, thereby contributing to future warming.¶ Out of all types of feedbacks, water vapor and the ice-albedo feedbacks are the most clearly understood mechanisms. Losses in reflective snow and ice cover drive up surface temperatures, leading to even more melting of snow and ice cover—this is known as the ice-albedo feedback (Curry, Schramm, & Ebert, 1995). As snow and ice continue to melt at a more rapid pace, millions of people may be displaced by flooding risks as a consequence of sea level rise near coastal communities (Biermann & Boas, 2010; Myers, 2002; Nicholls et al., 2011). The water vapor feedback operates when warmer atmospheric conditions strengthen the saturation vapor pressure, which creates a warming effect given water vapor’s strong greenhouse gas properties (Manabe & Wetherald, 1967).¶ Global warming tends to increase cloud formation because warmer temperatures lead to more evaporation of water into the atmosphere, and warmer temperature also allows the atmosphere to hold more water. The key question is whether this increase in clouds associated with global warming will result in a positive feedback loop (more warming) or a negative feedback loop (less warming). For decades, scientists have sought to answer this question and understand the net role clouds play in future climate projections (Schneider et al., 2017). Clouds are complex because they both have a cooling (reflecting incoming solar radiation) and warming (absorbing incoming solar radiation) effect (Lashof, DeAngelo, Saleska, & Harte, 1997). The type of cloud, altitude, and optical properties combine to determine how these countervailing effects balance out. Although still under debate, it appears that in most circumstances the cloud feedback is likely positive (Boucher et al., 2013). For example, models and observations show that increasing greenhouse gas concentrations reduces the low-level cloud fraction in the Northeast Pacific at decadal time scales. This then has a positive feedback effect and enhances climate warming since less solar radiation is reflected by the atmosphere (Clement, Burgman, & Norris, 2009).¶ The key lesson from the long list of potentially positive feedbacks and their interactions is that runaway climate change, and runaway perturbations have to be taken as a serious possibility. Table 2 is just a snapshot of the type of feedbacks that have been identified (see Supplementary material for a more thorough explanation of positive feedback loops). However, this list is not exhaustive and the possibility of undiscovered positive feedbacks portends even greater existential risks. The many environmental crises humankind has previously averted (famine, ozone depletion, London fog, water pollution, etc.) were averted because of political will based on solid scientific understanding. We cannot count on complete scientific understanding when it comes to positive feedback loops and climate change.

#### “No alternative” is an elite fallacy---grassroots activists are laying the seeds for the end of capitalism, but global commitment is key.

Grubačić et al. '20 [Andrej; 9/24/20; Professor and Department Chair of Social and Cultural Anthropology at California Institute of Integral Studies; Brett Wilkins, Bridget Meehan, Cynthia Peters, Don Rojas, Elena Herrada, Mark Evans, Medea Benjamin, Michael Albert, Noam Chomsky, Oscar Chacon, Paul Ortiz, Peter Bohmer, Savvina Chowdhury and Vincent Emanuel; "Greenwashing Capitalism Won’t Heal the Planet," https://truthout.org/articles/greenwashing-capitalism-wont-heal-the-planet/]

Our Future Must Be One Without Economic Growth

So focused on serving the needs of the wealthy elites, most governments, political leaders and policy-makers are stuck in the certainty that “there is no alternative” and their plans lie at the core of that belief. The proposals support “business as usual” with a coat of greenwash and a nip and tuck here and there. They fail to recognize that economic growth is in direct conflict with decarbonization, slowing down global warming or redistributing wealth, and that we must eliminate or vastly reduce certain activities altogether.

It is time to expose the extreme fallacy behind mainstream policy positions regarding the climate crisis. Decarbonization that will slow global warming is going to require more than a few tweaks to the system and nods to green investment. It will demand that we jettison our current economic paradigm altogether and replace it with a more socialist, participatory and democratic paradigm that puts social and environmental needs at its center and massively redistributes wealth. We are only kidding ourselves if we think it can happen any other way.

Many millions of us have already come to this realization. Recent polls conducted in Britain, for example, showed that just 6 percent wanted to go back to the economy as it was before the COVID-19 pandemic and 82 percent wanted to prioritize health and well-being over economic growth. Grassroots activists and movements are busy creating and implementing the alternatives to the status quo. “Ordinary” people are light-years ahead of the governments and political leaders in taking these courageous steps.

Despite the heroic efforts of everyday people working at localized levels, there are three hard truths we must face. The first is that our governments and political leaders are a major barrier. They may be pathetic but they hold the levers of power, albeit on behalf of the elites. The second hard truth is that efforts at localized levels are insufficient. Solving the climate crisis will necessitate the end of capitalism and that necessitates action on a global scale through global coordination, planning and regulation. Both of these truths, therefore

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#### Apocalyptic crises are the final development of the stabilization of institutional power – Their framing of natural disasters is no longer true. Disasters are no longer natural, but are a facet of neoliberal calculation.

**Masco 16** Joseph - Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago (“The Crisis in Crisis,” Online Nov 9, 2016, http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/688695) hk

