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Capitalism K

#### They neoliberalize difference by theorizing identities as essentially different and in competition for recognition. The only way out of oppression inflicted by specific systems is striving for solidarity to amplify class consciousness.

Bruce Rogers-Vaughn 16, Associate Professor of the Practice of Pastoral Theology and Counseling at Vanderbilt Divinity School, “Muting and Mutating Suffering: Sexism, Racism, and Class Struggle,” Caring for Souls in a Neoliberal Age, pg 131-166

INTERSECTIONALITY AS A POST-CAPITALIST THEORY: THE INTER-RELATIONALITY OF SUFFERING In light of the foregoing discussions of the neoliberal alterations of sexism, racism, and class conflict, I propose that we understand intersectionality theory as a post-capitalist project. This is not a stretch, given its origin among 1970s feminists who were themselves quite critical of capitalism. This requires, however, careful attention to the radical impulse within intersectionality theory and a dedicated precision regarding terminology. Otherwise, as I have already noted, it can quite easily be co-opted by neoliberal versions of diversity and multiculturalism. I will make no effort to be exhaustive in this concluding section. Rather, I draw upon prior sections of this chapter to suggest, in summary fashion, five features of an intersectionality theory that help to preserve its post-capitalist spirit. In brief, a post-capitalist intersectionality theory: (a) is primarily concerned with understanding the social generation of suffering rather than individual identity formation; (b) emphasizes a material grounding in actual human relationships rather than intersections between abstract categories of difference; (c) refuses to ontologize or prioritize the differences that appear in relationships; (d) strives to establish solidarities rather than dwelling solely upon the recognition of difference; and (e) works toward an increase in consciousness that addresses both second- and third-order suffering. As for the first point, I have the impression that intersectionality theory, despite its original countercultural impetus, is often read superficially as first and foremost a discourse about identity formation and cultural difference. The isolated individualism of neoliberal rationality, furthermore, tends to interpret identity as simply a matter of personal choice or individual formation. The combination of these two moves robs intersectionality theory of its radical critique. This can have unfortunate real life consequences. For example, psychologists Grzanka and Miles ( 2016 ), after studying the literature and training videos for “LGBT Affirmative Therapy,” conclude that this psychotherapy training program reconceives intersectionality simply as a matter of “multiple identities.” They argue that this is an instance of the “multicultural turn” in psychology, elements of which “are actually consonant with neoliberal transformations of social and institutional life that foremost function to incorporate difference, rather than to redirect and reconfigure the ways power and material resources are unfairly distributed” (emphasis in original). 4 They conclude that, while this form of therapy should not be seen as “fundamentally neoliberal,” it is co-opted by a neoliberal agenda that ignores structural inequalities and shifts responsibility onto individual agents. The result, as we will see in the next chapter, is that individuals may blame themselves and remain unaware of the social–material origins of their distress. The overriding concern of intersectionality, however, is not identity but the suffering arising from systemic oppression. It is a theory about the social genesis of suffering more than it is an identity theory. In her overview of intersectionality theory, pastoral theologian Nancy Ramsay ( 2014 ) observes that social justice is “the normative goal in intersectionality” (p. 456). This means that, while it may indeed shed light on questions regarding identity, its main concern is social well-being. The statement of the Combahee River Collective ( 1977 /1979), for example, focuses on social systems of oppression. The intersections the authors envision are not between identities as such. In the initial paragraph, they note that their analyses and practices are “based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking ” (p. 362, my emphasis). The spirit of this document is preserved in bell hooks’s ( 2004 ) recurrent description of contemporary oppressions as emanating from “imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (p. 17). 5 Unlike many of the lists common in the intersectionality literature—race, class, gender, sexuality, and so on—the culprits here are systems rather than identity categories. Furthermore, the concern here is laser-focused on suffering . Oppression is accomplished, however, by both configuring identities and manipulating the power dynamics circulating around and through them. The black feminists who wrote the Combahee River Collective statement believed that, while racism, sexism, and heterosexism cannot be reduced to class conflict, neither can the oppressions around these identities be understood without comprehending their place in capitalist systems of production. For our purposes here, it is critical to remember that neoliberal rationality is perfectly capable of co-opting intersectional discourse, primarily by reemploying the economics/culture divide I have previously discussed in this book. This has become evident during the 2016 presidential campaigns in the USA, in which the problems of racism and sexism are often discussed without reference to class struggle. As Denvir ( 2016 ) has observed, such injustices “cease to be intersectional the moment they are abstracted from political economy” (para. 7). Speaking of abstraction, those who espouse a post-capitalist intersectionality, which is to say, a version of this theory that retains its historical origins, will have reservations about this designation. This brings us to the second feature of a post-capitalist intersectionality. The term “intersectionality” is highly conceptual and immaterial. On its face, it appears to conjure up a mental exercise in which abstract categories of difference, rather than actual people, are interrelated. Worse yet, it could be taken to imply—contrary to its original principles—that these are categories of essential difference that are first separate, with the challenge being how to theorize their points of contact. In addition to leaving aside considerations of class, this is precisely what neoliberalized forms of intersectionality tend to do. The neoliberal imagination conceives societies as aggregates of distinctive and separate-but-equal individuals. The intellectual problem is then how to explain the ways these individual building blocks intersect. Perhaps, then, we need a better word for theorizing the sufferings emerging around social differences. It is generally accepted that the term intersectionality first appeared in a paper by the legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw ( 1989 ). Thus neither the term “intersectionality” nor any of its derivatives appears in the statement of the Combahee River Collective ( 1977 /1979). Rather, the document consistently refers to human relationships . Markers of difference (identities) are understood as entangled in the dynamics of everyday relationships, not only between individuals but also between individuals and social systems, as well as between collectives. Womanist theologian and ethicist emilie townes (personal communication, January 19, 2016) suggests that a better term might be inter-relationality . In my view, this means that the differences suffusing actual relationships, and the sufferings that often originate in them, are embedded in the materiality of relationships. They appear as we relate in concrete ways—eating together, living together, working together—including the ways we collaborate within and among collectives, as well as how we construct the economics and policies of social life. From this perspective, identities are always formed in relationships. They may be healthy or unhealthy, just or unjust, or combinations thereof. But they are never simply “personal choices.” Thus Ramsay ( 2014 ) observes: “Intersectional approaches to identity clearly link individual and social dimensions to any experience of identity. Identity is socially and historically constructed” (p. 456). The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman ( 2004 ) adds that identity “cannot be formed unless in reference to the bonds connecting the self to other people and the assumption that such bonds are reliable and stable over time” (p. 68). In more just relationships and societies, individuals have enough liberty to improvise upon what is given to them, and identities remain flexible. In less just societies, identities are simply imposed and rigid. I have been claiming that neoliberal transformations of sexism and racism refer to identity categories that are shorn of class. This may be a good place to comment on the connection, within an inter-relational perspective, between class and other identities. In a previous publication, I have argued that class is not an identity (Rogers-Vaughn, 2015 ). I must now repent of that opinion. At the time, I was focused on the difference between class and identity as this term is understood within neoliberal identity politics. Inter-relationality, however, gives us a way to understand identity, and even identity politics, from outside neoliberal discourse. Class, of course, has to be amenable to identification. Otherwise there could be no “class consciousness,” as well as forms of solidarity and social movements founded upon it. I still claim, however, that class is “a different kind of difference.” As theologian Joerg Rieger ( 2013 ) has noted, to talk about inclusion or diversity with regard to class, as we might with gender and race, makes little sense (p. 199). For instance, applying affirmative action to gender and race leads to a more equitable society. If applied to class differences, however, “it would mean the end of capitalism” (p. 202). What I wish to add here is that the economic and political power differentials indicated by the term class are not simply the basis for a potential identity. More importantly, class power manifests the capacity to generate and reconfigure identities, including those attributed to sex, gender, and race. For example, the ability to have an identity, much less multiple identities, as well as the degree of agency to improvise upon identity varies with class power. Bauman ( 2004 ) summarizes this capacity: At one pole of the emergent global hierarchy are those who can compose and decompose their identities more or less at will, drawing from the uncommonly large, planet-wide pool of offers. At the other pole are crowded those whose access to identity choice has been barred, people who are given no say in deciding their preferences and who in the end are burdened with identities enforced and imposed by others ; identities which they themselves resent but are not allowed to shed and cannot manage to get rid of. (p. 38, emphasis in original) Although I reject the notion of identity as a personal choice, I am reinterpreting Bauman’s position with reference to the relative capacity to improvise upon what is given. Most of us, says Bauman, “are suspended uneasily between those two poles,” and must tolerate a level of anxiety surrounding the precariousness of our identities (p. 38). Finally, Bauman notes: “there is a lower space than low—a space underneath the bottom” (p. 39). In this space dwell those whom he calls the “underclass,” those whom Sassen ( 2014 ) calls “the expelled.” These inhabitants have no identities at all, even those that may be oppressive: The meaning of the ‘underclass identity’ is an absence of identity ; the effacement or denial of individuality, of ‘face’—that object of ethical duty and moral care. You are cast outside the social space in which identities are sought, chosen, constructed, evaluated, confirmed or refuted. (Bauman, 2004 , p. 39, emphasis in original) Bauman is pointing here to desubjectivation in its most extreme form, and thus to what I am calling third-order suffering. While desubjectivation appears in other classes, in the underclass it is pervasive and near-absolute. But what I wish to emphasize here is that class has a dual meaning. It is both a potential identity and a power that generates and configures other identities. Thirdly, a post-capitalist intersectionality, or inter-relationality, refuses to ontologize or prioritize the differences that appear in human relationships. It is clear to most people, I think, that class is not ontological. It is not, in other words, given or natural. The ideal of social mobility—shared in the USA by political conservatives and liberals alike—assumes that one may be born into one class but ascend (or descend) into another. This is one thing that distinguishes capitalism, which divides society into classes, from pre-capitalist feudal societies, which divided the populace into rigid caste systems. What is often missed is that race and gender have no more ontological status than class. Scientific efforts to identify essential differences according to race and gender, beyond somatic variations such as sexual anatomy, skin pigmentation, eye color, body morphology, and hair texture have either come up empty or confirmed cultural stereotypes (e.g. Fields & Fields, 2014 ; Fine, 2010 ). Reed ( 2013 ) concludes that such efforts are “nothing more than narrow upper-class prejudices parading about as science” (p. 51). Theories emphasizing inter-relationality eschew assertions of essential difference and seek instead to identify ways that a hegemony utilizes asserted differences to serve its interests and agendas. The focus here is on how dominant powers create, configure, and utilize identities to accomplish political and material agendas. Regarding designations of race, Victor Anderson ( 1999 ) has been a pioneer in asserting that “blackness” is not ontological. Similarly, Fields and Fields ( 2014 ) argue that through a process the authors call “racecraft.” As Harry Chang (Liem & Montague, 1985 ) claimed during the 1970s, racialization is a type of reification: “Money seeks gold to objectify itself—gold does not cry out to be money” (p. 39). The upshot of all this, according to Reed, is that race and gender are “ascriptive differences” utilized by systems of domination: “Ideologies of ascriptive difference help to stabilize a social order by legitimizing its hierarchies of wealth, power, and privilege, including its social division of labor, as the natural order of things” (p. 49). This is not an argument for a “class first” approach. While gender and race, like class, are created and configured within matrices of domination, the consequent sexism and racism are quite real and take up lives of their own. Moreover, gender, race and class are always already entangled . It would be futile to attempt to prioritize them, even in concrete instances of oppression. For this reason, the statement of the Combahee River Collective ( 1977 /1979) asserts that “race, sex, and class are simultaneous factors in oppression” (p. 371). It is tempting to think that each may assume priority, depending on contextual circumstances. Even bell hooks (Lowens, 2012 ), in a recent interview, observes that theories of intersectionality “allow us to focus on what is most important at a given point in time. …Like right now, for many Americans, class is being foregrounded like never before because of the economic situation” (para. 19). I fear that such declarations may be slippery slopes that function to maintain antagonistic divisions within the progressive left. Furthermore, such a position does not attend to how, in everyday life, the oppressions circulating around these identities are directly , rather than inversely, proportional. It just does not seem to be the case that, with the increasing economic inequality under neoliberalism, class concerns move to the foreground, while sexism and racism recede. Rather, they all rise together and in tandem. It is true that rampant inequality has intensified class conflict and made it more visible. However, sexism has also increased under these conditions, with disproportional numbers of women pressured into low-paid and unpaid work, and with discrimination and violence against women accelerating (Braedley & Luxton, 2010 ; Connell, 2010 ). Likewise, growing economic inequality has been accompanied by suppressed income for blacks and by more frequent and egregious acts of violence and exploitation toward people of color (Giroux, 2010 ; Goldberg, 2009 ). It is surely no coincidence that this period, in the USA, has been marked by massive incarceration of blacks and an escalation in killings of unarmed blacks by law enforcement officials. As a parent, I fear for the future of my two biracial sons, now eight years of age, who will likely experience oppression at the hands of dominant neoliberal powers unless substantial changes occur. The point is that economic and social exclusion and exploitation go together. We simply can no longer afford a “class first” or “race first” or “gender fi rst” approach to political action. This brings us to a fourth dimension of a post-capitalist inter- relationality. While the statement of the Combahee River Collective ( 1977 /1979) may be interpreted as laying out the significance of identity politics, it is not the same identity politics that have become so familiar in neoliberal societies. Neoliberal identity politics have effectively balkanized what was once “the public.” Society breaks up into a multitude of identity groups, each more or less insulated from the others and in competition with them. This sort of fractiousness is absent in the statement of the Combahee River Collective. While clear about their own identity and interests, these women look for ways to collaborate with others, especially for political action. They stress, for example: “Although we are feminists and lesbians, we feel solidarity with progressive black men and do not advocate the fractionalization that white women who are separatists demand” (p. 365). After noting a number of examples, they emphasize that they “continue to do political work in coalition with other groups” (p. 371). This underscores that a postcapitalist inter-relationality presses through the recognition of difference in search of solidarity . If the problems of class exploitation, sexism, and racism arise together, then they must be addressed together. Pastoral theologian Cedric Johnson ( 2016a ) observes: Social exclusion and labor exploitation are different problems, but they are never disconnected under capitalism. And both processes work to the advantage of capital. Segmented labor markets, ethnic rivalry, racism, sexism, xenophobia, and informalization all work against solidarity. (para. 77) Any approach that gives primacy to a particular identity, much less attributing ontological status to it, necessarily undermines solidarity and political action. Johnson singles out “liberal antiracist discourse,” which separates race from class and prioritizes racism, as an example: Liberal antiracist discourse further isolates the conditions of the most excluded segments of workers, separating their experiences from those of other workers, and their labor from the broader processes at work, instead of emphasizing the empirical and potential unity of the laboring classes. (para. 78) This aids and abets the “divide and conquer” strategy that financial elites have historically used to divide working people against each other. Finally, a post-capitalist inter-relationality strives toward the increase of consciousness, particularly with regard to the social origins of suffering. Even with regard to second-order suffering, consciousness-raising is often critical. This is because the complex machinations of institutions and social systems tend to occur, as Marx often noted, “behind the backs” of the people. With third-order suffering—which arises from the synergy of deinstitutionalization, desymbolization, and desubjectivation—the increase of consciousness is even more important. As I discussed in previous sections, neoliberal rationality denies and thus renders sexism, racism, and class conflict invisible. Furthermore, by undertaking the “Three Ds,” neoliberalization erodes a sense of belonging, a common language for naming the suffering, and any durable agency. This yields the most profound unconsciousness imaginable, including, ultimately, a lack of awareness of goingon- being. How is the language of inter-relationality to make any sense for people in such a condition? Where are its referents now? We are reduced here to a voiceless and nameless suffering. So that is where we must begin. William Davies ( 2015 ) speaks, I believe, to this situation: “Rather than seek to alter our feelings, now would be a good time to take what we’ve turned inwards, and attempt to direct it back out again” (p. 11). Part of the wisdom of inter-relationality is that nothing can “make sense” outside of relationships. Especially when we no longer know who we are, and our suffering has no name, we need others who will be present to bear witness. We can only direct our suffering back out when we can direct it to others, even when this means, initially, sitting in silence together. There is no hope unless we can begin with at least this seed of solidarity. This does not mean “psychotherapy for everybody.” Rising from such a deep unconsciousness occurs best in groups, and perhaps even in movements, where “deep calls unto deep.” After many years of activism, Angela Davis ( 2016 ) confesses: I don’t know whether I would have survived had not movements survived, had not communities of resistance, communities of struggle. So whatever I’m doing I always feel myself directly connected to those communities and I think that this is an era where we have to encourage that sense of community particularly at a time when neoliberalism attempts to force people to think of themselves only in individual terms and not in collective terms. It is in collectivities that we find reservoirs of hope and optimism. (p. 49) So, to undo the spell of neoliberalism, we must “play the record in reverse.” That means finding paths, however meager, back to solidarity. And this brings us to the next chapter, in which I must respond to the inevitable question: “Where do we go from here?”

#### The AFF relies on a reductionist view of identity---this results in mystification of class contradictions in the service of uplift that benefits a select few instead of transformative agenda.

