## 1

#### Interpretation and violation:

#### The resolutional actor is the USFG.

U.S. Legal ’16 [U.S. Legal; 2016; Organization offering legal assistance and attorney access; U.S. Legal, “United States Federal Government Law and Legal Definition,” <https://definitions.uslegal.com/u/united-states-federal-government/>]

The United States Federal Government is established by the US Constitution. The Federal Government shares sovereignty over the United Sates with the individual governments of the States of US. The Federal government has three branches: i) the legislature, which is the US Congress, ii) Executive, comprised of the President and Vice president of the US and iii) Judiciary. The US Constitution prescribes a system of separation of powers and ‘checks and balances’ for the smooth functioning of all the three branches of the Federal Government. The US Constitution limits the powers of the Federal Government to the powers assigned to it; all powers not expressly assigned to the Federal Government are reserved to the States or to the people.

#### “By at least” means the core requirement for topical action is the USFG expanding the scope of its core antitrust laws.

Brower ’66 [John M; June 3; Justice on the Supreme Court of Nebraska; Westlaw, “Schmeckpeper v. Panhandle Co-op. Ass'n,” 180 Neb. 352]

1234 A review of the cases discussed and those cited which \*359 are not discussed indicates that the ordinary and usual meaning of the term ‘at least’ is expressive of a minimum and implies the possibility of more. Its definition in Webster's New Third International Dictionary, Unabridged (1961), we have cited. As set out in 7 C.J.S. 1965, quoted in Barron v. Green, supra, however, in certain instances it does have a different meaning taken from the context in which it occurs, and under particular circumstances it is held to be equivalent to ‘at most’ or ‘not to exceed’ as contended by the plaintiff. We, however, think the usual and ordinary meaning should first be applied to the phrase as it is used in section 21—1302, R.R.S.1943. If that is done the intent of the Legislature clearly appears to mean that a minimum surplus equal to 20 percent of the capital was to be accumulated as therein provided and that more might be provided. We do not think the usual and ordinary meaning of ‘at least’ should be set aside by judicial construction when the context of the statute and the circumstances before the court do not require it. ‘A statute is not to be read as if open to construction as a matter of course. Where the words of a statute are plain, direct, and unambiguous, no interpretation is needed to ascertain the meaning. It is not within the province of a court to read a meaning into a statute that is not warranted by the legislative language. Neither is it within the province of a court to read anything plain, direct, and unambiguous out of a statute.’ Bachus v. Swanson, 179 Neb. 1, 136 N.W.2d 189.

#### “Its” means the aff must expand federal laws.

Updegrave ’91 [W.C.; August 19; Supreme Law.org, “Explanation of ZIP Code Address Purpose,” <http://www.supremelaw.org/ref/zipcode/updegrav.htm>]

More specifically, looking at the map on page 11 of the National ZIP Code Directory, e.g. at a local post office, one will see that the first digit of a ZIP Code defines an area that includes more than one State. The first sentence of the explanatory paragraph begins: "A ZIP Code is a numerical code that identifies areas within the United States and its territories for purposes of ..." [cf. 26 CFR 1.1-1(c)]. Note the singular possessive pronoun "its", not "their", therefore carrying the implication that it relates to the "United States" as a corporation domiciled in the District of Columbia (in the singular sense), not in the sense of being the 50 States of the Union (in the plural sense). The map shows all the States of the Union, but it also shows D.C., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, making the explanatory statement literally correct.