**The link between nuclear crisis and climate crisis is human industry**: both of these existential dangers have been incrementally built over generations of labor in the pursuit of security. The nuclear complex is explicit in its goals, mobilizing the fear of mass destruction as the basis for US security in a world of competing nation-states. A changing climate is the collective effect of human industrial activity, an accumulation of a vast set of petrochemical practices dispersed across regions that have made the global economy over time. These **“crises” are** thus **infrastructural achievements of** an **American modernity**, modes of endangerment that are not necessary forms but rather effects of modern military and industrial systems. Following Roitman’s (2014:94) suggestion that crisis constitutes a “blind spot” that restricts narrative explanations as well as limits the kind of actions that can be taken, we could interrogate here how crisis states have become lived infrastructures, linking imaginations, affects, and institutions in a kind of total social formation. The crisis in crisis from this point of view is the radical presentism of crisis talk, the focus on stabilizing a present condition rather than engaging the multiple temporalities at stake in a world of interlocking technological, financial, military, and ecological systems. As Jean-Luc Nancy (2015:30) argues in After Fukushima, Fukushima is a powerfully exemplary event because it shows the close and brutal connections between a seismic quake, a dense population, and a nuclear installation (under inadequate management). It is also exemplary of a node of complex relationships between public power and private management of the installation, not to mention all the other chains of correlation that extend out from that starting point. Put differently, **there are no “natural” disasters** any more, as the imbrication of **technology, economy, and nature creates** ever-emerging **conditions for catastrophe, making crisis** seem **a permanent condition** when it is in fact the effect of financial, technological, militaristic, and political processes interacting with earth systems. **Crisis talk** today seeks to **stabilize an institution, practice, or reality rather than interrogate** the **historical conditions of possibility for that** endangerment **to occur.** In our moment, crisis blocks thought by evoking the need for an emergency response to the potential loss of a status quo, emphasizing urgency and restoration over a review of first principles and historical ontologies. In an era of complex interlocking systems of finance, technology, militarism, and ecology, **unanticipated effects are inevitable and** often **cascading processes.** In light of a post-welfare-state attitude of crisis management, one that does not protect citizens but rather seeks to restore the conditions from which crisis emerged, there is much attention today to precarity as the very condition for living. Precarity and resilience are the twin logics of a neoliberal order that abandons populations in pursuit of profit and then seeks to naturalize those abandonments as the only possible course of action (see Evans and Reid 2014). Put directly, crisis talk without the commitment to revolution becomes counterrevolutionary. With this in mind, how can we interrogate the “blind spots” informing nuclear crisis and climate crisis today? Despite the end of the Cold War and the widespread politicization of “weapons of mass destruction” under the terms of the War on Terror (Masco 2014), the Department of Energy (DOE) is currently planning to rebuild the US nuclear complex over the next 30 years (US Department of Energy 2013). This plan involves the first entirely new weapons designs since the 1980s, part of a strategic effort to create a nuclear arsenal and production complex that can last through the twenty-first century. These planned weapon systems will be less complicated mechanically and more robust that the Cold War designs in the current arsenal (which have been painstaking maintained part by part now for over two decades). They will also employ a new generation of weapons scientists through midcentury. These new designs will not have to be detonated, as did all prior weapons systems, before being deployed into US military arsenals thanks to the last 20 years of nuclear weapons research involving component testing, supercomputing, and simulations (see Masco 2006:43–98). The promise of the virtual weapons laboratory now points to a permanent nuclear production capacity in the United States, one that can maintain a nuclear test ban while also introducing new nuclear weapons. As the DOE’s (US Department of Energy 2013:1–6) programmatic report to Congress declares, by 2038, a new generation of weapons designers, code developers, experimentalists, and design and production engineers must demonstrate an understanding of nuclear weapons functionality using more predictive and more precisely calibrated computer-aided design and assessment tools than are possible today. High-fidelity experimental capabilities will produce quantitative data that preclude resumption of underground nuclear testing. This commitment to building new nuclear weapons should place the recent US wars over weapons of mass destruction—both real and imagined—in a new light. White House calls for a nuclear-free world are now linked to a projected $1 trillion investment over the coming decades in a new US nuclear complex (Wolfsthal, Lewis, and Quint 2014), which is being designed for a deep futurity. This makes current US policy a paradoxical program of pursuing global nuclear disarmament through rebuilding a state-of-the-art US nuclear production complex and arsenal. The crisis in crisis here is the automated renewal of an infrastructure that will necessarily encourage current and future nuclear powers to pursue their own nuclear programs and undercut the collective goal of creating a world incapable of nuclear war. This program also reinvigorates nuclear fear as the coordinating logic of American geopolitics. The DOE has turned aging nuclear weapons and experts into a “crisis” requiring immediate action rather than interrogating and building a new collective security for a post–Cold War, post–War on Terror world. Alongside a new generation of nuclear experts and weapons, future nuclear crises are being built into these programs. The **governance of a warming planet has** also **been** thoroughly **politicized in the U**nited **S**tates**, a victim of national security politics** (see Masco 2010) and petroindustry propaganda (see Oreskes and Conway 2010). Not coincidentally, the George W. Bush administration loosened regulatory rules for domestic shale extraction in 2005 (exempting it from the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act), which, in combination with technological breakthroughs in drilling technology, opened up several large domestic shale formations for immediate exploitation. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill (2010) in the Gulf—alongside Hurricane Katrina (2005), the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear meltdown (2011), and superstorm Sandy (2012)—demonstrated the vulnerability of complex natural, technological, and social systems and the near impossibility of environmental remediation. The boom in hydraulic fracturing has allowed the United States to increase its oil production massively even as climate scientists describe in ever-greater detail the collective environmental costs of such extraction for ice caps, atmospheric chemistry, climate, and public health. In its “Saudi America: The Economics of Shale Oil” article, the Economist (2014) reveals that the United States has moved from producing 600,000 barrels of oil a day in 2008 to 3.5 million a day in 2014 because of shale extractions. The Economist focuses on the shifting geopolitics of renewed American oil power but does not mention the consequences for the global environment of abundant, inexpensive oil. If current patterns hold, the United States will become the world’s leading oil producer in 2020—the number one petrostate—at precisely the moment when the damage of such an achievement has been scientifically documented across the earth sciences. Since 2005, a vast new infrastructure of wells, pipes, and ponds as well as truck and train lines carrying oil and natural gas has been built to exploit shale formations from Texas to North Dakota to Pennsylvania. In addition to greenhouse gas emissions, these infrastructures require vast amounts of water, create waste ponds, and also leak, raising important questions about the environmental safety of these areas over the projected life of each well. New York State recently banned hydraulic fracturing because of the long list of unknown effects on water, air, and public health (New York Department of Public Health 2014), while in Texas and North Dakota there are boom and bust towns devoted entirely to the enterprise and vast landscapes now covered with industrial infrastructures that produce both energy and radically uncertain environmental futures. The deregulation of hydraulic fracturing has made petrochemical energy inexpensive and abundant by historical standards at precisely the moment when it would be most socially and environmentally sound to make it ever more expensive. **If the** neoliberal logics of **market** determinism **were good at engineering a sustainable** collective **future, the U**nited **S**tates **would not be embracing shale** with such unrestrained enthusiasm. The ever-shorter profit cycle of corporate review, in other words, is diametrically opposed to the long-term investments in renewable energy, installing the perfect terms for ongoing environmental and health crises for as far into the future as anyone can imagine. Thus, one aspect of the crisis in crisis today is a notion of “profit” that has been so narrowly defined that a loss of the collective environment is easier to imagine than a shift in the nature of petrocapitalism. Instead of reenergizing a collective imaginary that can engage alternative modes of living and apply resources and agency to collective problems, governance today recommitments to exactly those existentially dangerous projects that should be formally disavowed for the public good: nuclear weapons and oil. This creates a public feeling of “permanent crisis” as well as increasing vulnerabilities across a range of domestic and global issues. One perverse effect of this twenty-first-century circuit is that it encourages social theorists to focus narrowly on the endless modes of precarity that are emerging rather than articulating the alternative futures that are needed, reinforcing a generational gestalt of political gridlock and decline. It is vitally important to understand how cumulative and asymmetrically distributed industrial toxins (from carbon to plastic to nuclear materials) affect communities and individual bodies and to articulate the ways that planetary-scale flows are now remaking local conditions. **The age of neoliberal calculation** is one that **naturalizes the abandonment of populations** that are **not immediately useful to the** quarterly **bottom line and renders invisible** those **many** others **affected** remotely **by** financial, military, or industrial **policies** (see Lorey 2015). **It is** also **important to interrogate** the **affective recruitments to existential crisis** and the political work such recruitments do in supporting existing political structures (Masco 2014). However, it is equally important to recover the capacity to generate positive futurities—what, following Berlant (2011), we might call the not yet cruel optimisms—that can affectively charge collective action, particularly on those issues (e.g., nuclear danger and climate danger) that have been constructed by generations of human agency and thus are immediately available to reform. At the end of World War II, the United States embraced a new kind of technological utopianism, believing that science would solve the problems of health, welfare, and security. Designing the future for both security and prosperity was the role of the state, allowing significant investments in education, welfare-state systems, and the establishment of a variety of environmental protection laws. Indeed, this mid-twentieth-century period of “crisis” is the moment when many of the key infrastructures—and generational investments in education and environmental protections—were established that inform our world today. Thus, the most dangerous moment in American history was, from this point of view, also one of the most productive, creating important commitments to civil rights, education, and the environment while establishing the precedents for international law and treaties to manage existential dangers. Since the 1980s neoliberal turn in the United States, militarism has remained the project of the state, but the collective future has been assigned to the marketplace, which elevates short-term profitability above all other concerns. What happened to the once vibrant social debate about alternative futures and the commitment to making long-term investments in improving the terms of collective life? The force of global capital has absorbed the power of crisis talk to shock, and thus mobilize, requiring a different call to action. **The crisis in crisis** today **is the inability to both witness the accumulating damage of this system and imagine another politics.** A fundamental challenge in our moment is that the key existential dangers of today—nuclear weapons and climate change—operate on different scales, creating friction between the global and the planetary while demanding different kinds of governance (Masco 2015). Because we do not yet have planetary-scale institutions that can govern these collective problems, it is easy to focus on the emerging and amplifying forms of precarity. Instead of a more aggressive media space devoted to detailing the current and projected crises, then, perhaps what our specific historical moment requires is an explicit commitment—a critical theory commitment—to generating the nonutopian but nonetheless positive futurities that can reactivate the world-making powers of society.