Adolph Reed 19, professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, 1-8-2019, "What Materialist Black Political History Actually Looks Like," nonsite.org, https://nonsite.org/editorial/what-materialist-black-political-history-actually-looks-like

The race-reductionist argument is propelled by a combination of intense moral fervor and crude self-interest. I’ve argued in 2018 articles in nonsite, The Baffler, and Dialectical Anthropology, that, as it has evolved, the post-2016 debate has thrown into bold relief the class character of antiracist and other expressions of identity politics.5 That could be a salutary product of the controversy. It’s good in this sort of debate for the mist of ideology to burn off and the material stakes involved to be clear and in the open. However, many people who have followed or even participated in the debates have not connected the dots to see that obvious point or to acknowledge its implications. One reason for failure to do so is summed up pithily in Upton Sinclair’s quip, “It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.” Not only would pursuit of an agenda focused on addressing “horizontal inequality,” if successful, disproportionately benefit upper-status, already well-off people—as Walter Benn Michaels and I have noted tirelessly over the past decade at least, the reality of a standard of justice based on eliminating group disparities is that a society could be just if 1% of the population controlled 90% of the resources so long as the one percent featured blacks, Hispanics, women, lesbians and gays, etc. in rough proportion to their representation in the general population; also, advocacy of defining the only meaningful inequality as disparities between groups is itself a career trajectory in the academy, as well as in the corporate, nonprofit and freelance commentary worlds. There’s no point trying to communicate with those whose resistance stems from such material investment; no matter what their specific content, their responses to class critique always amount to the orderly Turkle’s lament to McMurphy in One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest—“This is my fucking job!” Purblindness to identitarianism’s ever more clearly exposed class character also rests on naively habituated ideological thinking. Most of us operate with more or less vague or inchoate recognition that the past included bad old-timey times marked by openly racist practices like slavery and compulsory racial segregation, genocide against Native Americans, Chinese Exclusion, imposed gender hierarchies, etc. In lieu of examining the discrete sources of inequality in the present, antiracist ideology in particular depends on asserting superficial analogies to those earlier historical periods when racial exclusion and discrimination were more direct impediments to black Americans’ and other nonwhites’ social position and well-being. Thus, for example, Michelle Alexander proposes that contemporary mass incarceration be understood as a “new Jim Crow”6—though even she allows that the analogy doesn’t work—and expressions of outrage at miscarriages of justice in the present commonly allude to practices associated with slavery or the segregation era. As I have argued, such assertions are not to be taken literally as empirical claims; they are rhetorical. No sane or at all knowledgeable person can believe that black Americans live under similarly constrained and perilous conditions as they did a century ago or longer. Those analogies and allusions carry a silent preface: “(This incident/phenomenon/pattern makes it seem as though) Nothing has changed.” Yet the claim itself presumes that things have changed because the charge is essentially a denunciation of objectionable conditions or incidents in the present as atavistic and a call for others to regard them as such. Attempting to mobilize outrage about some action or expression through associating it with discredited or vilified views or practices is a common gambit in hortatory political rhetoric, more or less effective for a rally or leaflet. But this antiracist politics is ineffective and even destructive when it takes the place of scholarly interpretation or strategic political analysis.7 Political controversies in contemporary New Orleans provide an apt frame of reference for demonstrating antiracism’s limitations, and class character, as a politics. Antiracist political critique failed abysmally after Katrina to mobilize significant opposition to elimination of low-income public housing or to the ongoing destruction of public schools. In a context in which black people participate as administrators, functionaries, contractors, and investors—all in the blesséd name of racial representation—in the commercial opportunities provided by privatization and destruction of those institutions, that politics, which posits an abstract “black community” against an equally abstract “racism,” could not provide persuasive responses to the blend of underclass ideology that stigmatizes public housing as an incubator of a degraded population or that proffers culturalist explanations for failing schools.8 Debate over displacement for upscaling redevelopment, including proliferation of the Airbnb industry, is another powerful case in point in that city as elsewhere. In opting for a language of “gentrification,” opponents of displacement, often without necessarily intending to do so, cloud a simple, straightforward dynamic—public support of private developers’ pursuit of rent-intensifying redevelopment—with cultural implications that shift critique away from the issue of using public authority to engineer upward redistribution and impose hardship on relatively vulnerable residents. Instead, discussion of gentrification slides into objections about display of privilege, and lack of recognition or respect that, notwithstanding the moral outrage that accompanies them, accept the logic of rent-intensifying redevelopment as given and demand that newcomers acknowledge and honor aboriginal habitus and practices and that the “community” be involved in the processes of upgrading. The same racial or cultural discourse has unhelpfully shaped opposition to charterization of public education by focusing on the racial dimension of the process. The fundamental problem with Teach For America and the corporate privatizers for whom TFA are shock troops, after all, is not that the missionaries are mainly white and unfamiliar with native culture or even that many of them are tourists building extracurriculars for their graduate and professional school dossiers. Those are only idiosyncratically distasteful features of a particular line of attack on one front in a broader war on public goods and the idea of social solidarity, in line with marketization of all human needs. And that sort of culturalist discourse also opens opportunities for petty, and not so petty, entrepreneurship in the name of respect or recognition of the community, within the logic of neoliberalization. Race reductionism enables a sleight-of-hand in which benefits to individuals can appear to be victories for the generic racial population or community. The more deeply embedded a groupist notion of fairness or justice becomes as common sense, the more easily that sleight-of-hand works under labels like “community empowerment,” “voice,” “opportunity,” or “representation” to propel and legitimize accumulation by dispossession.9 This takes us back to Sinclair’s dictum, which underlies the material truth of antiracist politics and other expressions of identitarianism that are hostile to politics based on class solidarities. Yet even the crudest self-interest depends on ideological mystification for legitimacy. And race/racism—the former term is inconceivable without the latter—has always worked in exactly that way; only now, in the aftermath of the victories of the 1960s, it can work to the benefit as well as the detriment of nonwhites. The cornerstone of race ideology, which is not now and never has been incompatible with capitalism, is presumption of ontological-level differences among human populations apportioned into racial groups. Just as nineteenth and early twentieth century white supremacists insisted that fundamental differences preempt political alliances based on common material conditions, antiracists posit whites’ transhistorical—and thus primordial—commitment to racial supremacy toward the same end. That’s the more insidious basis of the impulse to argue for the primacy of race in contemporary politics via allusion to the past. Like all forms of race-reductionism it masks a class-skewed agenda. That underlying reality helps make sense both of why antiracists seem unconcerned that their elevation of challenging disparities to the paramount, if not exclusive, goal of egalitarian politics is entirely consistent with neoliberalism’s regime of intensifying economic inequality and why their de facto alliance with corporate and Wall Street Democrats against the conventional left has been automatic and untroubling. So I’ll conclude as I’d initially intended to begin this rumination, with several postulates about black American political history to counter the idealist mystifications that posit a primordial white racism or a transhistorical, reified White Supremacy capable of acting in the world on the conviction that, as Nihkil Singh and Joshua Clover most recently characterized it in a Verso blogpost, “black lives matter less.” Slavery was fundamentally a labor relation, not an extreme system of race relations. To paraphrase Barbara and Karen Fields, its objective was to produce cotton, sugar, tobacco, and rice, not white supremacy. Its appeal to the planter class was that it secured a labor force that had no rights or recourse, not that it was a permanent sadistic camp. Historian Kenneth Stampp quotes a slaveowner’s succinct explanation: “For what purpose does the master hold the servant? Is it not that by his labor, he, the master, may accumulate wealth?”10 An irony of the view that defines slavery as institutionalized brutality is its implication that slavery without extremes of brutalization might not be objectionable. The segregationist regime was an historically specific social order based on disfranchisement of the vast majority of blacks and a substantial percentage of whites, imposed by southern elites after defeat of the interracial Populist political insurgency in the late nineteenth century. It was defined by an extensive, legally codified system of racial subordination. That order was not fully consolidated before World War I, and its institutional foundations were crushed by the late 1960s. That is, it was a regime that prevailed for roughly sixty years, depending on location. There is no singular, transhistorical “Black Liberation Struggle” or “Black Freedom Movement,” and there never has been. Black Americans have engaged in many different forms of political expression in many different domains, around many different issues, both those considered racial and not. They have engaged in race-solidaristic formations and in close concert with others, in class-based and multiclass alliances. As Cedric Johnson has argued forcefully, contemporary scholarly discussion reads “black politics”—the ethnic pluralist group politics articulated mainly since the 1960s—back anachronistically onto the varying and pragmatically grounded political expressions in which black Americans have engaged since Emancipation, which he describes as “black American political life.” Political differentiation has been as common among black Americans as among all others. Moreover, issues bearing specifically on race or racial disparities have never exhausted, or exclusively defined, black Americans’ expressed political concerns. As a corollary of 3, the issues driving the postwar southern mass mobilization against segregation and the emergent black interest-group urban politics in the North and West, and the big city South, were distinct. Lumping them together under a blanket construct like the “long civil rights movement” does not help us comprehend the discrete features of either or, more important, the distinct trajectories each set in motion. Black Power was not a mass, radical insurgent movement. It was a militant expression of ethnic pluralism. Radicals of various sorts—including ideological race nationalists—occupied its fringes, but the driving and commanding forces of Black Power politics were always the assertive elements within the new black political and professional-managerial class that emerged from opportunity structures opened by the victories of the Civil Rights movement, the dynamics of urban demographic transition and incorporation into governing regimes, and War on Poverty, Model Cities, and foundation-funded programs. Nominally radical groups, such as the Black Panther Party (BPP), the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and others with less cachet among the left, were not serious alternatives, certainly not the romantic “roads tragically not taken” of post-New Left fantasies. General Baker, longtime United Auto Workers activist and co-founder of both the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, was emphatically clear that those tendencies were entirely specific to Detroit and the centrality of the union in local Democratic politics. The BPP was founded in 1966, and by the end of the decade was already in disarray, especially outside Oakland, as a result of police repression, to be sure, but also of their political incoherence. Neither Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James, nor Stuart Hall can tell us anything strategically useful about the black American political situation. Appeals to their putative wisdom stem from academic leftists’ romantic attachments and commitments to race-reductionist politics. Malcolm was dead before nearly all the big events understood to define “The Sixties” had occurred. Fanon died several years before Malcolm, and in any case his focus was always elsewhere; he gave only the most general, perfunctory attention to the United States. James’s time in the United States, as I have said, was on the political equivalent of a tourist visa. He was not enmeshed in black American politics and understood its internal and external dynamics in only an abstract, formalist way. The same pertains to Stuart Hall. Attachments to the likes of Malcolm, Fanon, James, and Hall are more totemic than intellectually or politically productive. There is a more pernicious aspect of embrace of those figures’ supposed cultural authority. Each is read as propounding trans-contextual insights about “race.” And such insights are necessarily race-reductionist.

#### Stopping capital is necessary to avoid extinction.

William Robinson 16, UC Santa Barbra sociology professor, 4-12-2016, “Sadistic Capitalism: Six Urgent Matters for Humanity in Global Crisis,” http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/35596-sadistic-capitalism-six-urgent-matters-for-humanity-in-global-crisis)

In these mean streets of globalized capitalism in crisis, it has become profitable to turn poverty and inequality into a tourist attraction. The South African Emoya Luxury Hotel and Spa company has made a glamorized spectacle of it. The resort recently advertised an opportunity for tourists to stay "in our unique Shanty Town ... and experience traditional township living within a safe private game reserve environment." A cluster of simulated shanties outside of Bloemfontein that the company has constructed "is ideal for team building, braais, bachelors [parties], theme parties and an experience of a lifetime," read the ad. The luxury accommodations, made to appear from the outside as shacks, featured paraffin lamps, candles, a battery-operated radio, an outside toilet, a drum and fireplace for cooking, as well as under-floor heating, air conditioning and wireless internet access. A well-dressed, young white couple is pictured embracing in a field with the corrugated tin shanties in the background. The only thing missing in this fantasy world of sanitized space and glamorized poverty was the people themselves living in poverty. The "luxury shanty town" in South Africa is a fitting metaphor for global capitalism as a whole. Faced with a stagnant global economy, elites have managed to turn war, structural violence and inequality into opportunities for capital, pleasure and entertainment. It is hard not to conclude that unchecked capitalism has become what I term "sadistic capitalism," in which the suffering and deprivation generated by capitalism become a source of aesthetic pleasure, leisure and entertainment for others. I recently had the opportunity to travel through several countries in Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa, East Asia and throughout North America. I was on sabbatical to research what the global crisis looks like on the ground around the world. Everywhere I went, social polarization and political tensions have reached explosive dimensions. Where is the crisis headed, what are the possible outcomes and what does it tell us about global capitalism and resistance? This crisis is not like earlier structural crises of world capitalism, such as in the 1930s or 1970s. This one is fast becoming systemic. The crisis of humanity shares aspects of earlier structural crises of world capitalism, but there are six novel, interrelated dimensions to the current moment that I highlight here, in broad strokes, as the "big picture" context in which countries and peoples around the world are experiencing a descent into chaos and uncertainty. 1) The level of global social polarization and inequality is unprecedented in the face of out-of-control, over-accumulated capital. In January 2016, the development agency Oxfam published a follow-up to its report on global inequality that had been released the previous year. According to the new report, now just 62 billionaires -- down from 80 identified by the agency in its January 2015 report -- control as much wealth as one half of the world's population, and the top 1% owns more wealth than the other 99% combined. Beyond the transnational capitalist class and the upper echelons of the global power bloc, the richest 20 percent of humanity owns some 95 percent of the world's wealth, while the bottom 80 percent has to make do with just 5 percent. This 20-80 divide of global society into haves and the have-nots is the new global social apartheid. It is evident not just between rich and poor countries, but within each country, North and South, with the rise of new affluent high-consumption sectors alongside the downward mobility, "precariatization," destabilization and expulsion of majorities. Escalating inequalities fuel capitalism's chronic problem of over-accumulation: The transnational capitalist class cannot find productive outlets to unload the enormous amounts of surplus it has accumulated, leading to stagnation in the world economy. The signs of an impending depression are everywhere. The front page of the February 20 issue of The Economist read, "The World Economy: Out of Ammo?" Extreme levels of social polarization present a challenge to dominant groups. They strive to purchase the loyalty of that 20 percent, while at the same time dividing the 80 percent, co-opting some into a hegemonic bloc and repressing the rest. Alongside the spread of frightening new systems of social control and repression is heightened dissemination through the culture industries and corporate marketing strategies that depoliticize through consumerist fantasies and the manipulation of desire. As "Trumpism" in the United States so well illustrates, another strategy of co-optation is the manipulation of fear and insecurity among the downwardly mobile so that social anxiety is channeled toward scapegoated communities. This psychosocial mechanism of displacing mass anxieties is not new, but it appears to be increasing around the world in the face of the structural destabilization of capitalist globalization. Scapegoated communities are under siege, such as the Rohingya in Myanmar, the Muslim minority in India, the Kurds in Turkey, southern African immigrants in South Africa, and Syrian and Iraqi refugees and other immigrants in Europe. As with its 20th century predecessor, 21st century fascism hinges on such manipulation of social anxiety at a time of acute capitalist crisis. Extreme inequality requires extreme violence and repression that lend to projects of 21st century fascism. 2) The system is fast reaching the ecological limits to its reproduction. We have reached several tipping points in what environmental scientists refer to as nine crucial "planetary boundaries." We have already exceeded these boundaries in three areas -- climate change, the nitrogen cycle and diversity loss. There have been five previous mass extinctions in earth's history. While all these were due to natural causes, for the first time ever, human conduct is intersecting with and fundamentally altering the earth system. We have entered what Paul Crutzen, the Dutch environmental scientist and Nobel Prize winner, termed the Anthropocene -- a new age in which humans have transformed up to half of the world's surface. We are altering the composition of the atmosphere and acidifying the oceans at a rate that undermines the conditions for life. The ecological dimensions of global crisis cannot be understated. "We are deciding, without quite meaning to, which evolutionary pathways will remain open and which will forever be closed," observes Elizabeth Kolbert in her best seller, The Sixth Extinction. "No other creature has ever managed this ... The Sixth Extinction will continue to determine the course of life long after everything people have written and painted and built has been ground into dust." Capitalism cannot be held solely responsible. The human-nature contradiction has deep roots in civilization itself. The ancient Sumerian empires, for example, collapsed after the population over-salinated their crop soil. The Mayan city-state network collapsed about AD 900 due to deforestation. And the former Soviet Union wrecked havoc on the environment. However, given capital's implacable impulse to accumulate profit and its accelerated commodification of nature, it is difficult to imagine that the environmental catastrophe can be resolved within the capitalist system. "Green capitalism" appears as an oxymoron, as sadistic capitalism's attempt to turn the ecological crisis into a profit-making opportunity, along with the conversion of poverty into a tourist attraction. 3) The sheer magnitude of the means of violence is unprecedented, as is the concentrated control over the means of global communications and the production and circulation of knowledge, symbols and images. We have seen the spread of frightening new systems of social control and repression that have brought us into the panoptical surveillance society and the age of thought control. This real-life Orwellian world is in a sense more perturbing than that described by George Orwell in his iconic novel 1984. In that fictional world, people were compelled to give their obedience to the state ("Big Brother") in exchange for a quiet existence with guarantees of employment, housing and other social necessities. Now, however, the corporate and political powers that be force obedience even as the means of survival are denied to the vast majority. Global apartheid involves the creation of "green zones" that are cordoned off in each locale around the world where elites are insulated through new systems of spatial reorganization, social control and policing. "Green zone" refers to the nearly impenetrable area in central Baghdad that US occupation forces established in the wake of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The command center of the occupation and select Iraqi elite inside that green zone were protected from the violence and chaos that engulfed the country. Urban areas around the world are now green zoned through gentrification, gated communities, surveillance systems, and state and private violence. Inside the world's green zones, privileged strata avail themselves of privatized social services, consumption and entertainment. They can work and communicate through internet and satellite sealed off under the protection of armies of soldiers, police and private security forces. Green zoning takes on distinct forms in each locality. In Palestine, I witnessed such zoning in the form of Israeli military checkpoints, Jewish settler-only roads and the apartheid wall. In Mexico City, the most exclusive residential areas in the upscale Santa Fe District are accessible only by helicopter and private gated roads. In Johannesburg, a surreal drive through the exclusive Sandton City area reveals rows of mansions that appear as military compounds, with private armed towers and electrical and barbed-wire fences. In Cairo, I toured satellite cities ringing the impoverished center and inner suburbs where the country's elite could live out their aspirations and fantasies. They sport gated residential complexes with spotless green lawns, private leisure and shopping centers and English-language international schools under the protection of military checkpoints and private security police. In other cities, green zoning is subtler but no less effective. In Los Angeles, where I live, the freeway system now has an express lane reserved for those that can pay an exorbitant toll. On this lane, the privileged speed by, while the rest remain one lane over, stuck in the city's notorious bumper-to-bumper traffic -- or even worse, in notoriously underfunded and underdeveloped public transportation, where it may take half a day to get to and from work. There is no barrier separating this express lane from the others. However, a near-invisible closed surveillance system monitors every movement. If a vehicle without authorization shifts into the exclusive lane, it is instantly recorded by this surveillance system and a heavy fine is imposed on the driver, under threat of impoundment, while freeway police patrols are ubiquitous. Outside of the global green zones, warfare and police containment have become normalized and sanitized for those not directly at the receiving end of armed aggression. "Militainment" -- portraying and even glamorizing war and violence as entertaining spectacles through Hollywood films and television police shows, computer games and corporate "news" channels -- may be the epitome of sadistic capitalism. It desensitizes, bringing about complacency and indifference. In between the green zones and outright warfare are prison industrial complexes, immigrant and refugee repression and control systems, the criminalization of outcast communities and capitalist schooling. The omnipresent media and cultural apparatuses of the corporate economy, in particular, aim to colonize the mind -- to undermine the ability to think critically and outside the dominant worldview. A neofascist culture emerges through militarism, extreme masculinization, racism and racist mobilizations against scapegoats. 4) We are reaching limits to the extensive expansion of capitalism. Capitalism is like riding a bicycle: When you stop pedaling the bicycle, you fall over. If the capitalist system stops expanding outward, it enters crisis and faces collapse. In each earlier structural crisis, the system went through a new round of extensive expansion -- from waves of colonial conquest in earlier centuries, to the integration in the late 20th and early 21st centuries of the former socialist countries, China, India and other areas that had been marginally outside the system. There are no longer any new territories to integrate into world capitalism. Meanwhile, the privatization of education, health care, utilities, basic services and public land are turning those spaces in global society that were outside of capital's control into "spaces of capital." Even poverty has been turned into a commodity. What is there left to commodify? Where can the system now expand? With the limits to expansion comes a turn toward militarized accumulation -- making wars of endless destruction and reconstruction and expanding the militarization of social and political institutions so as to continue to generate new opportunities for accumulation in the face of stagnation. 5) There is the rise of a vast surplus population inhabiting a "planet of slums," alienated from the productive economy, thrown into the margins and subject to these sophisticated systems of social control and destruction. Global capitalism has no direct use for surplus humanity. But indirectly, it holds wages down everywhere and makes new systems of 21st century slavery possible. These systems include prison labor, the forced recruitment of miners at gunpoint by warlords contracted by global corporations to dig up valuable minerals in the Congo, sweatshops and exploited immigrant communities (including the rising tide of immigrant female caregivers for affluent populations). Furthermore, the global working class is experiencing accelerated "precariatization." The "new precariat" refers to the proletariat that faces capital under today's unstable and precarious labor relations -- informalization, casualization, part-time, temp, immigrant and contract labor. As communities are uprooted everywhere, there is a rising reserve army of immigrant labor. The global working class is becoming divided into citizen and immigrant workers. The latter are particularly attractive to transnational capital, as the lack of citizenship rights makes them particularly vulnerable, and therefore, exploitable. The challenge for dominant groups is how to contain the real and potential rebellion of surplus humanity, the immigrant workforce and the precariat. How can they contain the explosive contradictions of this system? The 21st century megacities become the battlegrounds between mass resistance movements and the new systems of mass repression. Some populations in these cities (and also in abandoned countryside) are at risk of genocide, such as those in Gaza, zones in Somalia and Congo, and swaths of Iraq and Syria. 6) There is a disjuncture between a globalizing economy and a nation-state-based system of political authority. Transnational state apparatuses are incipient and do not wield enough power and authority to organize and stabilize the system, much less to impose regulations on runaway transnational capital. In the wake of the 2008 financial collapse, for instance, the governments of the G-8 and G-20 were unable to impose transnational regulation on the global financial system, despite a series of emergency summits to discuss such regulation. Elites historically have attempted to resolve the problems of over-accumulation by state policies that can regulate the anarchy of the market. However, in recent decades, transnational capital has broken free from the constraints imposed by the nation-state. The more "enlightened" elite representatives of the transnational capitalist class are now clamoring for transnational mechanisms of regulation that would allow the global ruling class to reign in the anarchy of the system in the interests of saving global capitalism from itself and from radical challenges from below. At the same time, the division of the world into some 200 competing nation-states is not the most propitious of circumstances for the global working class. Victories in popular struggles from below in any one country or region can (and often do) become diverted and even undone by the structural power of transnational capital and the direct political and military domination that this structural power affords the dominant groups. In Greece, for instance, the leftist Syriza party came to power in 2015 on the heels of militant worker struggles and a mass uprising. But the party abandoned its radical program as a result of the enormous pressure exerted on it from the European Central Bank and private international creditors. The Systemic Critique of Global Capitalism A growing number of transnational elites themselves now recognize that any resolution to the global crisis must involve redistribution downward of income. However, in the viewpoint of those from below, a neo-Keynesian redistribution within the prevailing corporate power structure is not enough. What is required is a redistribution of power downward and transformation toward a system in which social need trumps private profit. A global rebellion against the transnational capitalist class has spread since the financial collapse of 2008. Wherever one looks, there is popular, grassroots and leftist struggle, and the rise of new cultures of resistance: the Arab Spring; the resurgence of leftist politics in Greece, Spain and elsewhere in Europe; the tenacious resistance of Mexican social movements following the Ayotzinapa massacre of 2014; the favela uprising in Brazil against the government's World Cup and Olympic expulsion policies; the student strikes in Chile; the remarkable surge in the Chinese workers' movement; the shack dwellers and other poor people's campaigns in South Africa; Occupy Wall Street, the immigrant rights movement, Black Lives Matter, fast food workers' struggle and the mobilization around the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign in the United States. This global revolt is spread unevenly and faces many challenges. A number of these struggles, moreover, have suffered setbacks, such as the Greek working-class movement and, tragically, the Arab Spring. What type of a transformation is viable, and how do we achieve it? How we interpret the global crisis is itself a matter of vital importance as politics polarize worldwide between a neofascist and a popular response. The systemic critique of global capitalism must strive to influence, from this vantage point, the discourse and practice of movements for a more just distribution of wealth and power. Our survival may depend on it.