#### Those laws are Sherman, FTC, and Clayton.

Pfaffenroth ’21 [Sonia K, Justin P Hedge, and Monique N Boyce; July 1; Partner at Arnold and Porter, Former Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil and Criminal Operations for the Antitrust Division of the US Department of Justice; Counsel at Arnold and Porter; Senior Associate at Arnold and Porter; Mondaq, “United States: A Comparison Of Proposed Antitrust Legislation In 2021: Federal And New York State,” https://www.mondaq.com/unitedstates/antitrust-eu-competition-/1086194/a-comparison-of-proposed-antitrust-legislation-in-2021-federal-and-new-york-state#:~:text=At%20the%20federal%20level,%20there,;1%20(2)%20the%20Federal]

At the federal level, there are three core antitrust laws: (1) the Sherman Act, in which Section 1 outlaws "every contract, combination, or conspiracy in [unreasonable] restraint of trade," and Section 2 outlaws any "monopolization, attempted monopolization, or conspiracy or combination to monopolize";1 (2) the Federal Trade Commission Act, which prohibits "unfair methods of competition" and "unfair or deceptive acts or practices";2 and (3) Section 7 of the Clayton Act, which prohibits mergers and acquisitions where the effect "may be substantially to lessen competition, or to tend to create a monopoly."3 Criminal violations of the Sherman Act carry a maximum penalty of a $100 million fine for corporations, and a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a $1 million fine for individuals. A prevailing plaintiff in a civil suit can recover treble damages and attorneys' fees. But federal law currently does not provide for civil penalties when the government brings an antitrust case, only injunctive relief.

#### “Expanding” those laws sets a burden of materially altering them.

Hatter ’90 [Terry J Jr; March 20; January District Court Judge at the Central District of California; Westlaw, “In re Eastport Assocs.,” 114 B.R. 686]

Second, Eastport asserts that the presumption against retroactivity does not apply because the amendment was intended only as a clarification of existing law. Where an amendment to a statute is remedial in nature and merely serves to clarify existing law, no question of retroactivity is involved and the law will be applied to pending cases. City of Redlands v. Sorensen, 176 Cal.App.3d 202, 211, 221 Cal.Rptr. 728, 732 (1985). The evidence in this case, however, does not support the conclusion that the amendment to section 66452.6(f) was simply a clarification of preexisting law. The Legislative Counsel's Digest specifically states that “[t]he bill would expand the definition of development moratorium.” Senate Bill 186, Stats.1988, ch. 1330, at 3375 (emphasis added). Since the Legislative Counsel is a state official required by law to analyze pending legislation, it is reasonable to presume that the Legislature amended the statute with the intent and meaning expressed in the Counsel's digest. People v. Martinez, 194 Cal.App.3d 15, 22, 239 Cal.Rptr. 272, 276 (1987). By its ordinary meaning, the term “expand” indicates a change in the law, rather than a restatement of existing law. In light of the Counsel's comment, Eastport's argument is unpersuasive.

#### Our impact is debatability—there are two internal links:

#### Limits. A bounded topic serves as a predictable stasis point for debate that guarantees thematic coherence. Absent defined limits, debate’s competitive incentives create a race to the margins which distorts topic research.

#### Ground. A pre-defined controversy ensures a vibrant lit base and in-depth clash, but it’s unreasonable to prepare for alternative frameworks with the ground allocated to us by the parameters of the resolution All 2AC defense to this claim will rely on concessionary ground, which isn’t a stable basis for a year of debate.

#### New planless affs are in independent voter—they aren’t limited by the confines of the resolution so there’s no way to predict what the aff will be beforehand—leaves the neg permanently behind

## 2

#### Temporary corporate concentration is necessary for rapid and widespread expansion of cellular agriculture through accessing economies of scale. That displaces the meat industry and prevents structural violence, animal suffering, and environmental destruction that causes extinction.

Kateman, 21—cofounder and president of the Reducetarian Foundation (Brian, “Why Near-Monopolies In Plant-Based Meat Aren’t Such A Bad Thing,” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/briankateman/2021/04/26/why-near-monopolies-in-plant-based-meat-arent-such-a-bad-thing/>, dml)

Few brands have risen to prominence as quickly or completely as Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods have. In the last five or so years, these companies have taken plant-based meat analogs from the vegetarian niche to center stage. Their vegan patties and other products are sold in grocery stores across the country — not just big cities and college towns — and are now available at several fast food restaurant chains like Burger King and Del Taco. Some people point to the rapid success of these companies — as well as longstanding leaders MorningStar Farms and Gardein — as evidence that a small number of companies are accruing a concerning degree of power in the plant-based sector. But can we really afford to be worrying about that at this stage in the game?