#### Their horrific impacts remain affectively embedded within us, and voting Aff sanitizes a continuous, low-level fear of everything that is hidden by the 1AC. Prefer the affective alter-politics produced by the 1NC

-- The 1AC deploys one of disaster capitalism’s favorite tactics: impacts describing senseless horror quickly fade as we catch our breath and return to a state of normalcy.

**Massumi ‘11** [Brian, political theorist, writer, and philosopher, Professor of Critical Empiricism at the European Graduate School, Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences at the University of Montréal, April 15, 2011, “The half-life of disaster,” The Guardian]

**The world watched in horror as** the northeast coast of **Honshu was shaken by an earthquake** of unimaginable magnitude, then razed by a tsunami of monstrous force. The natural **disaster struck with** a **suddenness defying comprehension**. It is as if a body blow to Japan had knocked the wind out of the world. The hit was so sudden as to leave one speechless. One minute, a city; the next, twisted metal and rubble. Life one minute; death the next. The media **images showed all there was to say: the horror**. The breathtaking, **senseless horror** of it, **surpassing** the human scale of **understanding. Then** amid the rubble, life began to stir again. **The media lens zooms** in to the human scale. Language regains its descriptive traction. A family finds a loved one against all odds. A volunteer doctor travels 18 hours each way to spend a few precious hours of his weekend days off ministering to the traumatised and wounded. A last survivor is pulled from the rubble days after all were feared dead. The human **stories apply** a **narrative balm to shock-raw nerves.** The shock is soon alloyed with admiration for the Japanese people's calm and fortitude in the face of the disaster. **An affective corner starts to be turned: from horror to heart warming.** Of course, **nothing can ever expunge the horror. It will be archived. The images** of the disaster **will be held indefinitely** in store. **For as long as there is** an **internet, they** will **remain available** for recirculation. It is not so much that the horror is replaced by human warmth and its accompaniments. It is rather that it "decays" in the media. The horror transmutes into a different affective element, its intensity halved, then halved again, eventually reducing to trace levels. Globally, the event settles back into a more stable range of the periodic table of collective emotion. **What is the half-life of disaster in today's global media? At most two weeks. The suffering on the ground continues, and will continue for decades.** World attention quickly shifts elsewhere. The Tohoku earthquake and tsunami were soon displaced from media attention by a next unforeseen shock: upheaval in Libya. **This progression is familiar** by now. **Hurricane** in Louisiana, **tsunami** in the Indian Ocean, **flooding** in Germany, flooding in Pakistan, **fires** in Greece, **earthquake** in Haiti. **Terrorist attacks** in New York, Madrid, London, Moscow. Natural disaster and terrorism define the poles of disaster. In between stretches a continuum of disaster, a plenum of frightful events of infinite variety, at every scale, coming one after the other in an endless series. The media plays its role of affective conversion with a regularity that is as predictable as each event in the series, taken separately, is shockingly unforeseen. First **the affective strike** of the event **is** instantaneously **transmitted, cutting** a shocked-and-awed hole **of horror into the fabric of the everyday.** The ability to make sense of events is suspended in a momentary hiatus of humanly unbearable, unspeakable horror. Then comes the zoom-in to the human detail. Stories get human traction. The horror is alloyed, its impact archived. Another event has been affectively conveyed with irruptive, interruptive force, only to subside into the background of everyday life. What remains is a continuous, low-level fear. This fear doesn't stand out clearly as an emotion. It is more like a habitual posture, an almost bodily bracing for the next unforeseen blow, a tensing infusing every move and every moment with a vague foreboding. **This trace**-form anticipation – this post-shock pre-posturing – **becomes the very medium of everyday life.** The environment of life is increasingly lived as a diffuse and foreboding "threat environment". **It is** almost **a relief when the next hit comes.** It is only another bout of disaster that will enable the narrative balm to calm again the collective nerves of a humanity permanently on low-level boil. This **fear defies a collective response**. When response is re-enabled, it is on the individual scale of the personal actions of "everyday heroes" carrying out small deeds of voluntaristic support. At this becalming pole of the affective conversion circuit, human agency is reasserted, but in the exemplary figure of individual actors exercising personal choice. By contrast, the out-of-scale strike of the unforeseen event seems utterly inhuman, an "act of God' – by which is meant "nature". Any event that strikes like fate with a speed or at a scale beyond the ken of human sense-making takes on the aspect of an uncontrollable force of nature. This applies even to wholly human-caused events, such as terrorist attacks. An association is established between "natural disaster" and "national security threat", which discourages any response other than the cyclic, media-driven return to the voluntaristic, individual human scale. **That affective pattern becomes second nature**. The association between natural disaster and national security becomes almost automatic. Shortly after Barack Obama's election as US president, his staff sent out a press release announcing the appointment of his national security team. It contained a tell-tale typographic error. The American public was assured of the dedication and competence of its new "natural security" team. Three points stand out: 1) Collective response does, of course, go on. But it takes the privileged form of a growing state security apparatus. The anti-terrorism doctrine of the US explicitly includes emergency response to natural disaster in its purview. All suddenly striking, unforeseen events that defy human logic and thus seem to substract themselves from the political sphere in its everyday functioning are lumped together in the same category, and together fall under the jurisdiction of a security apparatus that is continually growing new arms and extending old ones, weaving itself into a complex, tentacular network. The network is designed to enable seamless relay from civilian emergency response to military response. Hurricane Katrina, for example, was used by the Bush administration to break down the historical prohibition against the domestic deployment of national military