#### The alternative is a politics of organizing around the common experience of life shaped by political economy. This starting point creates a mode of solidarity that doesn’t just add categories and stirs but creates an inclusive class identity via struggle that transforms participants.

Leo Panitch 18, York University Canada Research Chair in Comparative Political Economy, From the Streets to the State: Changing The World By Taking Power, pg. 26-28

What accounts for the impasse of the left by the late twentieth century? Over the last four decades one of the central tropes of intellectual discourse, epitomized by the popularity of Laclau and Mouffe’s Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, criticizes the strategic mistake of excessively emphasizing class identity and consciousness. Even Geoff Eley’s (2002) monumental historical study, quoted above, which demonstrates how effective socialist labor movements were as advocates for democratic reform, also stresses “the insufficiencies of socialist advocacy,” not least pertaining to gender and race, in terms of “all the ways socialism’s dominance of the Left marginalized issues not easily assimilable to the class-political precepts so fundamental to the socialist vision” (10). Yet the left’s current conundrum in the face of the new right also brings to light the insufficiencies of the politics of identity, which has not only filled the void of class politics in recent decades but has often played a significant role in shunting class aside. Adolph Reed Jr. (1999) has perhaps most powerfully made the case for “a politics focused on bringing people together” around the common experience of everyday life shaped and constrained by political economy—for example, finding, keeping or advancing in a job with a living wage, keeping or attaining access to decent healthcare, securing decent, affordable housing. . . . Such concerns and the objective of collectively crafting a vehicle to address them is a politics that proceeds from what we have in common. . . . To the extent that differences are real and meaningful, the best way to negotiate them is from a foundation of shared purpose and practical solidarity based on a pragmatic understanding of the old principle that an injury to one is an injury to all. This is not simply a politics that attempts to build on a base in the working class; it is a politics that in the process can fashion a broadly inclusive class identity. (xxvii–xxviii) The failure to absorb this strategic insight, which might entail severe costs even for liberal democracy, is becoming ever clearer amidst the reactionary electoral appeal of a new right to working class voters. Nevertheless, this chapter shall argue that it also has much to do with the longstanding problems with the practice of democracy inside the institutions of the labor movement and the political parties with which they were intertwined. It has become far too commonplace to address these problems by criticizing the “ontological” mistake of those theorists who advance a class-oriented politics. This is a kind of idealism which attributes far too much historical impact to theoretical texts. It avoids serious inquiry into what determined the actual historical practices of working class parties and unions as democratic institutions. It thereby fails to uncover what really accounts for their limited contribution to the development of workers’ democratic capacities so as to carry the struggle for democracy beyond the electoral arena to the workplace, to the corporations and banks that dominate the economy, and perhaps most important to the democratization of the institutions of the state.

### 1NC

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#### The role of the ballot is to determine the efficacy of a topical proposal relative to the status quo or a competing option.

#### Anticompetitive’ behavior are business practices that restrict competition without providing lower cost or higher quality goods and services

OECD 3 – OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms, from the Glossary of Industrial Organisation Economics and Competition Law, compiled by R. S. Khemani and D. M. Shapiro, commissioned by the Directorate for Financial, Fiscal and Enterprise Affairs, OECD, 1993, https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=3145

Definition:

Anticompetitive practices refer to a wide range of business practices in which a firm or group of firms may engage in order to restrict inter-firm competition to maintain or increase their relative market position and profits without necessarily providing goods and services at a lower cost or of higher quality.

#### ‘Expanding the scope’ must increase the area covered by antitrust law

Cesar A. Noble 17, Judge on the Connecticut Superior Court, Hartford Judicial District, 777 Residential, LLC v. Metro. Dist. Comm'n, 2017 Conn. Super. LEXIS 4178, \*4-5 (Conn. Super. Ct. August 1, 2017), 8/1/2017, Lexis

The defendant relies upon §7-249 as authority for the supplemental assessment. The statute provides that "[b]enefits to buildings or structures constructed or expanded after the initial assessment may be assessed as if the new or expanded buildings or structures had existed at the time of the initial assessment." The parties dispute whether the conversion of the property constitutes a construction or expansion of buildings or structures granting authority to the defendant to levy a supplemental assessment. The plaintiff argues that because the conversion did not constitute an expansion, that is, an increase in the volume or physical area of a building the defendant had no authority under §7-249 for the supplemental assessment. 5 In the view of the plaintiff it is significant that the conversion did not increase the physical footprint or interior square footage of the property in any way including by a vertical [\*5] enlargement. Absent such an increase, asserts the plaintiff, there can be no construction or expansion of any building or structure. The defendant assert that the construction of the 285 new residential units constitute new structures within the plain meaning of §7-249. The court agrees with the defendant.

[FOOTNOTE]

5 The plaintiff relies upon the definition of the word "expand" found in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (10th ed. 2002) of "to open up; to increase the extent, number, volume, or scope of."

#### Violation---the affirmative doesn’t defend prohibitions on anticompetitive business practices by the private sector by at least expanding the scope of its core antitrust laws.

#### The impact is clash---debates about scholarship in a vacuum are myopic and breed reactionary generics---they allow the aff to cement their infinite prep advantage, because all the aff has to do is find evidence supporting an ideological orientation towards the world---this crushes clash because all of our prepared negative strategies are based on praxis, and by not defending a clear actor and mechanism we lose 90% of negative ground, and the aff still retains traditional competition standards like perms to make being neg impossible---clash is an intrinsic good and it’s vital to the overall practice of debate. Every debater is here for different reasons, but they trace back to the pedagogical uniqueness of the space. An open topic prevents iteration through shallow debates, unpredictable advocacies, and lack of testing.

## Case

### Case---1NC

#### NEG on presumption---the 1AC is not polyrhythmic praxis---their authors say music is the means with which to disrupt white temporality.

-- [UK in blue]

Ramsey 21, Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Master of Divinity @ Harvard Divinity School. (James Stevenson, “Black Relativity: On Law, Music, and Spirit in (Anti-)Black Time”, pg. 32-35, Accessible at: https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37368077)

Of course, time is not reducible to rhythm, nor rhythm to time. Time might be thought of as fodder for rhythm, or the dark matter between the elements of whatever is deemed to be (ir)rhythmic—notes, speech, embodied movement, or something else. Or, rhythm, the (ir)regular pattern or passage of events, might be understood as that which makes time comprehensible; we measure our days, for example, by a certain repetition of moments, whether what we call “seconds” or the sun’s rising and falling. But, in the relationship and/or conceptual space, whatever it is, between rhythm and time, we can discern certain Black, revolutionary politics in and against given or imposed temporality. Smallwood notes that ‘Sibell’s storytelling, for instance, contravenes conventional, Western formats, incongruent with the “trajector[ies]” and “tropes of early modern travel literature.”85 ‘Sibell was, in other words, not beholden to the rhythms of narrative expression that ruled the day. She moves variously between past, present, and future throughout her story, even denying her listeners closure; as recorded by her transcriber, “here she burst into tears and could say no more.” ‘Sibell’s piecemeal, irregular storytelling, its blending of different points in time, and its sudden conclusion reflect the fracturing, disorienting traumas of the hold. Indeed, her account of endurance is perforated and shaped by the violences of betrayal, erasure, and the subjection of her body and soul to the whims of the master class, which reach backward and forward in (‘Sibell’s) story/time. However, the peculiar rhythmic patterns of her life and story are not only inflicted on ‘Sibell; here, they are expressed by ‘Sibell herself, products of her choices. She, for example, laments her separation from her homeland and her people, but, in order to mourn them, she must recall them, inscribing them into the archive even as the archive and its masters seek to extinguish and/or corrupt their memory. From this perspective, the story she tells might be understood as simultaneously a testament to the anti-Blackness she experienced and a challenging of it and its norms, toward a different way of being. Along these lines, we might reread the conclusion of her story’s transcription; what if, instead of her (white) transcriber’s assumption that “she could say no more,” we read “she would say no more,” a refusal?

Whether a matter of refusal or capacity, this abrupt ending is a cut, a sharp break, a breaking in and of a story, its internal rhythms, and the rhythms an audience might expect from it, which is to say their (rhythmic) worlds. This break and the unconventional forms of ‘Sibell’s story more generally demonstrate a mode of, in Sharpe’s words, “inhabiting and rupturing this episteme,” and they constitute an alternative imagination by which ‘Sibell attempts to “think and imagine laterally, across a series of relations in the hold, in multiple Black everydays of the wake”: “Me no know nobody in de [slave] House, but ven me go in de Ship me find my Country woman Mimbo, my Country man Dublin…, My Country woman Sally, and some more, but dey sell dem all about and me no savvy where now.—here she burst into tears and could [read: would] say no more.”86 This concluding sentence’s insistence on relation despite separation; its collapse of past, present, and future; and its hard stop instantiate what Moten might refer to as the “radical temporal politics of the broken groove,”87 an orientation in and toward the hold (along with its contrived coherence, its time, and its temporal violences) that can foster Black life. This is an orientation that feels and reflects the violent time(s) inflicted upon the Black while also making space for Black response to and reconfiguration of these times.

Thinking in terms of time, rhythm, groove, and their breaking, we might turn to music, then, as a site of Black refusal of, in, and through time. Ashon Crawley refers to the sounds of Black music (for him, Blackpentecostal noise and performance in particular) “as dissent, … a critique of the very conditions under which work-time as enslavement emerges.”88 That music serves as a “choreosonic” force which is itself a critique of anti-Black impositions of time—of which slavery’s work-time is an example, with a long wake—exemplifies what Crawley refers to as “the inexhaustible resource of resistance found in black performance.”89 In this way, in its capacity to demonstrate and enact alternative temporalities and, per Crawley, (a)theologies,90 musical performance serves as a form of wake work, which is to say as a resource by which Black folk might sustain themselves and the relations among them, lay claim to the twisted forms of time levied against them, and resist and disrupt the very conditions that make such temporal violences possible, toward the subversion of the regime itself along with its law. To demonstrate this, I now turn to two musical compositions and their performances: “Come Sunday” and “Ostinato (Suite for Angela).”

#### “Temporal subversion” alone is insufficient---politics must move beyond to demand institutional gains.

Jovonne Bickerstaff 17, Post-Doctoral Associate, “Of Wake Work and We Who Would Build: Centralizing Blackness in Digital Work”, February, http://aadhum.umd.edu/2017/02/centralizing-blackness-digital-work/

Wake work at the intersection of Black Studies and the Digital Humanities —Justin Hosbey, Ph.D. “In the anti-black ‘post-racial’ social reality animated and subtended by a black US president, non-humans weaponize sidewalks; shoot ourselves while handcuffed in the back of police cars; are brutally murdered while asking for help; incarcerated, assaulted, and stopped and frisked for walking, driving, and breathing while black. What will be the work of black studies now to defend those who are subject to such overwhelming and gratuitous, narrative and actual, discursive and material death?” —Christina Sharpe, Black Studies: In the Wake (2014) Here we stand, weeks removed from the inauguration of the 45th president of the United States. The malignant revanchism of White civil society has forcibly dislocated many of us from a cognitive dissonance induced by 8 years of a charismatic Black man being the face of American Empire. To be clear, the age of neoliberal capitalism has always been a politically and economically harrowing zone of existence for Black life. But it seems to me that after this election, our flights of fancy for incorporation into the American settler project can no longer reasonably cohere. Now we must ask—where do we go from here? As scholars and intellectuals committed to critical Black study and Black studies, where do our responsibilities and accountabilities lie? How can our work, digital and/or otherwise, upend the gratuitous violence that structures Black existence while undo-ing what Sylvia Wynter terms the “narratively condemned status” of Black life? In her essay, “Making a Case for the Black digital humanities,” Kim Gallon cites the work of Alexander Weheliye (2015) to put digital humanists on notice that the “human,” as defined by the West, is a distinctly racial project that demarcates humanity into categories of “full human,” “not-quite-human,” and “non human.” This demarcation of humanity is made coherent by the violent negation of the unassimilable, non-human, “Black.” Sylvia Wynter argues that this “human,” what she terms ‘Man,’ is a bourgeois, Western conception of the human that (as a result of colonialism and imperialism) “over-represents itself as if it were the human itself” (Wynter 2003: 260). The “humanities” are key intellectual engines of this overrepresentation: the liberal humanist subject—‘Man’—has animated centuries of hermeneutic inquiry in countless academic fields, from philosophy to history to anthropology. Through the uncritical use of digital modes of inquiry and representation, the digital humanities stand to further embolden the hegemony of ‘Man.’ As someone working at the intersection of Black Studies and the digital humanities, this is the central problem that circulates in my thinking and guides my research. If the digital humanities writ-large fail to reckon with the anti-Blackness at the core of liberal humanism, then a “Black Digital Humanities” should be prepared to deconstruct ‘Man’ and radically reconfigure what it means to be human. If digital humanists’ remedy for Black absence in many DH spaces is merely increased representation, instead of a conscious and critical reappraisal of the “Humanities” themselves, digital humanists risk replicating the ideological and cognitive frameworks that distort and undermine Black ways of knowing and being in the world. Gallon argues that a “Black Digital Humanities” could engage in the “technology of recovery,” which would interrogate the ways that the digital can reinforce the racialized configurations of humanity in the West. This recovery work would also be “characterized by efforts to bring forth the full humanity of marginalized peoples through the use of digital platforms and tools.” This is important work, particularly in a political climate where Senators Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Marco Rubio (R-Florida) have introduced Bill 103, which declares that “No Federal funds may be used to design, build, maintain, utilize, or provide access to a Federal database of geospatial information on community racial disparities or disparities in access to affordable housing.” This makes the stakes of Black digital humanities work even higher, particularly for scholars interested in geospatial analyses of race, space, and housing. The introduction of this bill reinforces the narrative of a “postracial” America – a place where pointing out racial disparities is tantamount to racial oppression itself. If this bill becomes law, we may no longer have access to even the state’s “official” renderings of race, space and place. Since before the time of W. E. B. Du Bois’ “The Philadelphia Negro,” maps and other geospatial renderings have been key in understanding the modalities and race and class inequality in Black communities. This bill is an assault on key databases used by activists, scholars, and communities in the struggle against regimes of urbicide and racial capitalism in the United States. This makes Gallon’s “technology of recovery” even more resonant, because Black historical and literary archives may soon be the only databases from which we can understand how that the past haunts our present, and propel ourselves towards a Black future. In my own research, I am drawn to Christina Sharpe’s conception of “wake work.” Wake work does not seek to amend Black suffering through the frames of juridical, philosophical, or historical solutions. Wake work theorizes Black life in both the “wake” and the “hold” of the slave ship, requiring recognition “of the ways that we are constituted through and by vulnerability to overwhelming force, though not only known to ourselves and to each other by that force.” This is critical Black study that does not seek to make room for the full scope of Black humanity to be recognized by the white consciousness. Rather, it works to “defend the dead” through the cultivation of a ‘blackened consciousness’ that would inhabit the ways that we are both living and dying in the wake. In my own digital humanities work centered in New Orleans, 11 years after the storm, this means staring unflinchingly at the political, economic, and intellectual assemblages that over-determine Black life/death, while simultaneously understanding how insurgent Black social life can undermine these over-determinations. Is digital wake work possible? If so, what can it look like? That is the question that I intend to work through as a researcher within the AADHum Initiative. If it is indeed true that, as Moya Z. Bailey says, “All the Digital Humanists Are White, All the Nerds Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave,” then it’s time to say—in the words of Jonathan P. Jackson—“Gentlemen, we will be taking over from here.” In our work, how can we discover and further develop digital lines of escape, made possible by the apertures that emerge at the collision of Black Studies and the digital humanities? We who would build: Re-visioning resistance & theorizing beyond the gaze —Jovonne Bickerstaff, Ph.D. We have two hands: one is to battle, one is to build. We battle. We resist by calling out threats to our dignity by name. We build. We actively protect our dignity by creating what works. Those two hands may be on one person, one organization may be set up to do both. For others, they are the battling or the building kind. Either way, the battlers need the builders. The builders need the battlers. This is a discipline of resistance. —Brittany Packnett, activist Outlining her concept of “Black studies in the wake,” Christina Sharpe emphasizes its call “to be at the intellectual work of a continued reckoning the longue of Atlantic chattel slavery, with black fungibility, antiblackness… accounting for the narrative, historical, structural, and other positions black people are forced to occupy.” Drawing on Alexander Weheliye, Kim Gallon, by contrast, characterizes Black Studies as “a mode of knowledge production” that “investigates processes of racialization with a particular emphasis on the shifting configurations of black life.” Building on the Duboisian tradition of intellectual activism that advances scholarship while furthering social justice, both suggest that the real and vital work on black people necessarily speaks to race—that is, analyzing the consequences of and resistance to the project of racialization. I can see how interrogating the racial project of whiteness that shapes black folks’ lives can be a way of speaking truth to power for African Americanist scholars. Still, focusing so acutely on unpacking racism and racialization as sole or primary path of resistance gives me pause. I wonder if we’ve framed what Black Studies does—and more importantly can do—too narrowly. Might our pre-occupation with black struggle, whether in the conditions of or resistance to oppression, make us complicit in the diminishing the fullness of black humanity and what we might explore in it? Can we imagine examining black experience without making America’s racialization project the dominant idiom? Recently, activist Brittany Packnett developed a Twitter thread which began, “We have two hands: one is to battle, one is to build.” Certainly, we African Americanists know how to battle. So much of our training as scholars prepares us for it; we’re socialized to privilege the work of critique and deconstruction. Given how black folk have been conceptualized or written out of cannons, our proclivity towards confrontational debate may be more pronounced. We feel the pulse of that resistance when Gallon characterizes Black Studies as “the comparative study of the black cultural and social experiences under white Eurocentric systems of power.” But… is that enough? Is our conception of black scholarly resistance too narrow? Taking Packnett’s call for a multifaceted strategy of resistance to heart, I must ask, when do we build? These questions are central to who I’ve become as a scholar. Surely, I do my share of confrontational resistance, interrogating problematic paradigms, particularly when I teach. Still, as my research agenda solidifies, I’m more compelled by that call to build. Centering black experience has been my entry point for moving beyond critique to imagine new narratives and inquiry to engage in what I term theorizing beyond gaze—orienting my own work and my hopes for the AADHum Initiative. “From my perspective there are only black people. When I say “people”, that’s what I mean… No African American writer had ever done what I did… even the ones I admired… I have had reviews in the past that have accused me of not writing about white people… As though our lives have no meaning and no depth without the white gaze. And I have spent my entire writing life trying to make sure that the white gaze was not the dominant one … I didn’t have to be consumed by or concerned by the white gaze… The problem of being free to write the way you wish to without this other racialized gaze is a serious one for an African American writer” [emphasis added]. —Toni Morrison Freedom for her, Nina Simone once quipped, was the absence of fear. As a scholar and writer, my vision of freedom is more akin to Toni Morrison’s and begins with one radical tool: choice. I name, frame, and lay claim to different terrains: examining understudied populations (couples in enduring relationships), raising novel questions (how emotional strategies for resilience impact intimacy), and situating my research in unorthodox literatures (sociology of emotions vs. “the black family”). In every case, each she/he/they that I describe is, by default, black. Refusing to explicitly qualify race in work on black people can be jarring because having non-white experiences centered is so rare. In addition to disturbing notions of black folks as the perpetual other, theorizing beyond the gaze forces us to recognize how failing to fully account for positionality undermines our theorizing. If we uphold confrontation as the primary or most effective tool of resistance, I fear we risk neglecting how resistance requires and has always relied as much on subversive tactics like theorizing beyond the gaze as on direct action. In the AADHUM initiative, I hope that helps us think through how can we begin to construct a “meaningful intellectual and activist challenge that circumvents the analyses of injustice that re-isolate the dispossessed, à la McKittrick’s invocation of Gilmore. It’d be easy (and reductive) to see black Twitter simply as an offshoot of mainstream Twitter use. But what if we saw it instead as innovation narrative, à la Steve Jobs and iPods and iPhones, whereby they’re responsible for optimizing technology use in ways that reveal its fullest potential? Or conversely, could we invert the arrows of co-optation, which typically focuses on stolen African American products, to reveal how communities of color used Twitter and Vine towards subversive ends of mobilizing social change (i.e. BLM), celebrating black joy in the mannequin challenge or viral memes on Vine? Ultimately, how, when and why we enter as African Americanists, seems to turn largely on who we are working for and what we are working towards. The aim is not to abandon the battle, but simply to recognize that, while necessary, it is insufficient.