If we want to change our food system, we need to start with an understanding of how it currently works. It’s estimated that four companies control 73% of the beef packing industry; for pork and chicken it’s 67% and 54% respectively. Thanks to decades of mergers and acquisitions — along with tasty products and low prices (aided by sizable government subsidies and lax regulations and enforcement) — just a couple of meat companies reign supreme. If we’re going to fight centralization of power in the food industry, we should focus on scrutinizing the companies whose activity is threatening the health of our planet and ourselves — not the ones trying to help. As Breakthrough Institute's Ted Nordhaus and Dan Blaustein-Rejto recently pointed out in Foreign Policy, "Any effort to address social and environmental problems associated with food production in the United States will need to first accommodate itself to the reality that, in a modern and affluent economy, the food system could not be anything other than large-scale, intensive, technological, and industrialized... A better food system will build on these blessings, not abandon them."

Still, I’m not necessarily saying that we should aspire to have a small number of plant-based meat companies dominate the market — there are numerous smaller, independent brands that add value to the space (and we're at the earliest days of plant-based meat, so it’s conceivable that any one of them could end up pulling ahead). But a desire for a highly diversified plant-based meat economy shouldn’t be prioritized over the potential for rapid and widespread availability of viable meat alternatives that may actually be able to take down the conventional meat industry. The fact that companies will have to contend with fierce competition from bigger companies like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat with more access to capital and greater distribution is an acceptable price to pay for the benefits of living in a world where plant-based meat is plentiful and affordable. After all, plant-based meat may be growing in popularity, but it still makes up only 1.4% of the broader meat market, according to recent data from The Good Food Institute. If we want to change that, we need to allow larger companies to grow to the point where they can take advantage of economies of scale. As GFI Executive Director Bruce Friedrich notes in The Guardian, "Profitability is a feature, not a bug. And really, it’s the most important feature." If instead these larger companies are made vulnerable to antitrust lawsuits and protections, that will serve to slow the growth of the plant-based industry, and that’s the last thing we need.

This urgency comes from the fact that the industrial animal agriculture industry accounts for between 14.5% and 18% of all human-induced global greenhouse gas emissions each year, making it a major contributor to climate change. In addition, factory farms cause a massive amount of animal and human suffering — every year, 70 billion land animals around the world are tortured and killed by people subjected to horrific working conditions in order to produce cheap, filling, and tasty foods for humans that are making them sick. It’s time to recognize that we have a moral crisis staring back at us from the refrigerator. Frankly, if faux-meat near-monopolies are what it takes to defeat industrial animal agriculture, so be it.

As Ezra Klein writes in The New York Times, “If we don’t end [factory farming], soon, terrible things will happen to us and to the planet. Terrible things are already happening.” So, yes, if there comes a time when chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are no longer the leading causes of death and disability in the United States, climate change is no longer a global urgent threat, and we’ve created a society that acts compassionately towards animals and laborers, we can address the specific corporate composition of the plant-based food sector then. (And if it’s too late, and I don’t think it necessarily will be, it still will have been well worth it.) Until then, keeping one or a few companies from holding corporate supremacy just isn’t as important as saving the planet and all who call it home.

## 3

#### Vote neg to reject the aff’s description of a monopoly over the marketplace of ideas and debate.

#### We can negate parts of the 1AC while agreeing with the rest—they might be right about speed-elitism, but the metaphor of a monopoly of ideals is not necessary for that analysis. Forcing us to negate the whole 1AC precludes intra-method debates, which accesses a bigger internal link to all their framework offense.

#### Using capitalist metaphors to describe social conditions reinforces corporatization of education and normalizes inequitable power structures.