force in America. A US National Guard was recalled from Iraq for service in Louisiana. When the fires were ravaging Greece in the summer of 2009, the Greek government declared the senseless, unforeseen disaster a terrorist threat, because it could not be ruled out that it had been the result of terrorist-connected arson. The army was called in. **Tendencies** such as these **blur the boundary between** the policing of **civil society and the military sphere**, and between natural activity, criminal activity, and acts of war. **The distinction between civil society and** the state of exception that is **war** is operationally blurred by the exercise of a "full-spectrum force" that is every much as diffuse and protean as the "threat environment" it purportedly secures. **Measures** suspending civil and political rights **are extended and multiplied**, and increasingly applied preemptively. The right to peaceful dissent suffers (witness the preemptive military-style tactics mobilised against peaceful demonstrators who had broken no law in Copenhagen at the climate talks in 2009 and at the G20 meeting in Toronto in 2010). **Collective action is** further **restrained** as the state of exception becomes the norm. The threat environment becomes an open field for autocratic intervention and arbitrary exercises of power operating on a continuum with military force. True to form, the nuclear disaster unfolding at the Fukushima reactor as a consequence of the earthquake and tsunami became "an opportunity for this pacifist nation to rely on its military at a level unseen since world war two," as the Japanese Self-Defense Forces are mobilised for civilian duty. Crucially, these developments are no longer legitimated in terms of political reason or reason of state. The blurring of the boundaries between war and peace, and the full-spectrum potential militarisation it fosters, is legitimated affectively, through the media-driven affective conversion circuit just described. In that affective logic, against the all-encompassing background of low-level fear, the tentacularly extending security apparatus appears as "natural" and as fateful as the events it is designed to respond to or preempt. 2) The periodic heartwarming return to the personal level and human scale obscures the reality that there is, in fact, a strange complicity at work between the human-caused and the naturally occurring. Hurricane Katrina was a "natural" disaster only if you fail to note the effects of climate change on the water temperatures of the Gulf of Mexico, and the environmentally ruinous "management" by the US Corps of Engineers of the Mississippi River floodplain. A similar complicity between causal factors of different orders, natural and human, was at work at Fukushima: tectonic shift meets nuclear energy infrastructure. The natural and the human are everywhere co-factors in disaster. They co-compose disaster in a way that can be fiendishly complex. But they are not simply in fusion or confusion. The media-borne affective conversion circuit upon which political power increasingly relies for its legitimation obscures the actual dynamics of this interlinkage. The return to the human personal level short-circuits any collective response that is not already either inscribed in the same logic of exploitative development that has brought the world to this juncture, or in complicity with the national/natural security apparatuses of full-spectrum force that move forcefully against those enacting alternate strategies of collective action in the name of alternate collective futures. 3) The actual dynamics of the disaster-prone interlinking of the complex systems just described involves a third complex system: the global economy. As the crisis of 2008 illustrated once again, capitalism itself is a far-from-equilibrium system eminently capable of generating its own endemic disasters. The financialisation of the capitalist economy has taken it to a level of complexity defying logic or description – not to mention regulation. It is as if capitalism has extruded its own, dedicated threat environment, in the form of abstract financial instruments operating on the edge of chaos, permanently under the pall of the spectre of debt crisis. A portion of finance capital, of course, still comes down to earth as investment capital. But this is always done with a view to maximising fluidity, in ways that fuel a perpetual self-destructuring of the economy, compensated for by a continual, quasi-chaotic remodelling of it. **This is** the aspect of capitalism that Schumpeter **called its drive to "creative destruction"**, and which Naomi Klein has suggestively named "**disaster capitalism**". The quasi-chaos of the process only further feeds such phenomena as the movements of migrant labour, which the nation-states are finding so destabilising. **It** also **gives rise**, in angry reaction, **to** movements of contestation which sometimes adopt, in desperation, exactly **the** kind of **"asymmetrical warfare" that** national/natural security **apparatuses categorise as "terrorist"**, and **which they fear above all things.** As a counterweight to the conditions of precariousness fostered by disaster capitalism itself, certain key economic sectors are allowed to consolidate through mergers. These quasi-monopolistic movements are tolerated, or even encouraged, in the name of securing the economy's future stability. This has been significantly the case in the energy sector, with policies friendly to centralised production and quasi-monopolistic ownership designed, for example, to revive the nuclear power industry or to kick-start capital-intensive **pseudo-green "alternatives"** like biofuels and the mythical "clean" coal – precisely the kinds of choices that **will render the global situation** even **more precarious** in the long run **by making a mockery of attempts to rein in global warming**, and by setting the stage for future generations' Fukushimas. **As long as disaster capitalism reigns** – which no doubt will be as long as capitalism itself reigns – **the world will be caught in a vicious circle**: that **of responding by** increasingly **draconian** and ill-advised **means to a threat** environment **whose dangers the response** only **contributes to intensifying. The only way out is** to militate for **an alternate interlinkage: between** global anticapitalist **political contestation and** a renascent environmental movement with opposition to nuclear power at its heart. **A political ecology** up to the task would embrace the human-nature hybridity, in all its complexity, but toward a new alliance designed to step outside the vicious circle. Also **required is a realisation that the affective turn** in the functioning of political legitimation that has come with the media saturation of global culture **is likely irreversible. An ecological alter-politics must** also **be an alter-politics of affect.**