#### Their method of resistance is too ephemeral AND can’t escape the academy.

Heather Love 15, R. Jean Brownlee Term Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, “Doing Being Deviant: Deviance Studies, Description, and the Queer Ordinary”, differences 2015 Volume 26, Number 1: 74-95

Today, queer studies—prestigious but unevenly institutionalized—still signals absolute refusal or criticality—all anti- and no normativity. In their influential 2004 essay, “The University and the Undercommons” (and in the 2013 book that followed from it), Fred Moten and Stefano Harney rely on such an understanding of queer (as well as concepts borrowed from black studies, feminism, ethnic studies, and anticolonial thought). They call for betrayal, refusal, theft, and marronage as modes of resisting the iron grip of the academy, pointing to an uncharted, underground, and collective space they call the undercommons. “To enter this space,” they write, “is to inhabit the ruptural and enraptured disclosure of the commons that fugitive enlightenment enacts, the criminal, matricidal, queer, in the cistern, on the stroll of the stolen life, the life stolen by enlightenment and stolen back, where the commons give refuge, where the refuge gives commons” (103). Moten and Harney speculate whether the “thought of the outside” (105) is possible inside the university and suggest that if there is an outside, it is along the margins and at the bottom. Yet their imagination of that outside is indebted to the inside, in particular to the conception of deviance produced within sociology. Their account of the undercommons reads like a rap sheet, a list of the traditional topics of deviance studies: theft, homosexuality, prostitution, incarceration. Moten and Harney do not describe the undercommons, but rather ask their readers to join it, to participate in active revolt against professional and disciplinary protocols. To offer an objective account of the social position of radical academics would be to further business as usual in the academy; dwelling in the undercommons requires giving up on the usual protocols of description. Moten and Harney argue against the traditional role of the “critical academic” (105), which they see as just another turn of the professional screw, since work that opposes the academy does not challenge its basic structure or everyday operations. They argue that “to be a critical academic in the university is to be against the university, and to be against the university is always to recognize it and to be recognized by it, and to institute the negligence of the internal outside, that unassimilated underground, a negligence of it that is precisely, we must insist, the basis of the professions” (105). In contrast to the figure of the critical academic, they forward the image of the “subversive intellectual” who is “in but not of” the academy (101). Without dismissing the galvanizing effect of such a call to the undercommons, it is important to consider the limits of the refusal of objectification as a strategy. To be unlocatable, to be nowhere, to be in permanent revolt: Moten and Harney describe the path that queer inquiry laid out for itself. Objectification—recognition, description, critique—can be a way to reinforce the status quo, but it is also a way of acknowledging one’s institutional position and the real differences between inside and outside. Even the most subversive intellectuals in the academy are “on the stroll” in a metaphorical but not a material sense. The fate of those who came “under false pretenses, with bad documents, out of love” (101), if they survive, is to become “superordinates” in Becker’s sense. Whose side are we on? Can we hold onto the critical and polemical energy of queer studies as well as its radical experiments in style and thought while acknowledging our implication in systems of power, management, and control? Will a more explicit avowal of disciplinary affiliations and methods snuff out the utopian energies of a field that sees itself as a radical outsider in the university? To date, both the political and the methodological antinormativity of queer studies have made it difficult to address our implication in the violence of knowledge production, pedagogy, and social inequality. Such violence is inevitable, and critical histories of the disciplines—and the production of knowledge about social deviance—are essential. Undertaking such work, however, will not allow escape into a radically different relation to our objects because we are (as Moten and Harney also argue) part of that history—we are its contemporary instantiation. To imagine a social world in which those relations are transformed—in what Moten and Harney refer to as the “prophetic organization” (102)—may be crucial for the achievement of social justice, but to deny our own implication in existing structures is also a form of violence.

#### Aesthetics get coopted.

M.I. Jazz Freeman 18, writer on Medium, self-described “Agender Jazz Aesthete ⊙ Dedicated to the development of new humanizing praxis to combat Imperialist White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy”, 2/18/18, “Aesthetic vs. Praxis in Afro-futurism,” https://medium.com/@amai.m.i.freeman/aesthetic-vs-praxis-in-afro-futurism-12d966efea44

It’s not news to anyone to say that black cultural, political, and socio-economic life in America has undergone a renaissance of sorts. An upwelling of fervor, dreams, insights, rage, creativity, vision, and determination have all marked the increase of black visibility in the public arena. And yet, this new reality, a cyclical reappearance of unapologetically black social currents in the media, in the streets, and in the public imagination are all born from the profound contradictions we have been forced to acknowledge. Two terms of America’s first black president alongside ritualized police murders of black-life, a rise of white apologism for an accumulating white supremacist violence that destroys black bodies. We saw a dramatic increase in deportations, the emergence of drone warfare, and an economic crises that prompted a new wave of political movements against inequity, followed by an uprising of black lead direct actions and black revolt. It is in these various contexts that the visibility of blackness is more present than ever before. The opportunities for expression, the platforms for protest, and the historically significant struggles we find ourselves within have inspired and ignited showcases of black life — real as well as creatively re-imagined. It is not a coincidence that this era has given birth to a resurgence of Afro-Futurism.

Afro-Futurism is the practice of constructing new ways of existing, retrieving the past ancestry of the black diaspora, inventing styles of presenting ourselves in the world, and projecting our visions of how we would like to see ourselves in the future. There are a number of figures who stand out in our collective memory as highly imaginative and sharply perceptive of what was their reality. Octavia E. Butler and Sun Ra are a few who have passed away only to have new generations engage and ultimately embody their work today. Despite this stirring in the cultural life of black americans, there exists a significant gulf — a distance between intentions and practices in this movement and I would like to focus my attention on those differences. In doing so, I hope to uncover some salient lessons and distinctions that lay beneath the surface of Afro-Futurism.

An indisputable element of Afro-Futurism is its aesthetic. It is this difference from the normal — what we might otherwise expect to be created or adorned by black people — that comes focused into view in such a way that suggests that it has arrived from the future. This element alone is what people are most likely to see, grasp in passing, and consume as art. It’s relatively easy to replicate if one is interested purely in the profit to be yielded from its commodification. These are the nods we see celebrities make in set stages, album covers, films, and the like. To sift out the intention and impact of Afro-Futurism from its aesthetics, there are two simple questions that prove useful:

What is the future being presented?

How do we get there?

Depending on the particular conjurer of Afro-Futurism, the utility of their vision can vary widely from others. An “afro future” can be a site of grief as much as it can be a site of hope. In summoning the figures of black ancestry, we situate our present in the context of who brought us here, honoring their past struggles, sacrifices, and joys. The perspective that comes with this sort of time-travel can aid efforts to appreciate what is in front of us today, and it can embolden us to pursue a greater life. Whether one dimension outweighs the other or balances in union together of course determines whether or not we witnesses to afro-futurism grow complacent or more courageous in the face of the status quo.

It what is commonly viewed as the opposite of the past, the futures of afro-futurism can be spaces of mourning over the goals that feel locked away from the realm of possibility today. Inversely, they can be an insightful warning or a positive suggestion for what can be or must be done today. Stated a different way, Afro-Futurism is a portal into black desires that have yet to be manifested or actualized. Now some possible political consequences become more clear as we pass over some of the intentions behind the speculative nature of Afro-Futurism. I wish now to place some Afro-Futurist media under a magnifying glass so that we can answer the two instructive questions I mentioned above.

Following the very recent Black Panther Movie release, the excitement around this blockbuster spectacle has been at its peak. The representation of black people in so visible a medium has generated a crossover appeal for Disney’s Marvel Franchise. The cast, the soundtrack, the black history evoked by its very title all draw from the cultural wellspring of black culture that has been generated over the past several decades.

At the same time, what is the future Black Panther presents us? We have Wakanda, a fictionalized black african nation that’s become the most advanced in the world. This is based on the premise that one fictional precious metal, Vibranium, was never ruthlessly extracted by exploiting wakandans, allowing them to remain untouched by white supremacy. It follows from these circumstances that Wakanda was granted with an opportunity to actualize a vision of black self-determination that produced inconceivable wealth, technology, and a preserved patriarchal monarchist hierarchy. The story is a reinvention of co-opted and dismantled black power that is a fictional doppelganger for the fate of the real-life black panthers, as the main conflict is about imperialist powers meddling with Wakandan affairs and social movements. If we peel away the impossible embellishments of the fictional story, the premise is simply that Africa would not be destitute were it not for Colonialism, Slavery, Capitalism, and Imperialism.

So how do we actualize Wakanda? We cannot. War, Slavery, Genocide, Global Imperialism ravaged Africa and fractured the diaspora permanently, changing the trajectory of every African nation. The black diaspora is ensnared globally within imperialism and there is no Wakanda to protect us. Not all of us can be wealthy. We are largely outgunned within and outside our respective nations. We have only ourselves. For these reasons I posit that the Black Panther Movie is a commodification of Afro-Futurist grief, and it grieves for those who define black liberation as the freedom to amass wealth and wield a nation state in our modern age of Globalism. It presents us with a media commodity that we want to consume because we so rarely see ourselves empowered in reality and in media. As we watch, we get exciting entertainment and time to reflect on our historic victories and losses as the film not-so-subtly reinforces the current state of affairs.

Compare this to, say, Sun Ra’s humorous but combative songs about nuclear war, black invisibility, or his pursuit of the “green note” that would abolish money with a single sound! Another is Octavia Butler’s Earthseed from her Parable Novels, which conceived of a communal culture of resilience, cooperation, and agency that would “deliver us to the stars,” away from a planet made uninhabitable by capitalism. She identified real obstacles that are suffocating we who live in the present, and she evokes a culture of resistance with a common target in mind. Octavia Butler, who despised super-heroes, details her afro futures vividly and directs readers attention to explicit systems of oppression that must be dismantled. While her stories often portray dystopias or post-apocalyptic futures, we have very clear answers regarding to how we might end up in such an oppressive predicament: unchecked climate change and environmental destruction, a defeated anti-racist movement, endless imperialist war, the privatization of water along with public institutions, unchallenged hierarchical power and authority, and patriarchal male chauvinism and violence that feminists have not eradicated. She answers our question in the negative: we will end up in terrible futures if we do not act now against everything that will lead to our extinction!

Turning now to the realm of music, I would like to call attention to how often the political potency and portrayals of agency in Afro Futures seem to show a correlation wherein black women and queer black folks tend to have more radical and optimistic visions, contrast with cis-straight black men risking fatalism, and sometimes misogyny in their iterations of Afro-futurism and their lived praxis. A perfect example of these poles would be Flying Lotus, who is a critically acclaimed music producer known for innovating afro-futurist soundscapes contrast with Wizard Apprentice, underground black feminist afro-futurist musician known also for her organizing projects and work as a healer who helps black folks process trauma. Despite being a descendant of the late Afro-Futurist Alice Coltrane, Flying Lotus over the years has consistently become more fatalistic, hedonistic, and indifferent to politics as he pursues a career as an avante-garde musician and filmmaker. He’s found himself time-after-time mired by his own chauvinist comments, apologies for a rapist associated with his own music label, and increasingly vulgar masturbatory art as evidenced by his full-length feature film, Kuso. All beg the question of whether he may even find himself exposed by today’s #Metoo movement.

Another example of the opposite ends of the afro-futurist political spectrum would be the dynamic duo Rasheedah Phillips and Camae Ayewa (a.k.a. Moor Mother) of the Philadelphia-based Afro-Futurist Affair contrast with Ishmael Butler and Tendai “Baba” Maraire of Shabazz Palaces. The experimental music the Afro-futurist Affair duo creates is explicitly about confronting — through unapologetic revolt — racial injustice, ancestral trauma, police violence and the prison industrial complex, patriarchy and sexual assault. While their essays, music, poetry, and fiction all embody the spirit of their determination to get free, their work in the community harmoniously compliments their creativity. Rasheedah Phillips works as a housing defense lawyer combating homelessness and gentrification, while she and Camae Ayewa run the House of Future Sciences for training political organizers to literally build futures and heal from trauma. Shabazz Palaces, albeit sonically inventive and clever, make lyrical critiques that lean very heavily towards their careers and the stagnation of the rap industry today. They borrow from and transform aesthetics of Sun Ra and they collaborate with Flying Lotus, Funkadelic, and George Clinton, creating songs that inspire black pride, occasionally scrutinizing systems of oppression in passing. Their impact on their respective genres have been powerful, but they leave something to be desired for how the rest of us can get free or at least be “successful” under capitalism, given that their praxis is limited to their music.

Returning just briefly to the Black Panther film, Kendrick Lamar scored its soundtrack and is facing a copyright violation lawsuit for using Lina Iris Viktor’s work in one of his music videos. Here we have a multiple grammy winning artist, lifting a black woman’s work without her consent and without compensating her. This reflects a parallel between Wakandan’s tightly protected wealth, and a real-world media industry that leaves women out in the pursuit of men’s profit.

As for Afro-Futurism as political praxis, adrienne maree brown’s emergent strategy is incredibly exemplary! In it she distills an actionable praxis from Octavia Butler’s novels and weaves them with her wealth of experience facilitating political work and organizational affinity within the left as well as the collective wisdom she’s accumulated from a plethora of organizers, healers, writers, and collectives. Her mantra “all organizing is science fiction” brings the future-building part of Afro-Futurism squarely into view. She provides an optimistic and empowering manual for us who are ready to “bury capitalism” while also “moving towards pleasure.”

I have a special fondness for N.K. Jemison’s multiple award winning Broken Earth Trilogy, which I believe is one of the greatest stories told to date that uses racial, environmental, and socio-economic allegory to masterful effect reminiscent of Octavia Butler’s own writing.

Black people are not a monolith. We all have different ideas about what a livable life looks like for us. Spaces to grieve collectively, stories that help us escape the reality of white supremacy for a while, strategies that help us achieve our liberation are all avenues that can help lead us towards life. All of these practices prepare us for our own black futurity when deployed in authentic contexts that allow us to keep our present in perspective. Afro-Futurism contains infinite possibilities, all of which help black folks live in a deeply flawed world. Still, it is important that we consider which future we are on a trajectory towards actualizing as the afro futures wash over us and enter our lives.

#### Polyrhythmic praxis fails.

Michael Hanson 8, Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of California, San Diego, “Suppose James Brown Read Fanon: The Black Arts Movement, Cultural Nationalism and the Failure of Popular Musical Praxis,” Popular Music, Vol. 27, No. 3, October 2008, accessed via JSTOR

By the mid-1960s the political impulse within black communities began to cohere in and animate cultural production and criticism, forcing attention onto the political qualities of black expressive culture.10 The Black Arts Movement developed as a somewhat diverse, yet generally coherent project that explicitly attempted to link cultural expression to black political practice in the form of a unique Black Aesthetic. The more general designation, cultural nationalism, distinguishes a position within black self-determination discourses that valorises black culture -at the extreme, employing the Hegelian dialectics of recognition and inversion that devalue European culture and history while mythologising Africa as the primordial site of positive transfiguration and social uplift in the recuperative gestures of self-making.11

Principal BAM critic Larry Neal referred to the Black Aesthetic as 'the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept is concerned with the relationship between art and politics; the other with the art of polities' (Neal 1971, p. 257). By explicitly yoking politics to cultural production, the Black Aesthetic envisioned a cultural praxis that, as key BAM figure Leroi Jones/ Amiri Baraka claimed would 'fight for black people's liberation with as much inten- sity as Malcolm X our "Fire Prophet" and the rest of the enraged masses' (Neal 1989, p. x).12 By 1963, as emblemised in the raw racial emotion of his play Dutchman and the landmark black musicological intervention, Blues People, Jones/Baraka had begun repudiating his earlier involvement with downtown modernist literary aesthetics, concentrating instead more intensely on black cultural practices, specifically black music.