Kip Austin Hinton 15, Assistant Professor, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, “Should We Use a Capital Framework to Understand Culture? Applying Cultural Capital to Communities of Color,” Equity & Excellence in Education, 48(2), 299-319, 2015.

Influence of an Economic Metaphor on Communities of Color

It makes sense for a neoliberal economist to embrace the prism of social or cultural capital, because economic research frequently interprets the world as a primarily economic sphere. But what about when a social justice educator embraces social or cultural capital? Many social justice advocates do not define the world in economic terms, and do not see market forces as the primary solution to oppressive systems. Capitalism promotes hegemony, not social justice. The agenda of capital has always run counter to the goals of community empowerment: “Within this transformed system, capital demanded that the household function as a factory” (Perelman, 2000, p. 74). According to Weber, the mere existence of family relationships presents an obstacle to capitalism (Collins, 1986, p. 269). Decades ago, Apple (1971) warned that schools were slipping into a marketplace orientation, prioritizing “maintenance of the same dominant world-view” (p. 27). Public institutions have indeed become more market-driven, focused on capital in a way that disempowers communities of color, making it harder to enact democratic reforms (Apple, 2006; Clawson & Leiblum, 2008). Metaphorical capital does not contribute to this directly, but rather indirectly—through metaphor.

Across metaphorical capitals, each framework is fundamentally economic. Research on funds of knowledge and community cultural wealth mimic economic vocabulary without a conception of investment or of supply and demand. Looking to the source, Bourdieu’s (1977) prominent theories are influenced by the economic work of Marx (2011). This makes it particularly notable that Bourdieu himself ignores most aspects of economic capital when he applies it to cultural interaction. Bourdieu does not theorize systems of exchange, return on investment, loans, entrepreneurship, or the actions of cultural capitalists. In fact, Bourdieu’s original concept is somewhat analogous to money, not to capital. Successive theorists have been reluctant to move beyond Bourdieu’s initial, imprecise articulations (Dika & Singh, 2002; Lin, 1999). So, although it may be unusual to come across a theory of race that ignores racism, it is common for a theory of capital to ignore capitalism.

Metaphors have influence. In a metaphor, one domain of human thought is superimposed on a different domain, creating important influence on the receiving domain (Barcelona, 2003). Lakoff (2004) and others have explained how a repeated metaphor reifies in our consciousness, even altering neural processes (Kovecses, 2010). The way any issue is framed, writes Mehta (2013), ¨ “changes the nature of the debate” (p. 292). A problem’s definition is a political consideration, deeply influencing which questions we ask, and which solutions we consider (Lakoff & Pinker, 2007; Sandikcioglu, 2003). This is illustrated by prominent metaphors in the languages of industrialized nations. We use money metaphors to think about time (spend time, living on borrowed time); we use war metaphors to think about arguments (defend a position, surrender a point). As Lakoff and Johnson (2003) explain, we do not explain arguments using a dance metaphor (p. 5), but if we did, it would influence the way we see our opponents/partners.

In the case of culture, are there limits to what education researchers are willing to characterize as capital? Derrida and Moore (1974) warn us of “deploying” metaphors “without limit”: “Consequently the reassuring dichotomy between the metaphorical and the proper is exploded” (p. 74). S. Smith and Kulynych (2002) claim social capital confuses analytical categories because capital is inextricably tied to economic discourse; this critique applies to all forms of metaphorical capital. In public consciousness, capital will not be divorced from capitalism. Deployments of metaphorical capital, therefore, impose the economic worldview of capitalism. These theories position capital and wealth as the normal ways of defining a relationship. Even if such theories were revised to reflect money instead (e.g., “cultural currency”), they would still precariously assume that human interaction can and should be explained in economic terms.