#### This logic of utilitarianism culminates in extinction

**Santos 3**, Boaventura de Souza Santos is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Coimbra, “Collective Suicide?”, Bad Subjects, Issue # 63 , http://www.ces.fe.uc.pt/opiniao/bss/072en.php

According to Franz Hinkelammert, **the West has** repeatedly **been under the illusion that it should** try to **save humanity by destroying part of it. This is** a salvific and **sacrificial destruction**, committed in the name of the need to radically materialize all the possibilities opened up by a given social and political reality over which it is supposed to have total power. **This is how it was in colonialism**, with **the genocide of indigenous peoples**, and **the African slaves.** This is how it was in the period of **imperialist struggles, which caused millions of deaths** in two world wars and many other colonial wars. This is how it was in **Stalinism, with the Gulag and** in **Nazism, with the holocaust.** And now today, this is how it is in **neoliberalism**, with **the collective sacrifice of the periphery** and even the semiperiphery of the world system. With the war against Iraq, it is fitting to ask whether what is in progress is a new genocidal and sacrificial illusion, and what its scope might be. It is above all appropriate to ask if **the** new **illusion will** not herald the radicalization and the ultimate perversion of the western illusion: **destroy**ing **all** of **humanity** in the illusion of saving it. **Sacrificial genocide arises from** a totalitarian illusion that is manifested in **the belief that there are no alternatives to the present**-day **reality** and that the problems and difficulties confronting it arise from failing to take its logic of development to its ultimate consequences. **If there is** unemployment, **hunger and death in the Third World, this is not the result of market failures;** instead, **it is the outcome of** the **market laws not having been fully applied.** If there is **terrorism,** this **is not due to the violence** of the conditions **that generate it; it is due**, rather, **to** the fact **that total violence has not been employed to physically eradicate all** terrorists and **potential terrorists. This political logic is based on the supposition of total power and knowledge, and** on the radical **rejection of alternatives; it is ultra-conservative** in that it aims **to infinitely reproduce the status quo.** Inherent to it is the notion of the end of history. During the last hundred years, **the West has experienced three versions of this logic**, and, therefore, seen three versions of the end of history: **Stalinism**, with its logic of insuperable efficiency of the plan; **Nazism**, with its logic of racial superiority; **and neolib**eralism, with its logic of insuperable efficiency of the market. The first two periods involved the destruction of democracy. The last one trivializes democracy, disarming it in the face of social actors sufficiently powerful to be able to privatize the State and international institutions in their favour. I have described this situation as a combination of political democracy and social fascism. One current manifestation of this combination resides in the fact that intensely strong public opinion, worldwide, against the war is found to be incapable of halting the war machine set in motion by supposedly democratic rulers. At all these moments, a death drive, a catastrophic heroism, predominates, the idea of a looming collective suicide, only preventable by the massive destruction of the other. Paradoxically, the broader the definition of the other and the efficacy of its destruction, the more likely collective suicide becomes. In its sacrificial genocide version, neoliberalism is a mixture of market radicalization, neoconservatism and Christian fundamentalism. Its death drive takes a number of forms, from **the idea of "discardable populations"**, referring to citizens of the Third World not capable of being exploited as workers and consumers, to **the concept of "collateral damage"**, to refer to the deaths, as a result of war, of thousands of innocent civilians. The last, catastrophic heroism, is quite clear on two facts: according to reliable calculations by the Non-Governmental Organization MEDACT, in London, between 48 and 260 thousand civilians will die during the war and in the three months after (this is without there being civil war or a nuclear attack); the war will cost 100 billion dollars, enough to pay the health costs of the world's poorest countries for four years. Is it possible to fight this death drive? We must bear in mind that, historically, **sacrificial destruction has always been linked to** the **economic pillage of natural resources and** the **labor** force, **to the imperial design of radically changing the terms of economic**, social, **political** and cultural **exchanges in the face of falling efficiency rates postulated by** the **maximalist logic** of the totalitarian illusion in operation. It is as though hegemonic powers, both when they are on the rise and when they are in decline, repeatedly go through times of primitive accumulation, legitimizing the most shameful violence in the name of futures where, by definition, there is no room for what must be destroyed. In today's version, the period of primitive accumulation consists of combining neoliberal economic globalization with the globalization of war. The machine of democracy and liberty turns into a machine of horror and destruction.