The short-lived Black Artists Repertory Theatre and School, or BART/S, in Harlem was, in vital ways, the archetypal black arts intervention. On 22 February 1965, the day after Malcolm X was assassinated, Baraka held a press conference in which he announced the formation of a new project devoted to the politico-aesthetic project of black liberation. BART/S involved a number of prominent cultural workers - Harold Cruse, Sun Ra, Albert Ayler, Archie Shepp, Sonia Sanchez, Ed Bullins, Askia Muhammad Toure and Larry Neal - who were principal actors in later nationalist-oriented projects. Perhaps most symptomatic of the fractious and conten- tious interest positions that undermine social movements from within, the political promise of BART/S singular mission itself narrowed, constricted and then over-ran and expelled those voices that did not adhere to the dominant line of a few charismatic and overly-ambitious egos (Woodward 1999, pp. 67-8). By fall 1965, BART/S had dissipated under the weight of its own in-fighting and found Baraka retreating from Harlem in defeat, refocusing organisational and creative energies in hometown Newark.

A particularly reductive gloss tends to emplot the entirety of this complex cultural and political moment. Retrospectively, the Black Arts Movement is typically portrayed as an unremitting, militant, masculinist arbiter of aesthetic practice and black authenticity, policing the expressive world for non-revolutionary art while yoking political meaning to every gesture, thought and expression. Many of these dismissive claims of the Black Aesthetic impulse do indeed have powerful merits - that the social realism of BAM trades the political for art and art for the political thus producing weakened attempts at both; that 'good' art is not equivalent to black skin; that BAM and nationalism's masculinist rhetoric creates internal cleavages and exclu- sions within the black collective (Harper 1996); that its racial chauvinism suffers from an antipathy toward white or European oppositionality (Taylor 1998).

However, the constellation of intellectuals, cultural producers, expressive media, tendencies, locales, and practices that constituted the Black Aesthetic was often diverse, leading to contradictory and competing political claims on collective identity, political formation, tactic and most significantly political praxis. In 1971, literary critic Addison Gayle, Jr. edited The Black Aesthetic, the principal statement and most coherent document of black aesthetic thought. Because there were diverse problematics addressed in BAM - the nature of black criticism, the development of a black critical framework, the role of the black artist in political struggle, the relative power of various media, particularly black music, and so on - the constituent posi- tions represented in The Black Aesthetic reveal more internal contradictions and ambivalence than critical analyses tend to acknowledge.13

One prominent black aesthetic position foregrounded black community and the political obligation that cultural producers had to make relevant and consumable aesthetic expressions that spoke to black experience. Critic Larry Neal, in his founda- tional statement on the Black Aesthetic, is exemplary here:

The Black Arts Movement is radically opposed to any concept of the artist that alienates him [sic] from his community. Black Art is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept. As such, it envisions an art that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America, (in Gayle 1971, p. 257)

In this case, the idealistic, explicit encoding of aesthetics with ethics and revolutionary nationalist concerns was not intended to be a 'protest' art as such, which implied an appeal to white morality, but rather a vehicle to communicate directly with the black masses (ibid., p. 258). Neal would be a primary proponent of function - the efficacy of black expression to shape, organise, and transmit political value - over craft - the modernist, Western tradition emphasising the autonomy and potentially apolitical nature of aesthetic expression (Baker, 1988). Here, the literary craft of Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray, in particular, was emblemised as the discursive foe to revolution- ary aesthetic praxis.14

The Black Aesthetic also contested the ways racial domination historically conditions the aesthetic criteria by which black art is judged. The black critic here functions to refigure the critical categories that have historically denigrated, devalued or simply excluded the contributions of Afrodiasporic expression. Critic Hoyt Fuller writes of the need to establish new critical frameworks (and critics) that 'will be able to articulate and expound the new aesthetic and eventually set in motion the long overdue assault against the restrictive assumptions of the white critics' (in Gayle 1971, p. 9). This call for a new aesthetic framework in its most moderate elaboration can be read as nothing more than a demand for expanded and inclusive critical referents.

Yet, at the ideological and racially exclusive extreme, cultural nationalist and US leader, Ron Malauna Karenga's injunction demanded that,

what is needed is an aesthetic, a black aesthetic, that is a criteria for judging the validity and/or beauty of a work of art ... all art must reflect and support the Black revolution, and any art that does not discuss and contribute to the revolution is invalid. . . . Black art must expose the enemy, praise the people and support the revolution. (Karenga 1971, pp. 31-2)

Dispersed among these positions were a host of other stances, concerns and strategies. The diversity of positions making up The Black Aesthetic and the varied expressions of cultural nationalist activism in local communities mirrors the broader labours of a black political project that was always embattled and contested, both from within and without.

Like Nigritude15 before it, the invocation of a narrow affirmational blackness in part served as a political trope, an explicit technique of foregrounding a racial dialectic between white and black, coloniser and colonised. The structuring principle of Nigritude relied on the positive resignification of blackness as a visibly marked and audibly charged point of political mobilisation. This symbolic re-ordering often relied on overwrought, at times mythical revisions of history. The political terms of Nigritude, and similarly the Black Aesthetic, were themselves the site of contestation and pivoted upon the constituents of blackness - from an essentialist and grandiose mythopoetic celebration of an almost biologistic racial unity to a diasporal cultural identity linked by the historical forces of collective subjugation.

Racial dualism also premised black nationalist rhetoric, a strategic essentialising, following Gayatri Spivak, in the name of political efficacy.16 To some degree this was efficacious, the nascent sense of self-pride and political possibility, for instance, drew upon this binary logic. However, the shoring up of the boundaries of black collective identity in the name of political mobilisation, the evocation of a singular black aesthetic or outlook, as a unifying cord of ingroup formation continually risked falling into an uncompromising, chauvinistic rhetorical straightjacket. The consolidating power derived from the dualistic Black Aesthetic unity was also its major weakness - the underside to the liberatory performance of black self-definition is the formation of new abject targets that fall outside the narrow template set by nationalist doctrine. Black nationalist positions can also reveal, as Nathan Grant (1998, p. 36) points out, 'the internecine quality of life in the Black community - the community's newly found ability to feed upon itself and middle-class Blacks all become the usual fare for a new generation of Bigger Thomases'. Moreover, as Clyde Taylor argues, the wholesale invocation of blackness, as positive sign, simply reflects a collective insecurity that prompts reactive outbursts of racial cheerleading (Taylor 1998 ).17 Phillip Brian Harper adds that the oppositional logic of the Black Arts Movement inadvertently produces divisions within the black community that foreclose black collective action (Harper 1996, p.48).

#### “Surrender to blackness” replicates the power relations of white altruism---only collective action ameliorates structural conditions

Jesse Myerson 18, an Indiana-based community organizer with Hoosier Action, 2-5-2018, “White Anti-Racism Must Be Based in Solidarity, Not Altruism,” The Nation, https://www.thenation.com/article/white-anti-racism-must-be-based-in-solidarity-not-altruism/

The dominant liberal conception of white anti-racism emphasizes altruism. In this mode, white people must set aside our own self-interest in order to extend kindness to those less fortunate. Humanitarian assistance is rewarded, and those who practice it are hailed for their self-sacrifice and generosity. White people are encouraged to defer, shrink, and assist. It is not our fight, the white-altruism mode says, so we must strive to decenter ourselves and support black people’s “advancement” as peripheral allies, doing what kindnesses we can to compensate them for the privileges we enjoy. We must reliably articulate non-racist positions using suitably non-racist terminology, correct white people who fail to do these, and under no circumstances use racist language out in the open. Not that people shouldn’t interrupt racist personal acts or respect the expertise of people of color regarding how racism plays out in their lives and communities, but that alone does not constitute a strategy. At best, these interruptions and this deference are a woefully inadequate response to systemic racism. At worst, white altruism is a recipe for disaster. Not only does it treat racism as personal flaw rather than a system of power; it also insists that white people have an obligation to help black communities “advance,” a construction that is vulnerable to white people’s misconceptions of what constitutes “advancement.” Without being anchored to a goal of redistributing power, altruism is often carried along by the prevailing currents of racist capitalism. At the end of the Civil War, instead of furnishing formerly enslaved black people with the 40 acres Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman had promised, well-meaning moderate Republican Reconstructionists championed the Freedman’s Savings Bank “to instill into the minds of the untutored Africans lessons of sobriety, wisdom, and economy,” which Congress considered crucial to “the economic and industrial development of a people.” According to bank’s founder, Congregational minister John Alvord, black people didn’t want free land: “We hear them saying, ‘We will work and save and buy for ourselves.’” Over a decade, the bank’s board, made up of highly regarded philanthropists, transformed the bank into an investment outfit conducting risky speculation, bribery, and fraud. When the Panic of 1873 threatened the bank’s viability, the trustees, desperate to reinforce an image of the bank as a trustworthy institution, appointed Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist and former slave, as bank president. In this capacity, Douglass discovered the enterprise to be “full of dead men’s bones, rottenness, and corruption.” The bank folded, leaving over 60,000 depositors without access to millions in strenuously earned deposits, and obliterating more than half of accumulated black wealth. White altruism fared no better out West than down South. The policy of “allotment,” which broke up tribal lands into individually owned plots, came from white altruists. The architect of the 1887 Dawes Act, which made allotment official federal policy, was Alice Fletcher, an upper-class New York City suffragist who, out of anthropological curiosity, went west to live with and studied the Omaha Indians, ultimately adopting one as her son. She and other reformers were sure that tribal landholding was unproductive, inefficient, and destructive to the individual work ethic, that it thus prevented Indians from making healthy economic advances. In practice, allotment shrunk Indian-held lands from about 150 million acres to 48 million by the time of the Dawes Act’s 1934 repeal, leaving two-thirds of Indians either completely landless or without enough land to subsist. Later, in the early 1940s, altruism struck again when the Rockefeller Foundation made an effort to alleviate the “tragedy of hunger” in the “backward” country of Mexico, touching off the much celebrated “Green Revolution.” Rockefeller Foundation scientists and policy experts implemented a system designed to raise Mexicans’ daily calorie intake by improving agricultural efficiency through “higher yielding and higher quality crop varieties” and disease control. The white people who designed and implemented the Green Revolution won awards. But for the farmers of Mexico, the program dramatically narrowed the genetic base of crops, destroyed indigenous agricultural practices, supplanted small and communal farming with commercial agribusiness, and displaced millions of peasants into urban slums or across the border. Still today, manifestations of white altruism undermine the well-being of the very “shithole” denizens whose “advancement” it seeks. Microfinance, or inviting poor people into small amounts of debt, has been held up by its most powerful, enthusiastic advocates as a panacea for the ills that beset impoverished countries. In 2005 the United Nations even gave microcredit its own international year. Honors notwithstanding, microloans tend to worsen livelihoods overall, notoriously driving hundreds of Indian women to suicide. Far from raising living standards, microfinance has calcified the hierarchy that produces such poverty—and enriches Europe and North America. Time and again, white people acting as allies in other people’s “progress” have not just failed to address racist power relations; they have entrenched white dominance. Altruism cannot be the basis for white anti-racist action. There’s only one thing that can: solidarity. Solidarity is about unity, not around like-mindedness or affinity but around common interests. Neither having the same opinions nor even mutual fondness is required for one to enter into a solidarity relationship with another. All they need is the acknowledgement that, to achieve liberation, “I need you and you need me.” Solidarity is about fighting for oneself alongside another person, for one’s family alongside another family. The thing is, when two people fight for themselves alongside one another, when they perceive themselves to be teammates, they begin to warm to each other. In 1939, a Chicago stockyard worker, Jim Cole, told a reporter from the Federal Writers’ Project, “I don’t care if the union don’t do another lick of work raisin’ our pay, or settling grievances about anything. I’ll always believe they done the greatest thing in the world gettin’ everybody who works in the yards together, and breakin’ up the hate and bad feelings that used to be held against the Negro.” Only when white people come to see that our own liberation is bound up in the liberation of others can we achieve solidarity and have a basis for white anti-racism that does not produce the colonial outcomes generated by altruism. White people in and adjacent to poverty have solid grounds for this type of solidarity; they are directly victimized by a politics that relies on racist rhetorical appeals. The cycle works the same way time and again: Politicians gin up fear of a racist mythological problem, and propose a solution that harms poor and working-class people of all colors—while consolidating wealth and power for the (almost entirely) white rich. In the late 1970s and ’80s , the racist mythological problem was “welfare queens” living decadently off government fraud, illegitimately claiming white people’s “taxpayer money.” To solve this problem, the government cut safety-net payments, the largest share of whose beneficiaries had been white. The entire, diverse working class, disproportionately people of color, was harmed, and the white rich claimed tax cuts on behalf of aggrieved “taxpayers.” Then in the 1990s, the racist mythological problem was “superpredators,” committing violence with “no conscience, no empathy”—the sort of people who, if affluent white Americans were ever to be safe, needed simply to be brought “to heel.” To solve “superpredators,” the government enacted harsh policing and sentencing measures, which served to expand the carceral system in which black and brown people were overrepresented, but a majority of whose inmates were white. The whole time windfall profits streamed into the accounts of the mostly white capitalists driving the prison-industrial complex. Lately, the racist mythological problem has been “voter fraud.” Trump, in his characteristic way, has eschewed the normal dog whistles and campaigned outright on the fear of “illegal immigrants voting all over the country,” encouraging his 2016 supporters to “go down to certain areas” and make sure that “other people don’t come in and vote five times.” To solve the “voter-fraud” problem, the government has enacted a host of suppression measures from requiring documentary proof of citizenship to an Interstate Crosscheck system, which disproportionately disenfranchises voters of color and rural communities. In each of these cases, the millions of lower-class white people whose lives are materially damaged have a firm basis for teaming up with the other nonwhite members of their class in opposition to the racist politics that fuel the policies hurting them. Poor and working-class white people are suffering under white supremacy, and have good reason to demand that they too be freed from it. The even greater challenge is to bring affluent white people into solidarity relationships with working-class and poor people of color. The systems of property, policing, and uneven distribution of political influence favor them. But even those who sit atop the racist hierarchy are pressured and bullied into the constant battle to maintain their position. In forcing them to jealously guard their resources and power against those with less—black people, immigrants, indigenous Americans, Muslims, and “white trash”—our hierarchical system makes them develop fearful and contemptuous attitudes that worsen their lives. It alienates affluent white people from their fellow Americans and humans, depriving them of fellowship and cooperation. The wealthy are terrified of falling a few strata down the socioeconomic ladder, and who can blame them? The less money you have, the poorer your health and education outcomes, the less decent your housing, the less healthful your food, the likelier you are to be abused on the job or by the police, and the less confident you can be that your children will have it any better. Losing ground in America is such a scary prospect that it blinds the affluent to the goal they might achieve if they adopted solidarity: liberation from that fear. If they there weren’t so far to fall, they wouldn’t be saddled with paranoia at every turn. Solidarity requires that we rethink “privilege.” At present, white anti-racism demands intense examinations of and attempts to correct for privilege. To build solidarity, we must shift away from this practice and toward a demand for universal rights. As long as anti-racist white people remain fixated on privilege at the expense of all else, we remain divided from black people and relegated to the role of, at best, helpful allies. If we can shift to a universal-rights framework, we recast ourselves as all on the same team. To perform this shift, it’s important to differentiate what political scientist and blogger David Kaib calls the “two faces of privilege.” On the one hand, “privilege” refers to things nobody ought to have, such as the power to dominate discussions, the feeling of entitlement to the body of another person, and the unthinking assumption that comes with social hegemony: that your experiences are the default. We should indeed pay attention to such dynamics, remaining vigilant about white people’s systematic conditioning to behave in ways that exasperate teammates or cause them pain or fear. On the other hand, it refers to things everybody ought to have. This is where the “privilege” framework can be harmful. For example, I am said to be “privileged,” because my housing has always been dependable, I have never been deprived of nutritious food, I have been able to access treatment and surgery when I have been sick or injured, I have not only received a quality education but had some say in its direction, my periods of unemployment have been brief, and I have enjoyed the free time and freedom of movement and communication necessary to pursue art, inquiry, social life, and other sorts of joy and fulfillment. Those are human rights, and calling them “privileges” undermines the fight to get them universally respected. Freedom, dignity, and democracy are due to everyone. If the lives of other people are less free and less dignified than mine, if they are denied the say I’m afforded in the systems that affect them, that is not a matter of their lacking my degree of privilege but of their rights being violated. The baseline matters. Describing human rights as “privileges” uses destitution as the baseline. When people work from that baseline and treat every step above it as another “privilege,” we are affirming the right-wing idea that we naturally have nothing, that we have to ruthlessly compete just to get by. But when we talk of “universal rights,” the baseline shoots way up to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and freedom from want and fear. That is the life we all deserve; that is the life we are owed. In the “privilege” framework, racist inequality induces white people to feel guilty, which produces inaction. In the “universal-rights” framework, it induces us to feel fury, which inspires action. No longer is it, “I feel bad for even thinking it, but thank goodness I don’t have it as bad as those who are worse off.” Instead, it becomes, “let’s get together and collect our due.” Fostering solidarity will require diverse groups (labor unions, community organizations, and political parties) organized around guaranteed rights to good jobs, decent housing, quality health care, educational opportunities, nutritious food, and so forth. People’s membership in these organizations must not be superficial, as grass-roots engagement tends to be with, say, the Democratic Party. For the solidarity to be real, disparate people have to take courageous collective action.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But probably not.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Their criticism of linear time is reductionist AND it relies on linearity implicitly.