Metaphorical capital advances an economic framework that interprets educational or cultural situations as capitalist, neoliberal, and market-based. We have adopted a specific paradigm, and now that paradigm dictates policy options (P. Hall, 1993). Neoliberal solutions, including standardized testing and charter schools, already dominate education reform (Jones & Vagle, 2013). Political and social critiques are central to critical race theory—yet are marginalized by neoliberal discourse. It is significant that Friedman (1997), one of the most influential proponents of capital and capitalism, advocated privatization of all public schools through vouchers. Rather than functioning as independent fields, education and economics are deeply connected, often in destructive ways. In the past decades, education research has seen an increase in both capitalrelated social theory and the influence of economics. Privatization and corporatization have increased throughout education systems (Saltman, 2012). Aside from the direct harm caused by market-based reform (Burch, 2009; Saltman, 2000), corporatization has reinforced the economic worldview that was embodied by metaphorical capital. Education reports are filled with finance-related vocabulary: funds, investment, value-added, stakeholder, productivity, buy-in. Economic perspectives infringe on discussions about students, even when topics are ostensibly unrelated to money. “This is the extent of capitalism’s hegemony, that it has colonized our capacity to imagine alternatives” (Hickel & Khan, 2012, p. 221). Language influences thought, and educators begin to accept the market mindset. We normalize an inequitable power structure. The capitalist viewpoint becomes the normal way to see everything, and its opportunistic oppression, likewise, becomes normal. It is not surprising, then, that the assets of communities of color go unrecognized—and as I write this, I struggle to explain the limitations of a capitalist frame without reproducing that frame, with my problematic word choice, “assets.”

Freire (1970) has been influential among scholars who rely on metaphorical capital to write about students of color. It is significant that Freire employs economic metaphors to represent the problem (Oughton, 2010): “Banking education” is his name for the method that dehumanizes students (Freire, 1970, p. 73). Freire recognizes economic power as a destructive force at play in the lives of the poor. He consistently opposes multiple elements of the neoliberal agenda, especially the prioritization of capital (Carnoy, 1998; Freire, 1998). Throughout his work, Freire offers ways to counter the commodification of students and promote true democracy (Marginson, 2006). A Freirean analysis of metaphorical capitals, then, notices the neglect of power relations and the depiction of human relationships as economic exchanges.

Hegemonic cultural values, says Gramsci (2011), are those that are accepted as inevitable. The status quo of the economic system cannot be separated from the status quo of the education system. Gramsci embraces education, believing the development of working class intellectuals will reshape the status quo. Gramsci recognizes resistance and promotes agency, in ways that are echoed by community cultural wealth. Though Gramsci opposes economism, he never claims culture, education, and economics are independent (Jessop & Sum, 2006). These are multiple facets of a single, comprehensive system of power. That is to say, there is no such thing as a non-economic policy goal. Do we choose capital as a metaphor because it is the best metaphor, or because it is the one we are familiar with? A Gramscian analysis by Torres (2013) examines the way a neoliberal framework asserts itself as common sense within educational reforms. In a capitalist system, power is allocated to the financially powerful, structuring our self-definitions. As participants in a capitalist system, capital is our common sense, our default, so it is not a surprise that we append the word even when it is unnecessary. These are “tacit, discursive endorsements of neoliberal ideology” (Ayers, 2005, p. 535). From a social justice perspective, metaphors are not arbitrary tools to assign without consequence. They make claims about truth, using rhetoric that “cannot be neutral” (Derrida & Moore, 1974, p. 41). Discourse matters, whether within controversies over Native American mascots (King & Springwood, 2001) or a politician’s description of a war as a “crusade” (Kellner, 2007). Power relations connect seemingly innocuous discursive practices to broader practices of political rhetoric, discrimination, and global financial institutions (McKenna, 2004). In an analysis of community college mission statements, Ayers (2005) concludes that “neoliberal discourse” directs attention to market concerns, so “curriculum is likely to become heavily laden with a market ideology that reinforces and reproduces power asymmetries” (p. 546). By repeating neoliberal vocabulary, frameworks of metaphorical capital have potentially weakened democracy by re-inscribing a framework of capitalism. Even when a particular study’s content works against oppression, language choices may not.