#### Catastrophe representations mold the populace into supporting an omnipresent security society while papering over continual structural violence

Melley, 15—professor of English at Miami University (Timothy, “Security, Secrecy, and the Liberal Imaginary”, Telos 170 (Spring 2015): 149–67, dml)

Welcome to the democratic security society, where “keep calm and carry on” is a slogan for suckers and mass-mediated panic is part of the rhythm of everyday life. In the democratic security society, fantasizing calamity is job one, for the collapse of society can be forestalled only by its tireless contemplation. This strange fact—that contemporary democracy increasingly imagines, plans, and even rehearses its own destruction—is but one reflection of the growing contradiction at the heart of contemporary life. On the one hand, modern liberal societies laud the ideals of participatory democracy, free speech, individual liberty, and governmental transparency. On the other, they grow ever more committed to the biopolitical regulation of life, the mitigation of threats to public health and safety, and the restriction of liberties as a way of securing liberty itself.4 This final strategy—the defense of liberty through the suspension of liberty—is the paradoxical “state of exception” that Giorgio Agamben finds haunting every democracy.5 Nowhere does this specter now loom larger than in the United States, which is the democratic security society par excellence. On the one hand, American citizens and leaders understand their nation as a paragon of liberal democracy—the first modern democracy, a beacon of liberty, “the greatest country on earth”; on the other, they demand protection from a host of dangers, which they understand partly as threats to “freedom” itself. The United States thus invests the majority of its disposable income in defense (because “freedom is not free”); it has erected a massive system of security bureaucracies, checkpoints, walls, and safety protocols; and twenty-five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it commits itself increasingly to a sovereign and clandestine security apparatus constructed in the Cold War.6 But that is merely the security state proper. The security society is a much larger system of institutions (private and public), knowledges, attitudes, and representations that constitute a rationality affecting all aspects of everyday life. If the hallmarks of liberalism are individualism, liberty, and transparency, then the hallmarks of the security society are borders, surveillance systems, clandestine agencies, and state sovereignty. Beyond these institutional features, however, a security society is also marked by a set of cultural dispositions and tendencies: (1) the triumph of a biopolitical model in which power is deeply committed to the regulation of human life; (2) a culture of futurism, in which everyday life, cultural production, and economic activity are increasingly concerned with future possibilities; (3) widespread social adoption of epidemiological and immunological models of threat mitigation leading to restricted mobility and enhanced surveillance for some populations; and (4) a cultural imaginary increasingly focused on florid depictions of catastrophe, disaster, and even apocalypse. This cultural imaginary is essential to the growth of a security paradigm in the potentially hostile territory of liberal democracy. Securitization is a process that begins by imagining future threats before they materialize. Imagining weakness, invasion, and collapse is big business. Corporations increasingly hire “white hat” hackers to reveal the holes in their cyber defenses. Military intelligence agencies stage fictional disaster scenarios, and they use filmmakers, writers, and scenarists in these exercises. Beyond such direct connections, popular fiction powerfully shapes state policy.7 Both the security state and the security society depend on a rich cultural imaginary to conceptualize the potential threats, harms, dangers, and catastrophes that better security measures might prevent. In a society deeply anxious about security, we should expect a rich array of narratives and media constructions of future invasion, deprivation, natural disaster, war, and apocalypse. This, of course, is precisely what we see. Since the Cold War, U.S. culture has grown increasingly consumed with visions of alien invasion, nuclear war, zombification, terrorism, mass extinction, contagion, and social and ecological collapse. From The Hunger Games to Survivor, the Hobbesian state of nature has never had so much representational cache. National Geographic Channel’s Doomsday Preppers is now in its fourth season. In the booming area of Young Adult fiction, dystopia is a mainstay. Since the Cold War, future social collapse has been the focus of hundreds of major motion pictures and television series, ranging from Mad Max and Blade Runner to recent productions as diverse as 2012, The Day After Tomorrow, World War Z, Oblivion, Elysium, and Snowpiercer. 8 Perhaps even more notable is the growing focus on ecological catastrophe and apocalypse in the work of major literary figures like Margaret Atwood, Stephen King, Don DeLillo, Octavia Butler, Cormac McCarthy, and Barbara Kingsolver, to name but a few.9 Catastrophe narrative is widely understood as “mere entertainment,” but it nonetheless occupies a great deal of the collective consciousness of contemporary American culture. It attracts massive capital investment and even greater investments of money and time from consumers. It thus constitutes an omnipresent collective fantasy, and this fantasy cannot be dissociated so easily from material security measures. The incessant contemplation of invasion, destruction, and social collapse is in fact one of the things that encourages the construction of survivalist bunkers, panic rooms, metal detectors, and gated communities. Such fantasies are in some ways the sign of privilege itself, the unconscious acknowledgment of dramatic social inequities that are maintained by the strangely porous but guarded borders of elite suburbs, corporate campuses, and international borders. While these zones are secured against physical threats, their most important effects may be epistemological ones. Secured boundaries have the effect of “protecting” privileged populations not only from physical conflict but also from knowledge about such conflict—that is, knowledge about the living conditions and experiences of those on the other side of the fence. Because security is a commodity of the privileged, these material and epistemological barriers undermine the empathy that might lessen social inequality. Within such a system, the cultural imaginary takes on a far greater role as a source of “knowledge” about the potential harms facing the security society. But because its “knowledge” is also fantasy, this arrangement produces a symptomatic irrationality at the heart of the security society. In response to perceived public demand, leaders often spend vast sums to mitigate relatively unlikely threats (terrorist attacks, for example) while tolerating all manner of much graver, but less catastrophic, harms (gun deaths, for example). This is hardly the “rational public sphere” that liberal society and its open public sphere were supposed to foster

#### Roleplaying colludes with an imperialist agenda that maintains status quo power, privilege, and oppression by distancing debaters from real world participation in the political contexts we debate about

Reid-Brinkley 2008 (Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley, University of Pittsburgh Department of Communications, “THE HARSH REALITIES OF “ACTING BLACK”: HOW AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLICY DEBATERS NEGOTIATE REPRESENTATION THROUGH RACIAL PERFORMANCE AND STYLE” 2008)

Mitchell observes that the stance of the policymaker in debate comes with a “sense of detachment associated with the spectator posture.”115 In other words, its participants are able to engage in debates where they are able to distance themselves from the events that are the subjects of debates. Debaters can throw around terms like torture, terrorism, genocide and nuclear war without blinking. Debate simulations can only serve to distance the debaters from real world participation in the political contexts they debate about. As William Shanahan remarks: …the topic established a relationship through interpellation that inhered irrespective of what the particular political affinities of the debaters were. The relationship was both political and ethical, and needed to be debated as such. When we blithely call for United States Federal Government policymaking, we are not immune to the colonialist legacy that establishes our place on this continent. We cannot wish away the horrific atrocities perpetrated everyday in our name simply by refusing to acknowledge these implications” (emphasis in original).116 118 The “objective” stance of the policymaker is an impersonal or imperialist persona. The policymaker relies upon “acceptable” forms of evidence, engaging in logical discussion, producing rational thoughts. As Shanahan, and the Louisville debaters’ note, such a stance is integrally linked to the normative, historical and contemporary practices of power that produce and maintain varying networks of oppression. In other words, the discursive practices of policy-oriented debate are developed within, through and from systems of power and privilege. Thus, these practices are critically implicated in the maintenance of hegemony. So, rather than seeing themselves as government or state actors, Jones and Green choose to perform themselves in debate, violating the more “objective” stance of the “policymaker” and require their opponents to do the same.