Andrew Hom 18, University of Edinburgh political science department, “Silent Order: the Temporal Turn in Critical International Relations,” Millennium, 46.3, 311-314

Linear Time Even more than timelessness, ‘linear time’ plays the bête noire in critical IR.48 This appellation subsumes a huge variety of temporal phenomena associated with hegemonic logics, including but not limited to state sovereignty,49 national citizenship,50 security,51 capitalism and colonialism,52 history,53 patriarchy,54 western calendars and clocks,55 neopositivism, 56 progress and rationality,57 and narrative.58 How precisely these issues link to or instantiate ‘linear time’ – and how this supports hegemony – typically remains unsaid. Moreover, rare qualifications of ‘linear time’ add little in the way of clarity. Linear time is ‘bounded’, ‘rational’, and ‘homogeneous’.59 It depends on heroic narratives of specific deeds but is also a smooth ‘continuum’ moving us ‘steadily from moment to moment’ or, relatedly, an ‘empty’ container for events.60 These visions of linear time contrast discontinuity.61 Yet elsewhere linear time associates with discontinuity, with discrete parcels of past, present, and future sometimes normatively valuated as progress.62 This distinguishes linear time from continuous, pre-modern, or indigenous temporalities, which are ‘non-linear’ because they co-mingle the past and future in each present and thus admit no temporal borders.63 Occasionally, ‘linear’ indicates both continuity and discontinuity, as when heroic national narratives produce discrete succession and time as ‘continuous and linear’.64 Critical scholars also contrast linear time with cyclical or circular temporalities.65 By this way of thinking, cyclicality problematises the arrow-like trajectory of linear time’s forward thrust, a movement which complements the logics of nationalism, patriarchy, and causation.66 Cyclical alternatives to linearity as such are not especially coherent. In cyclical time the past ‘“directly effects the present and the future”’.67 This is very much a causal statement.68 Moreover, rendered as simplistic binaries, linear/cyclical distinctions are spurious: a cycle refers to an undulating line or sine wave,69 and the further in we zoom, the straighter it appears. Finally, like invocations of ‘timelessness’ a basic sense of linearity facilitates rather than precludes cyclical imputations, providing the serial baseline passage against which recurrence resolves as such. Other critical alternatives to linear time also depend on linearity inasmuch as they propound a lineal-spatial metaphor and/or assume some sense of past, present, and future (or before and after). For example, duration, chronotopicity, and retroactive and anticipatory meaning-making imply, respectively: the serial connectability of experiential content, a spatialised and gridded shape, a clear sense of backward and forward.70 Or consider time as ‘becoming’, which refutes linearity because it moves ‘in different directions at the same time, into the past and into the future’.71 Nothing about ‘linear’ per se opposes this movement or the sense of continual development evoked by ‘becoming’. As before, becoming only resolves as such against a basic linear comparator. Non-linear proposals based on time-as-becoming are even more explicitly linear. Aion describes the ‘pure’ and ‘empty form’ of a ‘straight line’,72 which vitiates ontologies of presence by stretching out ‘limitless in either direction’.73 It is the movement by which ‘the line’ frees itself from the punctual present so as to ‘[c]onstantly flee … in different directions’.74 These characterisations depend on a classical notion of linearity: ‘a line that is single, straight and infinite in both directions’.75 Yet aion’s champions pit these very qualities directly against the state’s linear time, in particular its ‘linear timelines and distinctions between before and after’.76 Now it may be that they mean aion to challenge a specifically discontinuous and unitary form of linearity, but as the summary above showed, these qualities do not exhaust the possible meanings of linearity. Similarly, it is difficult to understand how the ‘pure event’ associated with aion refuses distinctions between before and after but depends on notions of the past and future. Something more is going on with the aionic challenge to state and historical time, but most of the grappling remains hidden by a discourse based on a number of silent, shared assumptions about just what ‘linear’ encompasses. Similar problems stalk critical scholars’ interest in the non-linear ‘countertemporality’ of alternative knowledge genres.77 For instance, where linear state narratives close down political possibility, films are ‘powerful [because they do] not try to bring [experiences] together in order to form a unity’.78 Now alternative cinematic accounts of events may indeed challenge hegemonic interpretations. However, to gloss them as ‘non-linear’ because they possess no ‘clear temporal order

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that can be used … to determine the sequence of images and sounds in accordance with a homogeneous movement or a narrative that takes us from the past to the present’ forgets the linearity of the artistic medium itself and the sovereign practices involved in the ‘series of cutting and sequencing’ that the auteur uses to ‘disrupt the very notion of a whole’.79 It makes no sense to claim that cinema’s ‘time-image’ produces ‘“images without subordinating them to coherent movements and linear timelines”’80 unless we ignore the series of singular images that compose a film and have in mind a specific and particular understanding of linearity. Just as hegemonic narratives construct coherent unity, films purposefully construct a non-coherent storyline by manipulating an intrinsically linear series. It is this structural quality that led earlier time scholars to attack determinism by charging that it ‘denied time and freedom by rolling up the future in the present the way the end of a film is already determined at the start of the reel’.81 Such tensions would not be so conspicuous if critical scholars did not persist in positioning them against a murky, libertine notion of ‘linear time’.82

# 2NC

## T-USFG

### AT: Centers Blackness---2NC

#### Concepts can be re-appropriated, they don’t have a problematic essence and that is not an impact.

Gregory Pappas 17, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Texas A&M University, March 31, 2017, “The Limitations and Dangers of Decolonial Philosophies: Lessons from Zapatista Luis Villoro,” Radical Philosophy Review

For Villoro a serious study of ideologies has to be as specific to time and place as possible. The quest for theoretical barometers of good and evil at a global level and across history should be subject to critical suspicion and may be futile since the present ideological function of a concept/category is not always determined by its past use or the original purpose for which it was created. A distinction created to oppress may play a different function or have different functions in different social contexts. Modernity and liberalism have not always functioned as ideologies or to the same degree, nor does it make sense to claim that they always will. Even native thought (indigenismo) can become an ideology if adopted to keep the oppressed in their place, i.e., if it perpetuates subordination or oppression.39 If Villoro is correct in the above analysis then decolonial views are vulnerable to inaccuracy and insensitivity, especially those that wish to trace back to 1492 and across different countries the ideologies that have supported coloniality—such as modernity, capitalism, or liberalism. Villoro did not ignore how historically similar colonial structures were throughout the Americas, but for him ideologies and the logic of domination that operate in one particular place and time may not operate in the exact same way in another, especially in such a complex and diverse region as the whole of Latin America. If domination and exclusion via ideologies are local, its diagnosis and remedies must also have to be local. We need to be careful when we extrapolate from one context to another. Villoro raised a similar criticism of leftist reactions to the problem of Eurocentrism that relies on simple formulas that state we just need to embrace what is “ours” and reject what is European. Although Villoro was a critic of Eurocentrism and admirer of indigenous thought, he warned Zea and the Latin Americanist or indigenismos movement to not react to Eurocentrism and the colonial Manichaean ideas, where what is “ours” or indigenous is denigrated, with a mere inversion of the Manicheanism. For Villoro the Left must resist the temptation to rely on lazy theoretical barometers of good and evil. It must be able to provide a basis for being critical of Western ideas beyond the fact that they are Western or come from the oppressor. Not all Western concepts, standards, and categories are oppressive even to the most non-Western people. To decide between good and evil requires intelligent discriminative judgment and not easy theoretical formulas according to geopolitical coordinates or cultural origins. Again, even native thought (indigenismo) can become an ideology. He expected the Left to be sensitive to this, but what he actually experienced was a Left slipping dangerously toward subtle Manichaean assumptions, i.e., simplistic barometers about the boundaries between good and evil. This, I am afraid, is a danger in decolonial thought, one that seems unavoidable as long as they make central to their project the coloniality axis that relies on binaries to determine the direction of good and evil. I am aware that it is not easy to oppose a binary without just inverting it, but we must be careful. To be fair, decolonial thought has been critical of Manichaeism as part of the colonial legacy and there is no doubt about their good intentions to move in a pluralistic direction where there is no one central epistemology. However, this center-versus-periphery framework is easily susceptible to slipping into the simplistic view that all evil comes from what is at the center—Europe, the West, modernity, liberalism, capitalism. For instance, Mignolo describes the decolonial project as “delinking” from the West and recovery of the indigenous as if this determines what is the right path from evil toward the good.40 This smells like a subtle Manichaeism or at least a position that does not permit inquiry that is sensitive to historical context. The decolonialists’ criticism of the hegemony of the West is warranted and important, but for it to continue as a growing project that does not succumb to the excesses (vices) of the Left that Villoro diagnosed it must be careful to not slip into any of the following assumptions: • Modernity and liberalismwere and are totally bad; they are ideologies for dominating, colonizing, and oppressing or only have a darker side. • Eurocentrism (interpretation, standpoint) is bad, but philosophy from the periphery is good. •Western concepts have been used to distort or occlude indigenous (non-Western) ones therefore all or most Western concepts distort or contaminate, or are tools of domination. • Western epistemologies areimperialistic; the epistemologies of each of the colonialized regions are good. Finding particular instances where these assumptions have been explicitly articulated in the decolonial project is not necessary since the point is about the latent danger of slipping into these assumptions due to what the project is centered on or stresses. However, to make the case that I am pointing to a real danger, I next present some examples and controversies within the decolonial literature where a subtle Manicheanism has already raised its ugly head. Mignolo has come closer than any other decolonial thinker to assume the view that Western epistemologies are imperialistic. Linda Alcoff criticizes Mignolo for “often operating with what appears an overly simplified account of Western philosophical positions.” 41 One way to make Manicheanism work is to provide or assume simplistic accounts of both the good and evil poles. In Mignolo’s case, varieties of epistemologies in Europe and the United States are lumped together into asingle category before they are all easily dismissed according to an implicit barometer of domination/ liberation.

## Capitalism K

### Kick---2NC

#### Poetics fail to create communities of care.

Daniel Tiffany 14, USC PhD in comparative literature, “Cheap Signaling,” <https://bostonreview.net/poetry/daniel-tiffany-cheap-signaling-class-conflict-and-diction-avant-garde-poetry>)

In these tableaux morts of competing dictions, tensions exist between the verbal expression of class affiliation, which often goes unmarked, and the tonal properties of gender or race. This is only one of many ways that class diction can be obscured by competing verbal registers. The variegated diction of a poet such as Fred Moten, for example, complicates and masks the verbal field of class antagonism by submerging it in the verbal performance of race. His writing spins a black vernacular that speaks through the poet but leaves the verbal evidence of class conflict rifting the poems unacknowledged. Here is a passage from a poem of Moten’s entitled “Block Chapel”: if you walk all over me I’m gon’ say how do you do. the history of art from below is a violent greeting on the surface of kansas city, a readymade social dance upstairs in the gallery. baby, tell ‘em a rushing did it! to burn for creative orchestra in köln, a block from the konfrontationen in a ditch, on all this molecular gastronomy for ceramics. . . Here we see symptoms of elite class formation in phrases such as “a readymade social dance,” “molecular gastronomy,” and “the history of art from below is a violent greeting.” The implications of class also find expression, alternately, in Moten’s devotion to under-phenomena, to languages and communities that lie beneath the dominant culture (“art from below”). His poetry (and theory) evoke what he calls the “undercommons”: a sublimated refuge or demimonde elaborated through “a theory of blackness”—or, inversely, a vision of oppositional black culture translated into class discourse. With great affection and conviction, Moten summons a space of fugitivity, infidel poetics, jazz, social obscurity, and what might be called tavern talk. (One of his collections is called Hughson’s Tavern.) Yet, in contrast to the patois of a black demimonde, the word “commons” also designates a fashionable academic topic these days—an affiliation disclosing the class tensions at the very core of Moten’s Rousseauian project. The “undercommons” is at once the verbal and ideological space of a demimonde and of the academic elite. In terms of its divergent class affiliations, Moten’s project goes both over and under mainstream tastes. The mainstream appears to be the enemy here, but is the relationship between the two “commons” complementary or antagonistic? To use a phrase coined by sociologists—brought to my attention by Prageeta Sharma and developed in her poem, “She Did Not Want to Embody Cheap Signaling”—Moten’s conjuring of the “undercommons” through a synthetic vernacular, and its veiling of class conflict, could be identified as an instance of “cheap signaling” (a circumstance in which the social “cost” of transmitting a message is low enough that senders can transmit it fraudulently without risk). At the same time, Moten’s poetry privileges the black vernacular as somehow authentic or genuine—a presumption undermined by the long history of vernaculars forged at once by dominant and marginal classes. (Sharma’s poem, I should note, is subtitled “After Undergloom”—borrowing the title of one of her books—a neologism modeling a variant of the fugitive verbal substance over-written by Moten as intrinsically black.) Contrary, then, to Moten’s efforts to foreground the authenticity of a black vernacular, perhaps all poetic formulations of vernacular speech should be viewed as synthetic vernaculars. As the jargon of an inaccessible “commons,” both above and beneath the multitude, at once esoteric and moribund, fugitive languages must be seen as possessing the allure and political powers of a dead language (a fetishized medium of cultural tradition and discrimination). The seemingly impossible task of inventing dead languages—the dialectical project of fake folk songs and ballad imitation since the eighteenth century—must infuse the basic strategies of class warfare and oppositional poetics. From this perspective, the invention of dead languages associated with vanished subcultures becomes a revolutionary instrument of the poetics of Gothic Marxism. Dialectically speaking, it would not be impossible to see the phrase “cheap signaling” as designating a method of authentic defiance and revolt—as long as Moten and other poets experimenting with adversarial dictions acknowledge, paradoxically, that the jargons they forge, whether demotic or theoretical, are indeed inauthentic, or cheap: discounted, vulgar, imitation, unfair, and even criminal (a cheap shot). Only if the poetic vernacular is acknowledged to be a knockoff, as the throwaway property of the underclasses, can it function as a deliberate instrument of class warfare. To escape the pitfalls of what Adorno calls “the jargon of authenticity” (a veiled collusion between dominant and oppositional languages), all jargons (corporate, academic, but also racial or class-based) must be understood—and employed—as inauthentic, counterfeit, provisional. In addition, if we adhere to a rigorous Marxian theory of class, poets who curate the idioms of a cultural underworld must present these invented languages as incorporating their own destruction, as destined to be extinguished—just as the revolutionary class forging its vernacular achieves emancipation and complete self-consciousness only through its own extinction. Thus the infidel lyric, the jargon, the verbal undergloom, of the “dangerous classes,” to use a phrase of the Situationist scholar of gypsy language and culture, Alice Becker-Ho, always forecasts and expresses its own death—its deliberate, and vital, anachronism. The détournement of infidel tongues becomes a crucial index and weapon of class conflict.

# 1NR

## Case

# 1NR

## Case

### Presumption---1NR

#### You at least have to do more than just read words on the screen.

[Kentucky in blue].

1AC Moten, Harney, and Shukaitis 21 – Fred Moten and Stefano Harney. Interviewed by Stevphen Shukaitis. ("Refusing Completion: A Conversation," March 2021, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/116/379446/refusing-completion-a-conversation/>)

Stefano Harney: When I start off talking at our talks, going first, so to speak, **I’m really just continuing.** I’m **picking up where we never left off.** The talks are an important moment in our ongoing rehearsal. So, in that sense you are right. I’m just picking up the beat. And Fred just comes in on top of that, and I remember Fred’s great phrase, “improvisation is **making nothing out of something**.” We have to do it this way—improvisationally—because we never left practice. Because practice is where you can be with everyone, where you can be with your friends. And **the other thing is everybody already knows this beat, and the hook.** We don’t travel and talk to bring something new. Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich called themselves “pilgrims of the obvious.” And that’s what we are bringing with our itinerant ways—the good news people already have, the obvious. Now, we aren’t comparing ourselves to them, except insofar as like them we want to retain the emphasis on the obvious, and to avoid being confused with the message. **It’s not about us. We accept** going down the road, **travelling on**, as a breath of **the common wind**, as Julius Scott would teach us. We’re happy if our rehearsal, **our rhythm** as you call it, the strangeness of our dub, as Eddie George would say, **comes through to people as a kind of insurgent information about the obvious, a cadence in that common wind**. FM: There’s two things. There’s a poetics to the writing. Our acquaintance began as a function of a shared interest in poetry. That shared interest is old and sort of ancestral, so to speak, because we get it from our parents. But also, we got to know each other in terms of a certain kind of engagement with a tradition of experimental poetry in North America. Those poets remain really important and crucial for us—as poets but also as thinkers. Our friendship grew under the protection of our friend and mentor Bill Corbett, a poet who further immersed us in that tradition but who also lived that tradition. There is a poetics embedded in the criticism of poets who are in and extend that tradition—H.D., Zukofsky, Olson, Duncan, Mackey, Howe, Baraka. We grew up under the influence of their criticism, rather than under the influence of what people nowadays call critique. We were interested in the criticism that was being offered by poets more than in the various forms of literary or even theoretical critique. And to the extent that we were interested in theory or philosophy, we were always interested in folks who revel in their poetic sensibilities, whether that was James or Derrida or Glissant or Wynter or Spillers. And we gravitated towards the poetic or the literary sensibility that animates Marx’s work. **We were looking for poetry, or for the poetic, in everything we read**, and the criticism that got us started helped us in that. Marx, like Zukofsky, is a deep and playful reader of Shakespeare. There’s a trace of Shakespeare in how he develops this interplay of critique and criticism in his work, and that was always something in which we were trying to be involved. And that goes back to something that was there for Stefano in his relation to his dad, and for me in my relation to my mom**. It meant also being interested in the poetics of everyday speech, and the common tongues of the people that we grew up around. We’re just fascinated by the rhythm and the music of their speech.** You can talk about this as a kind of vernacular poetics, particularly with regard to the black tradition, but you could broaden that vernacular notion out in the ways that William Carlos Williams does as he tries to imagine a new American speech. When Baraka, say, takes up that charge he’s trying to make it ante-American and, at the end of the day, anti-American, too. So, **there are** some traditions **that we’re in**. The best way to put it is the way Baraka put it—you have to sound like something. You know, there’s writing that doesn’t sound like anything. It’s drone-ish. Rightly, Derrida teaches us not to think of writing as epiphenomenal to speech or parasitical on speech, and yet there is the kind of writing that appears to have no relation to speech whatsoever and to the way that speech is always irreducible to a single voice. We want to make sure **our writing sounds like something where sounding like something is sounding like something broken or cracked or dubbed or overdubbed. And because we’re overdubbed**—because, as Stefano says, **we’re visitors, who are always visiting, and who are always being visited**—we are always speaking names, always being spoken by them, always working in this unnaming and renaming, maybe both in but also against the grain of how poetry bears naming as a kind of power. **Maybe there was no way for us not to sound like something, given the various places where we’re coming from**. **Maybe we can also tap into some kinda poetic force** that sound bears against poetry’s nominating power. Maybe we can just hang with how folks hold something back of what they hold out to the poet’s lovingly extractive ear. We don’t know. Anyway, there’s that sense of a poetics in the writing that’s also a phonics of the writing. But **then there’s this other question of rhythm that has to do with the fact that our writing is a form of correspondence**. We like to think we’re involved in a kind of musical correspondence, like we’re trading fours. You know, Stefano takes four bars and I take four bars; or, probably it’s more like he takes four bars and I take forty-four. But also, there’s the problem that **the normal rhythm** of taking fours **is predicated on proximate presence, on being there with the person** with whom you’re trading. And **most of the time we’re not there together in the same place and we’re not playing at the same time. There’s all these** time lags and rhythmic **irregularities** that come into play—a sort of involuntary sync of patience. And for a while being in different places has meant being in different seasons. **We’ve been learning how to negotiate that—not overcome it but actually ride it. We use the gaps and the pauses as ways to think more clearly and more effectively with one another** and by way of one another and past the separation of one and another. **There’s a rhythm. Definitely. But it’s an irregular rhythm. And not only irregular compared to some metronomic norm but irregular in being overpopulated. The beautiful thing about the polyrhythm is that even though it’s just the two of us,** as Bill Withers and Grover Washington Jr. would say, **it’s way more than that.** Not only **our parents, our families, our partners, and the various children in our lives, but also all these other people that we’re always working with and talking with and thinking with and reading with. There’s always a lot of sound in our head,** and in our hands, too.

#### Polyrhythmic praxis embodies a radical alternative to normativity that throws dominant narratives of spacetime into crisis.

[Kentucky in blue].