Although market-based education reforms have become more powerful, those who promulgate theories of metaphorical capital have become less likely to have academic understanding of capital itself (Dika & Singh, 2002). Cultural neglect of students of color cannot be logically separated from the economic exclusion they face, as irrelevant curriculum leads to higher pushout rates (M. Fine, 1991; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Yes, the cultures of black, Latina/o, Native ´ American, and Asian American students deserve equal footing inside classrooms, and this is true even—or especially—when those cultural practices are not easily framed as a form of capital. I am inspired by Yosso (2005) in her referral to Anzaldua’s (1990) call for a more empowering ´ theory. Yet I think of Lorde’s (1984) warning, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house,” because those tools keep a part of us stuck within “the master’s relationships” (p. 123). Wealth and capital are the capitalist’s tools, the capitalist’s relationships. These are not ethical relationships (Schweickart, 2002). The dominance of financial vocabulary empowers non-human (and inhumane) relationships, through capitalism. These are the relationships between supply and demand; between capital and commodity; between powerful and powerless; between legislation and corporation. As argued by Giroux and Giroux (2006), global capital is responsible for making the wealth and achievement gaps worse for black and Latina/o communities.

I specifically claim that this supposed metaphorical capital is not capital at all. As social justice researchers, we are not neutral; we seek ways to fight oppressive conditions. Yet by basing our metaphors on capital, our theoretical frameworks promote a worldview that is inconsistent with our own goals. Letting go of the metaphor of capital, we may find more relevant and more ethical ways to theorize culture.

## Case

### Presumption—1NC

#### Presumption—voting aff doesn’t materially change models of competition

Hovenkamp, 21—James G. Dinan University Professor, University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School and the Wharton School (Herbert, “The Looming Crisis in Antitrust Economics,” Faculty Scholarship at Penn Law, 2151 (2021), dml) [language modifications denoted by brackets]

Today, these tables have been turned dramatically. Perfect competition has very largely lost its place in economic modeling, except perhaps in diffuse markets for commodities. Simple perfect competition models have given way to models that recognize a wide variety of strategic behavior. Further, these new models seem to be doing much better than perfect competition models in the area of testability.50

One example is the important rise of empirical economic analysis of consumer substitution behavior that is applied in unilateral effects theories of merger harm. The theory is that mergers between two firms that are reasonably adjacent in a differentiated product space will predictably yield a price increase. This occurs because more of the sales that a single firm loses in response to a price increase will be recaptured by the merger partner rather than other firms in the market. In perfectly competitive markets, however, sales that are lost as a result of a price increase are simply lost. That is, unilateral effects theory depends on the observation that, although customers substitute among different products in the same market in response to price changes in one, in a differentiated market they do so at different rates.

The model of unilateral effects analysis is completely inconsistent with perfect competition, which assumes that the cross elasticity of demand facing different sellers in the same market is the same and extremely high. If one seller in a market raises price unilaterally, it will immediately lose all its sales.51 If two sellers in a perfectly competitive market merge and increase their price, they will also lose all of their sales. By contrast, models that account for product differentiation assume that the cross elasticities of demand between pairs of firms actually vary significantly and that these differences can be empirically measured. As a result, it becomes possible to use the distance between firms in product space to evaluate the price impact of a merger.52

Empirical testing requires data about the rates of substitution between pairs of firms in response to one firm’s price change. Here, the widespread availability of digitized transaction evidence makes this measurement much easier than it had been previously, certainly during Stigler’s time.53 Today, the theory of unilateral effects is robust and testable, and it accounts for a significant percentage of government merger challenges.54 It seems clear that imperfect competition models are durable, testable, and unlikely to go away.