#### Their portrayal of a Chinese threat is not a descriptive claim, but one that is value laden and draws lines between the American self and the Chinese Other.

Pan 04 Chengxin Pan, professor of political science and international relations at Australian National University, “The ‘China Threat’ in American Self-Imagination: The Discursive Construction of Other as Power Politics,” Alternatives 29, 2004, pg. 305-331

More specifically, I want to argue that U.S. **conceptions of China as a threatening other are always intrinsically linked to how U.S. policymakers**/mainstream China specialists **see themselves** (as representatives of the indispensable, security-conscious nation, for example). As such, **they are not value-free, objective descriptions of an independent, preexisting Chinese reality** out there, **but** are better understood as a kind of **normative**, meaning-giving **practice that** often **legitimates power politics** in U.S.-China relations and **helps transform** the "**China threat" into** social **reality**. In other words, **it is self-fulfilling in practice, and is always *part* of the "China threat" problem it purports merely to describe**. In doing so, I seek to bring to the fore two interconnected themes of self/other constructions and of theory as practice inherent in the "China threat" literature—themes that have been overridden and rendered largely invisible by those common positivist assumptions. These themes are of course nothing new nor peculiar to the "China threat" literature. They have been identified elsewhere by critics of some conventional fields of study such as ethnography, anthropology, oriental studies, political science, and international relations.\* Yet, so far, the China field in the West in general and the U.S. "China threat" literature in particular have shown remarkable resistance to systematic critical reflection on both their normative status as discursive practice and their enormous practical implications for international politics. It is in this context that this article seeks to make a contribution.

#### Representations of China as a threat ignores the normative value-judgments inherent to the process of claiming to empirically know Chinese national and political identity—this makes security threats self-fulfilling prophecies

-- Reject their China impact – China’s threat is not objective, but relies upon discoursive projections. We should take responsibility for our framing of geopolitics

**Pan 4** – PhD in Political Science and International Relations and member of the International Studies Association ISA (Chengxin Pan: “The "China threat" in American self-imagination: the discursive construction of other as power politics”, Alternatives RC)

**China and its relationship with the United States** has long been a fascinating subject of study in the mainstream U.S. international relations community. This **is reflected,** for example, in the current heated debates **over whether China is primarily a strategic threat** to or a market bonanza for the United States **and whether containment or engagement is the best way to deal with it.** (1) While U.S. China scholars argue fiercely over "what China precisely is," their debates have been underpinned by some common ground, especially in terms of a positivist epistemology. Firstly, **they believe that China is ultimately a knowable object, whose reality can be, and ought to be, empirically revealed by scientific means.** For example, after expressing his dissatisfaction with often conflicting Western perceptions of China, David M. Lampton, former president of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, suggests that "it is time to step back and look at where China is today, where it might be going, and what consequences that direction will hold for the rest of the world." (2) Like many other China scholars, Lampton views his object of study as essentially "something we can stand back from and observe with clinical detachment." (3) Secondly, associated with the first assumption, it is commonly believed that China scholars merely serve as "disinterested observers" and that their studies of China are neutral, passive descriptions of reality. And thirdly, in pondering whether China poses a threat or offers an opportunity to the United States, they rarely raise the question of "what the United States is." That is, the meaning of the United States is believed to be certain and beyond doubt. I do not dismiss altogether the conventional ways of debating China. It is not the purpose of this article to venture my own "observation" of "where China is today," nor to join the "containment" versus "engagement" debate per se. Rather, I want to contribute to a novel dimension of the China debate by questioning the seemingly unproblematic assumptions shared by most China scholars in the mainstream IR community in the United States. To perform this task, I will focus attention on a particularly significant component of the China debate; namely, the "China threat" literature. More specifically, I want to argue **that U.S. conceptions of China as a threatening other are always intrinsically linked to how U.S. policymakers/mainstream China specialists see themselves** (as representatives of the indispensable, security-conscious nation, for example). As such, **they are not value-free, objective descriptions of an** independent, **preexisting Chinese reality out there, but are better understood as a kind of normative, meaning-giving practice that often legitimates power politics in U.S.-China relations and helps transform the "China threat" into social reality.** In other words, it is self-fulfilling in practice, and is always part of the "China threat" problem it purports merely to describe**. In doing so**, I seek to bring to the fore two interconnected themes of self/other constructions and of theory as practice inherent in the "China threat" literature--themes that have been overridden and rendered largely invisible by those common positivist assumptions. These themes are of course nothing new nor peculiar to the "China threat" literature. They have been identified elsewhere by critics of some conventional fields of study such as ethnography, anthropology, oriental studies, political science, and international relations. (4) Yet, so far, the China field in the West in general and **the U.S. "China threat" literature** in particular **have shown remarkable resistance to systematic critical reflection on both their normative status as discursive practice and their enormous practical implications for international politics.** (5) It is in this context that this article seeks to make a contribution. I begin with a brief survey of the "China threat" argument in contemporary U.S. international relations literature, followed by an investigation of how this particular argument about China is a discursive construction of other, which is predicated on the predominant way in which the United States imagines itself as the universal, indispensable nation-state in constant need of absolute certainty and security. Finally, this article will illustrate some of the dangerous practical consequences of the "China threat" discourse for contemporary U.S.-China relations, particularly with regard to the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait missile crisis and the 2001 spy-plane incident.