1AC Crawley 20, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and African American Studies at the University of Virginia. (Ashon T., Of Forgiveness, February 25, 2020, By Ashon T. Crawley, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/of-forgiveness/>)

It’s in the constant struggle that freedom is found, Angela Davis informs us. We share in air. Here. In this place. We flesh. Even those that have renounced relation to flesh, which is their relation to the earth, to the social, to the sensual sound, to blackness. And it is urgent to think about how we can live together, to breathe with one another — to, as Gwendolyn Brooks says, live in the along. This, in the language of Katherine McKittrick, livingness of blackness is a syncopated, arrhythmic, polyrhythmic thing. Found in the sound, in the music. Not about or for or in the direction of linear progression of spacetime but is a thing that happens in some otherwise relation to normative time and space. It also doesn’t long to return to normative function and form; it is instead about an otherwise form of music and an otherwise praxis that would produce a radical alternative to and against the normative in our current moment. A different temporality.

### AT: Wake Work

#### Their mode of refusal is impossible and unsustainable.

Webb 18 – Dr. Darren Webb, MA, PhD, Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Sheffield, “Bolt-Holes and Breathing Spaces in the System: On Forms of Academic Resistance (or, Can The University Be A Site Of Utopian Possibility?)”, Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, Volume 40, Number 2, p. 102-105

The undercommons

“The undercommons” is associated with the work of Fred Moten, Stefano Harney (Harney and Moten 2013) and Stevphen Shukaitis (2009; Undercommoning Collective 2016). At one level, undercommoning is concerned with creating spaces within the academy—“liminal and recombinant spaces” for “subversion” and “sabotage,” as Shukaitis puts it (Shukaitis 2009, 173). These spaces are infused with a utopian dimension as they are inhabited by a network of radical alliances who resist elitism, enclosure, commercialization, and “seek to mobilize the unique historical location and material power of the university to imagine and build a world beyond the present order” (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014, 12). By undercommoning together and forging solidarities, the tensions and contradictions of the contemporary academy can be transformed into “visions, actions and experiments for a radically different world” (Undercommoning Collective 2016).

But the undercommons is more than just the creation of spaces with utopian intent. It is a shifting matrix of spaces, processes, relations, and structures of feeling. Harney and Moten do attach importance to teaching and the classroom—in particular as an opportunity to refuse the call to order—but the undercommons exists in institutional cracks outside the classroom: in stairwells, in alleys, in kitchens, in corridors, in smoking areas, in hiding. The undercommons is a community of maroons, outcasts, and fugitives, not of responsible teachers. It is “always an unsafe neighbourhood” (Harney and Moten 2013, 28). In fact, the undercommons is best described as a way of being: a way of being within and against one’s institution and a way of being with and for the community of outcasts (Melamed 2016). Within and against the corporate-imperial university, the subversive intellectual is unprofessional, uncollegial, impractical, disruptive, disloyal, unproductive, unreliable, “obstructive and shiftless, dumb with insolence,” forever refusing the call to order (Harney and Moten 2013, 34). With and for the undercommons, hapticality describes a way of feeling that is at once unsettled—“to feel at home with the homeless, at ease with the fugitive, at peace with the pursued”—and intensely intimate—“the capacity to feel through others, for others to feel through you, for you to feel them feeling you” (97–98). Together, the maroons of the undercommons engage in study; a mode of sociality, “a kind of way of being with others,” walking and talking and thinking and working together “in a way that feels good, the way it should feel good” (111–112, 117).

There is a definite utopian project at work here. Moten tells us that “I believe in the world and want to be in it. I want to be in it all the way to the end of it because I believe in another world in the world and I want to be in that” (Harney and Moten 2013, 118). The undercommons is presented as an entry point to this other world in the world. It is a “utopic commonunderground,” a utopia “submerged in the interstices and on the outskirts of the fierce and urgent now” (Moten 2008, 1746; Harney and Moten 2013, 51). The call to both disorder and to study—what Freire might have termed the utopian process of denunciation-annunciation—becomes an ontological enactment of something that is already here (Harney and Moten 2013, 133–134). For Harney in particular, the undercommons as a way of being can be understood in terms of rhythm. It is a new rhythm working against the global rhythm of work, the “global assembly line tearing apart the functions of man,” the rhythm of inputs and outputs every facet of which must be “measured and managed” (Harney 2015, 174–176). In contrast, the rhythm of the undercommons is “a militant arrhythmia” that unsettles the rhythm of the line, “invites us to feel around us” and brings the utopic commonunderground into the open (177–178).

It is easy to be seduced by the language of the undercommons. Embodying and enacting it, however, is difficult indeed. Being within and against the university, refusing the call to order through insolent obstructive unprofessionalism, is almost impossible to sustain. Halberstam (2009, 45) describes the undercommons as “a marooned community of outcast thinkers who refuse, resist, and renege on the demands of rigor, excellence, and productivity.” A romantic and appealing notion for sure but refusing and reneging on “the university of excellence” will cost you your job. When Moten describes subversion as a “series of immanent upheavals” expressed through “vast repertoires of high-frequency complaints, imperceptible frowns, withering turns, silent sidesteps, and ever-vigilant attempts not to see and hear” (2008, 1743), one is reminded instantly of Thomas Docherty, disciplined and suspended for his negative vibes.7

Being with and for the maroon community is difficult too. First of all, “Where and how can we find/see the Undercommons at work?” (Ĉiĉigoj, Apostolou-Hölscher, and Rusham 2015, 265). Where and how can one find those liminal spaces of sabotage and subversion, and how does one occupy them in a spirit of hapticality, study, and militant arrhythmia that brings the utopic underground to the surface of the fierce and urgent now? Beautiful language, but how does one live it? Networks do, of course, exist—the Undercommoning Collective, the Edu-Factory Collective, the International Network for Alternative Academia, to name but a few. These are promising spaces for bringing together and harboring the maroons and the fugitives. But networks are typically short-lived, and—as Harney and Moten warned—there is a danger of institutionalization, of taking institutional practices with you into alternative spaces “because we’ve been inside so much” (Harney and Moten 2013, 148). And so, predictably, meetings of the fugitives come with structure, order, an official agenda, and circulated minutes. The outcasts convene in conventional academic conferences, with parallel sessions, panels of papers, lunch breaks, wine and nibbles (e.g., Edu-Factory 2012). These spaces offer time out, welcome respite, a breathing space, a trip abroad, and then one returns to work.

If hapticality, the touch of the undercommons, is “a visceral register of experience … the feel that what is to come is here” (Bradley 2014, 129–130), then this seems elusive. It is hard to detect a sense of the utopic undercommons rising to the surface of the corporate-imperial university. Moten describes the call to disorder and to study as a way to “excavate new aesthetic, political, and economic dispositions” (Moten 2008, 1745). But this notion of excavating is highly problematic. It is common within the discourse of “everyday utopianism”—finding utopia in the everyday, recovering lost or repressed transcendence in “everydayness” (Gardiner 2006)—to describe the process of utopian recovery in terms of excavating: excavating repressed desires, submerged longings, suppressed histories, untapped possibilities. But the fundamental questions of where to dig and how to identify a utopian “find” are never adequately addressed (see Webb 2017). Gardiner defines utopia as “a series of forces, tendencies and possibilities that are immanent in the here and now, in the pragmatic activities of everyday life” (2006, 2). But how are these forces, tendencies and possibilities to be identified and recovered? For Harney and Moten, it is through study, hapticality and militant arrhythmia. These are slippy concepts, however, evading concrete material referents.

What is it to inhabit the undercommons? Those who have written of their experiences refer to “small acts of marronage” such as poaching resources and redeploying them in ways at odds with the university’s designs and demands (Reddy 2016, 7), or exploiting funding streams “to form cracks in the institution that enable the Others to invade the university” (Smith, Dyke, and Hermes 2013, 150). For Adusei-Poku (2015), the undercommons is a space of refuge which is all about survival (2015, 4–5). We who feel homeless in the university are forced into refuge. We gather together to survive. We may gain satisfaction from small acts of marronage, but this is less about bringing the utopic common underground to the surface as it is a form of “radical escapism” (Adusei-Poku 2015, 4). Benveniste (2015, v) tells us that: “The undercommons has no set location and no return address. There is no map for entering and no guide for staying. The only condition is a living appetite. Listen to its hunger for difference.” We need more than poetry, however. And we need more than a series of minor acts of resistance. As Srnicek and Williams rightly emphasize, resistance is a defensive, reactive gesture, resisting against. Resistance is not a utopian endeavour: “We do not resist a new world into being” (Srnicek and Williams 2016, 47). The undercommons, when one can find it, is a bolt hole, a place of refuge, a breathing space in the system. We need something more.

#### Subversion has been weaponized by the university as a way of individualizing resistance. Whatever communal activism the aff may galvanize gets short-circuited---especially by a ballot.

Woolwine and Bell, 18—University of Central Oklahoma AND University of Houston-Victoria (Sarah and Justin, “American Pragmatism, Disability, and the Politics of Resilience in Mental Health Education,” The Palgrave Handbook of Philosophy and Public Policy pp 623-634, SpringerLink, dml)

Positive psychologists usually characterize resilience as a subjective capacity for adaptation in the face of trauma or adversity, as well as a necessary pre-condition for flourishing which is attainable through the personal efforts of individuals. We contend that these ideas concerning the meaning and acquisition of resilience are problematic for two reasons. First, they shift the lion’s share of responsibility for managing mental health issues onto affected individuals and their families rather than educational and other institutions to which the mentally ill might turn for services and help. Second, these ideas wrongly conceive of resilience as an outcome or “end state” of educational processes aimed at shaping the values and capabilities of the individual. We will derive this argument from a detailed discussion of American Pragmatism, which we contend to be a better standpoint for thinking through the challenges of public policy decisions concerning mental health than the concept of resiliency. Positive Psychology and Neoliberal Social Order Positive psychology is a relatively new field of study that focuses on personal growth rather than the identification and treatment of mental illnesses. Cecily Knight notes that in this research context, resilience is variously conceptualized as a state, a condition, and a practice.2 She favors a construction that encompasses all three, stating that “There are a number of cognate terms found in resilience literature that are effectively talking about aspects of what I understand to be resilience. The terms include mental health promotion, emotional intelligence, social-emotional competence and emotional literacy.”3 In other words, Knight views resilience as a complex and overlapping array of abilities that cohere around the capacity to regulate one’s own emotional well-being. Based on research into the life outcomes of socio-economically disadvantaged students, she argues that personal resilience tends to outweigh risk factors such as poverty as a predictor of one’s eventual capacity for financial self-support and success at career endeavors. Resilience, she additionally declares, “is not a quality that some possess and others do not” because it consists in skills that can be learned by all. And because it is possible to increase one’s resilience, “there is a role for classroom teachers in enhancing resilience for all children and young people in schools independent of risk.”4 Knight , then, views the capacity to regulate one’s emotions—in other words, one’s resilience—as something akin to a character trait that can be cultivated by anyone regardless of factors such as age, gender, ability, or income level. What implications arise from Knight’s claims concerning the importance of resilience for psychological health and personal success? In the first place, her statements seem to suggest that this curiously underspecified trait offers protection against almost any mishap or loss of security that might befall one. In other words, they posit resilience as a trait that facilitates emotional wellness by offering protection against the suffering one would otherwise experience as the plaything of forces beyond one’s control. From the standpoint of such a view, resilience would be an indispensable form of psychic currency in that its accrual would constitute necessary pre-condition for the achievement and retention of one’s mental health. The idea seems to be that if you are resilient enough, you can simply evade the situational despair most others feel in the face of major setbacks such as job loss, personal illness, discrimination, and so on. Ostensibly, then, “happiness” or “flourishing” arises from one’s inner preparedness for and ability to withstand disaster rather than any mutualistic relation to others and one’s material environment. If Knight’s account of personal resilience is accepted, it seems unlikely that a person could ever be too resilient or fail to benefit from becoming more resilient than they are at present. Thus, there would be no hard limit to the amount resiliency training today’s students need to become healthy, functioning members of society. And if that is the case, then it is profitable to invest in her notion of resilience—not only as a consumer but also and more especially as a disseminator of therapeutic techniques and educational programming designed to enhance personal resiliency. Who, more specifically, stands to benefit from creating and dispersing such techniques and programming? The American Psychological Association (APA), for one. The organization reiterates Knight’s claims regarding the privacy, necessity, and egalitarian nature of resilience in its official statement on the topic, asserting that “resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have.” Rather, “it involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.” The behaviors, thoughts, and actions in question include (but are not limited to) efforts to “take decisive actions, maintain a hopeful outlook, make connections, and avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.”5 The APA’s claims are characteristic of agendas designed to promote resilience as a desirable and universally learnable trait of character. Their subtext seems to be that resilience is an ideal after which all can and ought to strive, and that there is a responsibility to develop resilience that lies with individuals rather than social institutions or communities. Notice how such thinking allows for a connection to be drawn between the personal management of emotional problems and the wider economic uncertainties faced by subjects living in contemporary capitalist societies. Mark Neocleous has commented on the ease with which the notion of resilience promoted by the APA tends to fit with neoliberal concepts of selfhood and membership in society, stating that “Neoliberal citizenship is nothing if not a training in resilience as the new technology of the self: a training to withstand whatever crisis capital undergoes and whatever political measures the state carries out to save it.”6 We would argue that by touting resilience as a panacea for life’s misfortunes, the APA signals its allegiance to a neoliberal concept of good citizenship wherein virtuous members of the community are taken to be the ones best prepared to withstand whatever economic crises may be in store for them on the basis of their own private economic and emotional resources. Thus, the APA benefits from positive psychology’s discourse on resilience by employing it as a means to align itself with a now-predominant social order that locates any responsibility for remedying the disabling effects of mental illness in individual sufferers rather than communities and institutions. The supposedly personal yet democratically open nature of resilience has been central to its appeal as an idea among researchers and therapists—and, increasingly, for those outside the academy. To wit, the concept of resilience as it has arisen in positive psychology correlates strongly with other ideas such as “hardiness” and “grit” that have found popularity with the public and so also those who seek to capitalize on it. Angela Duckworth, for example, has become famous for her self-help writings on grit. Duckworth thinks of “grit” as a trait independent of talent that can be learned and refined by anyone. She claims that grittiness is more predictive of personal success than innate talent or intelligence. To become gritty, Duckworth argues, it is necessary to develop a “growth mindset” characterized by the identification of a burning interest , a sense that this interest serves some “higher purpose” in the sense of improving the world, and the ability to turn setbacks into fungible assets which can aid one in the realization of one’s goals. Her discussion of disability and grit demonstrates how easily this sort of rhetoric can be used to disparage disabled persons who are unable to “mainstream,” or pass as normatively capacitated. In Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance, Duckworth references the experiences of a colleague who, due to repeated ear infections as a child, suffered difficulties in processing sound information and was tracked as learning disabled while growing up and in school. A moment came, she says, when the colleague in question wondered, “Who am I? A learning-disabled kid with no real future? Or something else?”7 Following a process of sustained effort coupled with apparent attempts to fit into conventional classroom settings, she claims that this individual eventually became an honors student—leaving the hopeless future that he had projected for himself as a disabled person behind. One of the implications of this example is that, with enough effort, a person with a disability can simply adapt to able-bodied society and leave his or her disabled self in the past where it assumedly belongs. Another implication, of course, is that the lives of those with physical and intellectual impairments lack meaning and value . One need not look far to uncover further demeaning attempts to interpret the experiences of disabled persons and their loved ones through the construct of resilience. For example, a recent study of hearing impaired community college students found resilience (or its lack) to be a crucial determinant of educational and professional success. In this study, being “resilient” equated to having traits such as a good sense of humor, comfort with social isolation, self-perceptiveness, self-responsibility, and steadfast commitment to worthwhile goals.8 Another, similar study examined the role of resilience in the mental health of mothers who find themselves in long-term caregiver relationships with developmentally disabled children. The researchers concluded that the resilience of these mothers was directly related to their personal optimism, stating that “optimism is a resource that has wide-ranging beneficial effects for these midlife and older mothers who face lifelong caregiving responsibilities .”9 In both studies, a number of troubling assumptions appear to have been in play. To begin with, the researchers seem to take it for granted that having a disability or caring for a disabled person always places one at a disadvantage compared with others. Secondly, they seem uncritical of the idea that the disadvantage of disability simply lies in occupying a minority relative to one’s own embodiment—rather than, for example, inhabiting an unaccommodating or socially unaccepting environment. Third and most importantly, they assume that the solution to such issues is to look inward and “adapt” or “think positively” rather than challenge systematic inequalities that present obstacles to greater accessibility and acceptance. It should be noted, finally, that both studies re-capitulate the notion of the individual as the primary locus of “resilience” (however we may choose to define the term). The current zeal for interpreting disabled experience through the concept of resilience has recently spread to institutions of higher learning, where it handily serves the economic interests of the university rather than the needs of students. Based on an examination of mental health programming in Canadian universities, Kate Aubrecht argues that the positive psychology movement provides vocabulary with which universities can create educational programming that simultaneously construes disability as something to which all students are susceptible and against which all have a personal responsibility to arm themselves. The ideas that disability is wholly negative and that it must be prevented from penetrating the domain of “normal student life” figure importantly in this programming, according to Aubrecht. She states: At the crux of the positive psychology movement is the idea that people can learn to be resilient, if given the skills and encouragement to do so. Based on this belief, university wellness services now see students as improvable subjects, capable of resilience. Disability, or the possibility that students might become disabled by the experience of distress or other mental health difficulties, lies at the heart of this. Wellness services implicitly view disability negatively, as something that must be prevented through resilience programming, with the aim of preserving or improving the health of the student body, and thus the academic standing of the university more generally.10 Universities have much to gain from sending the message that the responsibility for managing mental health issues on campus lies primarily with students and their families . Most importantly, any university that gets on board with this mindset stands to offset some of the economic cost associated with providing mental health services—all the while sounding as if they are offering students a solid lesson in self-responsibility. Students, on the other hand, stand to suffer as a result of the potential withdrawal of needed medical resources and the increased stigma surrounding mental illness that surely follows from programming that promotes resilience as a solution to clinical depression, anxiety disorder, and other potentially disabling conditions. To conclude this section, it behooves us to point out that we are not questioning the virtue of dedication to a cause or of some degree of emotional self-reliance. Indeed, in a well-ordered social context these traits would have significant value for any person. Instead, we are concerned by the ableism inherent in theories which use resiliency, grit, or hardiness as means to adjust the attitudes and expectations of individual disabled persons toward the demands of neoliberal political economy—especially to the exclusion of other values.11 We suggest that the demand for resiliency is not a demand that helps disabled persons achieve meaningful lives for themselves, but instead a demand that they conform as individuals capable of interacting in a neoliberal market. And, given the needs of disabled persons, they are certainly a potentially ripe market.