B. Ideology and Economic Science in Antitrust Policy

Disputed scientific issues present courts with questions of fact—something that has been clear for nearly two centuries.55 The Federal Rules of Evidence couch their treatment of expert testimony in this way, requiring the testimony to be based on “sufficient facts or data.”56 In its Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc.57 decision, the Supreme Court gave as important considerations for evaluating scientific testimony whether it can be tested or falsified and whether a proffered theory has a known or potential rate of error.58 The leading treatise on scientific evidence emphasizes the same idea. 59

To be sure, under the Federal Rules of Evidence, judges perform a gatekeeping function in determining the admissibility of proffered scientific evidence. But the courts have also made clear that this function is limited to questions about the expert’s methodology, not his or her [their] ultimate conclusion.60 It was certainly never intended to permit federal judges to turn scientific issues into questions of law.61 Indeed, the very concept of admissibility applies only to issues of fact.

In this regard, economics is no different from any other science. Testing its hypotheses and models has been one of economics’ most important functions since the 1950s,62 leading to an empirical renaissance in industrial economics in the 1980s and after.63 Today, empirical economics and econometrics make up a significant part of litigation concerning expert testimony.64 Antitrust litigation in particular makes liberal use of both economic theory and economic evidence.65 The debate over how antitrust should use economics has many facets, and the extent to which any particular proposition of economics is testable can be subject to dispute.66 Nevertheless, economic evidence is concerned with questions of fact that are subject to the usual Daubert considerations for admissibility that have become conventional for scientific testimony.67

#### You can’t just talk your way out of neoliberal subjectivity.

Fleming and Banerjee, 16—Professor of Business and Society and Director of the Modular Executive MBA programme AND Professor of Management and Director of the Executive PhD program at Cass Business School, City University London (Peter and Subhabrata Bobby, “When performativity fails: Implications for Critical Management Studies,” human relations, 2016, Vol. 69(2), 257–276, dml)

In their influential analysis of Critical Management Studies (CMS), Fournier and Grey (2000) argue that CMS scholarship is driven by three basic principles: denaturalization, reflectivity and non-performativity. Denaturalization deconstructs the seemingly immutable ‘realities’ and ‘rationalities’ of managerialism while exposing the wealth of alternatives that reside in the shadows of organizational life. Reflectivity challenges the dominance of positivism in the methodologies of mainstream management research, revealing how all social scientific investigation is underpinned by political assumptions. Drawing on Lyotard’s (1984) notion of instrumental performativity, the principle of nonperformativity rejects the means-ends rationality that governs many organizational situations, especially under neoliberal capitalism characterized by a brazen cost-minimization/ profit-maximization logic (Fournier and Grey, 2000).

The principle of non-performativity has recently been questioned in a number of articles published in this journal and elsewhere. These authors suggest that by critically distancing themselves from the concrete activities of managers, researchers may miss opportunities to intervene and make a difference for the better. For example, in their influential article, Spicer et al. (2009: 538) argue that the principle of non-performativity needlessly isolates CMS from organizational practitioners. This in turn fosters a corrosive ‘cynicism and negativism’ whereby scholars ply grand critical theories that have little relevance to everyday organizational challenges. Others similarly maintain that the principle of non-performativity fails to offer ‘practical’ guidelines for managers (King and Learmonth, 2014); misses crucial opportunities to ‘collaborate’ with middle-managers and stubbornly objects to becoming ‘more relevant to practice’ (Wickert and Schaefer, 2014: 7); is elitist in how it ignores practitioner management texts in favour of ‘canonical perspectives’ associated with Marx, Foucault and the Frankfurt School (Hartmann, 2014: 619, also see Clegg et al., 2006).

These scholars recommend a renewed commitment to performativity so that critical knowledge can have an impact on the practices of managers and lead to emancipatory change. Most assertive in this regard are Spicer et al. (2009) and Wickert and Schaefer (2014) and their respective notions of critical performativity and progressive performativity. Both articles draw upon wider philosophical studies of performativity to discern its potential for CMS researchers hoping to make meaningful interventions. In particular, they apply Austin (1963) and Butler’s (1990, 1993) influential insight about the way language creates reality (rather than just describe it). Armed with this insight, it is claimed that CMS researchers can change organizational practice (for the better) by altering how language is used by managers. Modified speech may lead to modified and thus emancipatory behaviour. Such critical performativity ‘involves active and subversive intervention into managerial discourses and practices’ (Spicer et al., 2009: 538). Instead of worrying about emancipation on a grand scale, more modest microemancipatory practices might ‘stimulate the performative effects of language in order to induce incremental, rather than radical, changes in managerial behaviour’ (Wickert and Schaefer, 2014: 1). This means getting closer to managers rather than critiquing them from afar.