#### Representations of China as a threat are just another realist construct- they ignore economic factors

Lacy, lecturer in international relations at Lancaster University, 2005

(Mark J., “Security and Change”, p. 3-4 ) //ME

However, it can be argued that **the inclusion of China** into the architecture of the¶ global economy (through bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), and¶ investment by global corporations in China) **will lessen the chances of conflict**. Gabriel¶ Kolko declares that **China’s** rulers “**want to do business**, and their highest priorities, by¶ far, are economic; their adhesion to the World Trade Organization is the surest indication¶ that they want to be integrated into a capitalist world economy.”20 From this perspective,¶ it could be argued that **a China included into the space of “globalization” will present less¶ danger than non-state actors**, such as deterritorialized and flexible terrorist networks.¶ Although **the Realist could point out that such a line of argument is exactly what an¶ intellectual such as Mearsheimer is trying to protect us from as the sense of fear that¶ people feel** after 9/11—with its violent immediacy and visceral power—may lead¶ politicians to focus on sources of insecurity that are really not that dangerous for the long¶ term security of the state. A terrorist network could not have access to the type of¶ weapons of mass destruction that China has access to: states—by definition of their¶ military capability—are still the main agents of destruction on the geopolitical scene. Of¶ course the Realist may argue **that China plays by the rules of the capitalist system¶ because they are means to an end—**but what happens when it becomes a peer competitor?¶ From the Offensive Realist perspective, **this is the underworld to the “optimistic” vision¶ of liberal theorists who argue that enlargement of the spaces of economy and democracy¶ will lead to order and progress in international affairs.¶ Fear of China is not unique to Mearsheimer’s work on Offensive Realism and it is a¶ discourse of danger that circulates in many areas** where the future of security and the¶ global economy are debated. **This fear of China in the contemporary political imaginary¶ of Europe and the United States appears to stem from an awareness by the “developed”¶ of the power of capitalism and technology to unleash huge changes in society** (creating a¶ condition of “everlasting uncertainty,” as Marx and Engels put it). It stems from **the view¶ that in Europe and the United States there are moral limits imposed on the market¶ civilization of liberal democracy** (although these moral limits may become flexible¶ outside of the “core”). As Max Weber put it, the “inner attitude of the adventurer that¶ laughs at all ethical limitation is universal”;21 the fear of China emerges from the sense¶ that a capitalist China competing in a global economy will unleash the power of the¶ market without any sense of ethical limitation. In this sense, commentators from both¶ Left and Right fear a territory where 1.3 billion individuals are willing to work for low¶ pay as in a zone where “everything is permitted.” The Economist comments that China¶ has an “inexhaustible supply of workers, willing to work long hours for pitifully low¶ pay.”22 In November 2002 Wired, a magazine that celebrates—some would say,¶ fetishizes—the vision of an information age driven by free markets and a borderless¶ economy, published an article on “The Hot zone”: “An untamed technology boom is¶ sweeping through China’s Pearl River Delta, where cheap labor, mass production, police¶ thugs, and get-rich-quick dreams rule. It’s a terrible, horrible, lawless frontier. And it¶ works.” **The fear of China is combined with a perverse fascination**—and maybe even¶ Introduction 19¶ admiration—for the “unrefined” market, free from liberal concerns. And maybe this is¶ what scares Mearsheimer: a population that does not hold the “deep-seated” optimism¶ and liberalism of the United States. **This fear of “unrefined” capitalism is what lies at the¶ core of these views of China, a fear that “unthinking hordes,” used only to totalitarian¶ governance, will threaten the decadent tame zones of liberal democracy**. A similar fear¶ drove the imaginary of the Cold War, articulated through Hollywood fantasies of¶ immoral scientists and unthinking robot armies or zombies attacking the free¶ communities of 1950s America.

#### Roleplaying leads to passivity and ressentiment – turns case and is an independent reason to vote Neg

Antonio 95 Robert, Professor of Sociology at the University of Kansas, “Nietzsche’s Antisociology: Subjectified Culture and the End of History”, Volume 101, No. 1 \*\*we don’t agree with author’s use of ableist language

While modern theorists saw differentiated roles and professions as a matrix of autonomy and reflexivity, Nietzsche held that **persons** (especially male professionals) in specialized occupations **overidentify with their positions and engage in gross fabrications to obtain advancement. They look** hesitantly **to the opinion of others, asking** themselves, "**How ought I feel about this?" They are so** thoroughly **absorbed in simulating effective role players** that **they have trouble being anything but actors-"The role has actually become the character."** This highly subjectified social self or simulator suffers devastating inauthenticity. The powerful authority given the social greatly amplifies Socratic culture's already self-indulgent "inwardness." **Integrity,** decisiveness, **spontaneity, and pleasure are undone by paralyzing overconcern about possible causes, meanings, and consequences of acts and unending internal dialogue about what others might think,** expect, say, or do (Nietzsche 1983, pp. 83-86; 1986, pp. 39-40; 1974, pp. 302-4, 316-17). **Nervous rotation of socially appropriate "masks" reduces persons to hypostatized** "shadows," "abstracts," or **simulacra.** One adopts "many roles," playing them "badly and superficially" in the fashion of a stiff "puppet play." Nietzsche asked, "Are you genuine? Or only an actor? A representative or that which is represented? . . . [Or] no more than an imitation of an actor?" **Simulation is so pervasive that it is hard to tell the copy from the genuine article**; social selves "prefer the copies to the originals" (Nietzsche 1983, pp. 84-86; 1986, p. 136; 1974, pp. 232- 33, 259; 1969b, pp. 268, 300, 302; 1968a, pp. 26-27). Their inwardness and aleatory scripts foreclose genuine attachment to others. This type of actor cannot plan for the long term or participate in enduring networks of interdependence; such a person is neither willing nor able to be a "stone" in the societal "edifice" (Nietzsche 1974, pp. 302-4; 1986a, pp. 93-94). **Pervasive** leveling, improvising, and **faking foster** an inflated sense of ability and **an oblivious attitude about the fortuitous circumstances** that **contribute to role attainment** (e.g., **class or ethnicity**). The most mediocre people believe they can fill any position, even cultural leadership. Nietzsche respected the self-mastery of genuine ascetic priests, like Socrates, and praised their ability to redirect ressentiment creatively and to render the "sick" harmless. But he deeply feared the new simulated versions. Lacking the "born physician's" capacities, these **impostors amplify the** worst inclinations of the **herd; they are "violent, envious**, exploitative, scheming, fawning, cringing, arrogant, all according to circumstances. " Social selves are fodder for the "great man of the masses." Nietzsche held that "**the less one knows how to command, the more** urgently **one covets someone who commands**, who commands severely- a god, prince, class, physician, father confessor, dogma, or party conscience. **The deadly combination of desperate conforming and** overreaching and untrammeled **ressentiment paves the way for a new type of tyrant** (Nietzsche 1986, pp. 137, 168; 1974, pp. 117-18, 213, 288-89, 303-4).