### AT: Aesthetics

#### Aesthetic strategies valorize autonomy and demonize instrumental considerations---this dovetails with fascism.

Jay 92 (Martin. History @ UC Berkeley. "The Aesthetic Ideology" as Ideology; Or, What Does It Mean to Aestheticize Politics?” Cultural Critique 21 Spring p. 43-44)

Any discussion of the aestheticization of politics must begin by identifying the normative notion of the aesthetic it presupposes. For unless we specify what is meant by this notoriously ambiguous term, it is impossible to understand why its extension to the realm of the political is seen as problematic. Although a thorough review of the different uses in the literature cited above is beyond the scope of this essay, certain significant alternatives can be singled out for scrutiny. As Benjamin's own remarks demonstrate, one salient use derives from the l'art pour l'art tradition of differentiating a realm called art from those of other human pursuits, cognitive, religious, ethical, economic, or whatever. Here the content of that realm apart-often, but not always, identified with something known as beauty-is less important than its claim to absolute autonomous and autotelic self-referentiality. For the obverse of this claim is the exclusion of ethical, instrumental, religious, etc. considerations from the realm of art. A politics aestheticized in this sense will be equally indifferent to such extra-artistic claims, having as its only criterion of value aesthetic worth. Moreover, the definition of that worth implied by such a rigid differentiation usually suppresses those aspects of the aesthetic, such as sensuous enjoyment and bodily pleasure, which link art and mundane existence; instead, formal considerations outweigh "sentimental" ones. On a visit to Paris in 1891, Oscar Wilde was reported to have said: "When Benvenuto Cellini crucified a living man to study the play of muscles in his death agony, a pope was right to grant him absolution. What is the death of a vague individual if it enables an immortal word to blossom and to create, in Keats' words, an eternal source of ecstasy?" (Raynaud 397). Another classical expression of this attitude appeared in the notorious response of the Symbolist poet Laurent Tailhade to a deadly anarchist bomb thrown into the French Chamber of Deputies in 1893: "**What do the victims matter if the gesture is beautiful**?"8 Not long after, F. T. Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto echoed the same sentiments in glorifying, along with militarism, anarchistic destruction, and contempt for women, "the beautiful ideas which kill" (182). Moving beyond the Futurists' flatulent rhetoric, Mussolini's son-in-law and foreign minister Ciano would confirm the practical results of its implementation when he famously compared the bombs exploding among fleeing Ethiopians in 1936 to flowers bursting into bloom. The aestheticization of politics in these cases repels not merely because of the grotesque impropriety of applying criteria of beauty to the deaths of human beings, but also because of the chilling way in which **nonaesthetic criteria are deliberately** and provocatively **excluded from consideration**. When restricted to a rigorously differentiated realm of art, such antiaffective, formalist coldness may have its justifications; indeed, a great deal of modern art would be hard to appreciate without it. But when then extended to politics through a gesture of imperial dedifferentiation, the results are **highly problematic**. For the disinterestedness that is normally associated with the aesthetic seems precisely what is so **radically** **inappropriate** in the case of that **most basic of human interests, the preservation of life**. Benjamin's bitter observation that mankind's "self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order" ("Work of Art" 244) vividly expresses the disgust aroused by this callous apotheosis of art over life.

#### Especially true given their critique of modernity AND constraints.

Wolin 96 (Richard, History @ CUNY Graduate Center. “LEFT FASCISM: GEORGES BATAILLE AND THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY” Constellations 2 (3) p. 397-400)

In an essay that has often been considered a touchstone for the multifarious debates during the 1980s over the merits of “modernity vs. postmodernity,” Jiirgen Habermas brands French poststructuralism as a type of young conservatism. His remarks - which are far from uncontroversial - read as follows:

The young conservatives embrace the fundamental experience of aesthetic modernity - the disclosure of a decentered subjectivity freed from all constraints of rational cognition and purposiveness, from all imperatives of labor and utility - and in this way break out of the modern world. They thereby ground an intransigent antimodernism through a modernist attitude. They transpose the spontaneous power of the imagination, the experience of self and affectivity, into the remote and the archaic; and in manichean fashion, they counterpose to instrumental reason a principle only accessible via “evocation”: be it the will to power or sovereignty, Being or the Dionysian power of the poetic. In France this trend leads from Georges Bataille to Foucault and Derrida. The spirit [Ceist] of Nietzsche that was reawakened in the 1970s of course hovers over them all.’

The epithet “young conservative” has often been misconstrued by critics. Since Habermas’s characterization of the poststructuralists occurs in the context of a discussion of neoconservatism as a political force in the United States and Europe during the 1980s, it has often been assumed that he considers the aforementioned French theorists as ‘neoconservative’ - which is of course far from true.2 Instead, his comparison refers to a group of right-wing - in truth, either fascist or proto-fascistic - German intellectuals who played an enormously influential, subversive role in the waning years of the Weimar Republic. Among their number one would have to include: Ernst Junger, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Ludwig Klages, Ernst Niekisch, Carl Schmitt, Oswald Spengler, and the members of the “Tat” (“The Deed”) ~ i r c l e .O~f equal importance is the fact that there are significant aspects of the philosopher Martin Heidegger’s critique of modernity that bear profound affinities with their doctrine^.^ One could best summarize the role played by Germany’s so-called conservative revolutionaries by saying that they contributed decisively to the “spiritual preparation” for German National Socialism. It was their withering critique of modernity, their indictment of the purportedly “Western” ideas of reason, liberalism, individualism, constitutionalism - in sum, of a decadent and moribund bourgeois Zivilzkation (that had, moreover, been grafted unwillingly upon German Kultur by the victorious allies at Versailles) -that did much to undermine intellectually what little support remained for Germany’s fledgling democracy in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It is worth pointing out that Habermas is not alone in having perceived the intellectual affinities between the critique of reason that was fashionable in the concluding years of Weimar and contemporary French theory. Manfred Frank has also remarked on the striking conceptual parallels between the two currents in question. As Frank observes: “Postmodernism and antimodernism perfidiously join hands. This is also the case with ‘logocentrism’: [Ludwig] Klages and the new anti-intellectualism [ Geistfeindlichkeit] of our day agree in the affect against the achievements of Western ‘rationality’.”’ Through the allusion to Klages, Frank alludes to the telltale fact that the term ‘logocentrism’ -that lament against which has become the hallmark of Derrida’s deconstruction - was itself coined by Klages in his work of the late 1920s and early 1930s, Der Gezkt als Widersacher der Seele (The Intellect as Antagonist of the Soul). According to Frank, the theoretical position shared by poststructuralism and the German critics of civilization in the 1920s was that rationality and reason, which the post-enlightenment tradition perceived as a balm for the ills of humanity, represent instead the primary source and origin of those very ills. To speak of intellectual affinities between Germany’s young conservatives and the French postmoderns, while suggestive, as yet tells us relatively little. There could indeed be more substantive differences between these two groupings than similarities. Prima facie, their respective political leanings could not be more opposed: while the proto-fascism of the German critics of reason and civilization is plain, their French counterparts would seem to be the authentic philosophical heirs of the spirit of May ‘6fL6 As such, their theories incline toward a philosophical anarchism that is resolutely anti-statist. The embrace of an authoritarian state, as practiced by the German young conservatives, would in their case be something very difficult to imagine.

### AT: Polyrhythmic Praxis

#### It can’t translate into praxis or break out of the system Moten criticizes---it’s too sweeping and oppositional of a category to be effective.

Katja Čičigoj 14, Stefan Apostolou-Hölscher and Martina Ruhsam, The Inflexions of the Undercommons, Lingering Ghosts: (Un)Answered Questions, (Un)Present Speakers, (Un)Read Books and Readers?, <http://www.inflexions.org/radicalpedagogy/n8_tangent_cicigojapostolou-holscherruhsam.html>

What are the Undercommons then? In their groundbreaking essay The University and the Undercommons Harney and Moten describe a tendency that is not only valid for the contemporary academia in the US but has also been unfolding on a rather international level, the latest since the Bologna reforms were decided by 29 European ministers of education in 1999. Harney and Moten paradoxically identify the idea of universitas as such with its professionalization and thereby – being inspired by the operaist assumption that living labor would always be creative whilst capital could only react to its inventions – juxtapose the mass intellectuality of what they call the Undercommons with a privatization of (knowledge) practices through their imprisonment inside the walls of the academia: “The Universitas is always a state/ State strategy,“ they claim. In comparison the Undercommons as maroons rather act against their administration by state apparatuses. PERSISTENT QUESTIONS– 1. ONTO-METHODOLOGY: creation of concepts (D&G): theory/philosophy as poetic practice versus a scientific attitude of understanding the world - raised as a problem of metaphoric poetic language, this may be more than a mere question of rhetorics: PHILOSOPHICAL-POLITICAL POIESIS can amount also to the CREATION OF POLITICAL IMAGINATION against “capitalist realism” - i.e. recognizing the immense political productivity and creativity of innumerable practical readings of concepts such as the Multitude, the Commons, and the Empire from Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt or performativity from Judith Butler – regardless of what our theoretical assessment of them might be in terms of how much they “scientifically” can correspond to concrete social realities. - so what is the poetic practice of the Undercommons as a concept? Can we envisage its political poesis (and how to think of it in this temporal order, if the Undercommons is always already here – see next point)? 2. EPISTEMOLOGY/POLITCS: Where and how can we find/see the Undercommons at work? If they are always already here, they risk becoming ubiquitous and we risk not to spot them... And on the other hand – why should we spot them at all, if they are always already here? - There seems to be an onto-political tension between “THE ALWAYS ALREADY” and “the contrary to what is”: between assigning value to the potential of what is already (the undercommons of study as always already going on) AND DEMANDING A RADICAL CHANGE OR BRAKE, infrastructural change etc. (for if what we are looking for is already here – it seems we necessitate no political work anymore) Does the recognition of the “always already” of the undercommons call for being complemented by political work on what is not (yet)? Can we think of these two attitudes together, but not merely in terms of a complementary “peaceful coexistence”? Can they inform each other – and how? About the Undercommons as Being... Always Already There “They saw our bad debt coming a mile off. [...] Anywhere bad debt elaborates itself. Anywhere you can stay, conserve yourself, plan. A few minutes, a few days when you cannot hear them say there is something wrong with you.” The Undercommons – Against Politics? The intentional work of subjects towards a clear goal: “Our task is the self-defence of the surround in the face of repeated, targeted dispossessions through the settler’s armed incursion. And while acquisitive violence occasions this self-defence, it is recourse to self-possession in the face of dispossession (recourse, in other words, to politics) that represents the real danger. Politics is an ongoing attack on the common – the general and generative antagonism – from within the surround” […] We surround democracy’s false image in order to unsettle it. Every time it tries to enclose us in a decision, we’re undecided. Every time it tries to represent our will, we’re unwilling” (Harney & Moten 17-19). An abdication of political responsibility? OK. Whatever. We’re just anti-politically romantic about actually existing social life. We aren’t responsible for politics. We are the general antagonism to politics looming outside every attempt to politicise, every imposition of self-governance, every sovereign decision and its degraded miniature, every emergent state and home sweet home. We are disruption and consent to disruption. We preserve upheaval. Sent to fulfil by abolishing, to renew by unsettling, to open the enclosure whose immeasurable venality is inversely proportionate to its actual area, we got politics surrounded. We cannot represent ourselves. We can’t be represented.” 3. THE INFORMAL/The need of FORMATION/DIS-/RE-FORMATION: – “the informal” is proposed by Harney and Moten as a way of thinking about the Undercommons; but when reflecting back on the specific conference set-up and how it worked out in the end in terms of in-forming the way our discussions proceeded, it struck me how perhaps what we think of as “the informal” is always already in-formed by pre-formed relations and positions (also in the specific case of this conference, but not only): how therefore a mere “via negative” of formal openness might not be enough for everyone to feel addressed and included (does everyone need to be addressed and included at all, however, or are we bound to always form specific regimes of address and inclusion/exclusion?) - The question might therefore not be how to form the informal (paradox?), but how can a pre-formed and informed “informal” set-up be dis-formed and re-formed otherwise in order to enable i.e. an emergence of a situation of study? - Is study really “the informal” or does it need some kind of form-ation to take place, to enable a study to occur? Is study itself a kind of dis- and re-formation, neither the formation ex nihilo, nor the creation of a supposed informal? 4. (IM)PATIENCE AND (LACK OF) RESULTS: - Bojana Kunst asked – why do we seem to be very patient when discussing the minute theoretical discrepancies, but impatient when faced with concrete practices and propositions? - To bring it further, does this indicate our inability to cross contextual boundaries or is there something inherent in contemporary modes of power operations that makes us prone to abstract assessment but reluctant to concrete propositions (unable to go “beyond the symptom”)? - Randy Martin asked whether our inclination towards self-assessment makes us perhaps too impatient to see and produce results. How to enable the afterlife of the conference to linger?

#### Their form of self-care doesn’t spill out or translate into broader social change---the most likely outcome is a depoliticized enclave politics.

Myers 13 – Ella Myers, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and the Program in Gender Studies at the University of Utah, PhD in Political Science from Northwestern University, BA in Politics from the University of California, Santa Cruz, Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World, p. 46-49

The therapeutic ethics advanced by Foucault and Connolly resonate strongly with dominant features of American culture. In particular, therapeutic ethics echoes a widely held popular belief, captured in this chapter's second epigraph, that working on oneself is the path to broader social change. This view is expressed quite clearly today in the doctrine of ethical consumerism, which holds that individuals should critically reflect on their consumption practices, making changes in themselves and in their personal conduct (namely, in what they buy) in order to generate collective change. In addition to expressing the striking and disturbing conviction that a primary way of shaping the self and becoming a better person is through purchasing commodities, this orientation rests on the belief that each individual's action will additively amount to something greater, producing transformation on a large scale. This is a more simplistic model than Connolly's in that it recognizes no difference between micropolitics and macropolitics, treating the latter as simply the cumulative result of the former. There are, nonetheless, real similarities between Foucauldian-inspired ethics and the more generalized conviction that transforming oneself is the most important and even the most politically significant project a person can undertake.

Even though Foucault's and Connolly's accounts of ethics may not intend to further the prevalent popular belief that you change the world by changing yourself, conceptualizing ethics primarily in terms of self-intervention is dangerous in the context of an American cultural environment that can fairly be described as narcissistic.115 There is no doubt that the Foucauldian-inspired arts of the self Connolly advocates are meant to challenge reigning ways of being and to transform individuals in ways that enable them to engage more effectively in collective projects, including critical and oppositional endeavors that aim to alter status quo arrangements. Yet the massive popularity of self-help programs disseminating the view that worldly events are the direct result of one's personal thoughts, in conjunction with capitalist ideologies that tend to reduce the aesthetics of existence to the acquisition of a lifestyle through shopping, along with many other cultural influences that promote questionable techniques of the self, should make one hesitate before embracing an ethics that focuses so heavily on concern with oneself.116 Even Connolly's version of therapeutic ethics, which he wants to demarcate from unappealing forms of self-indulgence, runs the risk of being captured by prevailing habits and beliefs that can render arts of the self nondemocratic, even antidemocratic.

Some of Connolly's own formulations bring this danger into relief. For example, Connolly sometimes uses the term micropolitics to refer not only to the self's reflexive tactics but also to small-scale intersubjective relations and projects that might not typically be recognized as political in nature but which Connolly maintains can support and enhance macro-politics.117 Micropolitics of this sort are already "ubiquitous," but they can be developed, readers are told, in ways that are "more or less conducive to democratic politics."118 This dimension of micropolitics is sometimes depicted by Connolly as a bridge connecting concentrated work on the self to organized forms of collective citizen action. But the concrete examples of micropolitical activity that he gives, even those that extend beyond the self's relation to itself, raise new doubts about how resistant or transformative such activity really is. Indeed, some of what Connolly has in mind seems depressingly adaptive to contemporary arrangements, considering how focused his examples are on individual lifestyle choices rather than on the admittedly more difficult problem of how to mobilize energies for more collaborative, oppositional, and inventive endeavors. Writing of micropolitics, Connolly counsels, "If you are in the middle class, buy a Prius or a Volt and explain to your friends and neighbors why you did; write in a blog; attend a pivotal rally; ride your bike to work more often; consider solar panels; introduce new topics at your church." While these things may be worth doing, it is not clear why one should believe they will foster an urge to "participate in larger political assemblages in more robust ways" as Connolly wagers.119 Indeed, these recommendations seem to reinforce the belief that political change is a happy by-product of small decisions made by each individual. Despite Connolly's best intentions-and his ambitious calls for broad transformation in the direction of deepening pluralization, greater economic equality, and less vengeful foreign policy—the therapeutic ethics he endorses is too easily absorbed, even co-opted, by a dominant culture that rewards forms of preoccupation with the self that do little to facilitate associative democracy.

This point seems to be unwittingly made, in a slightly different context, by Cressida Heyes's Self-Transformations: Foucault, Ethics, and Normalized Bodies. Heyes's stated objective is to rescue Foucaults work on ethics from misreadings that liken self-care to self-indulgence, in order to defend the importance of "somaesthetics," in which the self strives to cultivate a body in ways that are resistant to normalization. Yet although Heyes is devoted to the idea that ethical self-discipline, performed by the self on the self, can be an "art of living with greater embodied freedom," the vast majority of the book is spent investigating, in great detail, case studies involving contemporary practices of askesis (sex reassignment surgery, Weight Watchers, and cosmetic surgery), which, Heyes convincingly argues, help to produce "docile bodies."120 So although Heyes continues to hold out the hope that concentrated work on the self, and specifically on one's body, can serve as a site of resistance against normalizing power, the overwhelming sense conveyed by her research is how readily and thoroughly care for the self is promoted and practiced in conformist, "self-absorbed" ways.12' There is little acknowledgment of the difficulty thetics. What does it mean to endorse an ethics focused on rapport a soi and on "somatic askesis" in particular, in the context of a society that, by Heyes's own account, obsessively and successfully markets forms of self-care that produce compliant and often solipsistic selves? Why should one believe that Heyes's preferred example of good somatic self-discipline, yoga, is somehow safe from the normalizing influences so well documented in her treatments of sex reassignment surgery, organized weight loss, and cosmetic surgery? Like Connolly, Heyes seems to neglect the way in which even the best-intentioned calls for care of the self may still be too complicit with an American culture that celebrates and aggressively markets depoliticizing modes of self-care.

Still, the appeal of therapeutic ethics is undeniable. It soothes with the promise that one need not get tangled up in the messy, fraught world of intersubjective political struggle

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in order to engage in politically meaningful action. Whether tending to the self is seen as synonymous with politics, as in the popularized version of therapeutic ethics, or whether it is understood as a precursor to collective endeavors, as in Connolly's view, the suggestion that one ought to begin with focused attention on oneself is comforting. It spares one the challenges of attempting to address a public problem by acting in solidarity with and in opposition to other citizens, where there may be no assurance of success and when fatigue, disappointment, and frustration are likely. When the political landscape looks bleak—because there are few opportunities for ordinary citizens to govern themselves, because of growing corporate influence over politics at all levels, or because of any number of other depressing facts — therapeutic ethics reassures with the idea that one can be an engaged citizen all by oneself.

### AT: Time K

#### Finishing

that can be used … to determine the sequence of images and sounds in accordance with a homogeneous movement or a narrative that takes us from the past to the present’ forgets the linearity of the artistic medium itself and the sovereign practices involved in the ‘series of cutting and sequencing’ that the auteur uses to ‘disrupt the very notion of a whole’.79 It makes no sense to claim that cinema’s ‘time-image’ produces ‘“images without subordinating them to coherent movements and linear timelines”’80 unless we ignore the series of singular images that compose a film and have in mind a specific and particular understanding of linearity. Just as hegemonic narratives construct coherent unity, films purposefully construct a non-coherent storyline by manipulating an intrinsically linear series. It is this structural quality that led earlier time scholars to attack determinism by charging that it ‘denied time and freedom by rolling up the future in the present the way the end of a film is already determined at the start of the reel’.81 Such tensions would not be so conspicuous if critical scholars did not persist in positioning them against a murky, libertine notion of ‘linear time’.82