We agree that CMS scholars should be reflecting on how their critical findings might translate into concrete change. Otherwise why bother being critical in the first place? Moreover, we applaud recent efforts – including the advocates of critical and progressive performativity – to rethink how CMS research might make a difference to organizational practices. Our motivation for entering this discussion, however, derives from a nagging doubt. We are concerned that the emphasis on discursive performativity as a change mechanism risks presenting an overly optimistic view of (a) the power of language to alter institutionalized organizational practices associated with neoliberal capitalism and (b) the capability of CMS scholars alone to reorder in situ how managers make sense of governing imperatives like profit-maximization, shareholder value, consumer responsiveness and so forth. While there may be situations in which critical and/ or progressive performativity may ‘talk into existence new (counterbalancing) behaviours and practices’ (Wickert and Schaefer, 2014: 3), we also propose that, realistically speaking, such attempts would just as likely fail given the preponderant pressures of economic rationality in many business contexts. Missing in the aforementioned calls for a wider appreciation of (discursive) performativity, therefore, are the strict boundary conditions that Austin (1963) and Butler (1990, 1993, 2010) themselves place around the notion.

Our article contributes to the ongoing discussion about the challenge of making CMS performative by addressing two central questions. First, rather than automatically assume their success, how might discursive performative approaches (such as critical and progressive performativity) fail to enact desired material changes and for what reasons? Answering this question will provide a better understanding of the practical contingencies that can determine whether these new performativities are the best method for endeavouring to influence organizations. Second, in light of the constraints on the performative potential of language, what other possible avenues are available to the CMS community for having an impact (however modest) on organizational practices and routines?

The article is structured in four parts. First, we provide an overview of the founding CMS principle of non-performativity and analyse recent calls for critical research to become more performative, giving particular attention to the two articles that have recently appeared in this journal. Second, we identify the circumstances under which it is more realistic to expect discursive performativity to fail rather than succeed. Corporate Social Responsibility (or CSR) is here highlighted as a failed performative in managerial and mainstream discourses. Third, the article posits alternative methods that the CMS community might use to help make organizations less exploitative and more equitable. Fourth, we conclude by discussing the broader role of critique in management studies at this juncture. Our overall aim is to continue the ongoing dialogue about performativity in the CMS community and hopefully inform new avenues to achieve its stated objectives in business and society.

Critical Management Studies and the question of performativity

We will not provide a detailed overview of CMS as that has been done extensively elsewhere (see e.g. Adler et al., 2007; Alvesson et al., 2009; Banerjee, 2011a; Fournier and Grey, 2000; Spicer et al., 2009). CMS is characterized by a diversity of theoretical and philosophical perspectives. For instance, the 2013 Critical Management Studies conference held in Manchester comprised of 25 streams involving a wide range of topics such as critical perspectives on strategy, globalization, international business, diversity, feminism, race theory, human resource management, marketing, accounting, postcolonialism, sexuality, gender, postmodernism and environmentalism. CMS was established as a division in the Academy of Management in 2008. The domain statement of the CMS division describes its mission:

CMS serves as a forum within the Academy for the expression of views critical of established management practices and the established social order. Our premise is that structural features of contemporary society, such as the profit imperative, patriarchy, racial inequality, and ecological irresponsibility often turn organizations into instruments of domination and exploitation. Driven by a shared desire to change this situation, we aim in our research, teaching, and practice to develop critical interpretations of management and society and to generate radical alternatives. Our critique seeks to connect the practical shortcomings in management and individual managers to the demands of a socially divisive and ecologically destructive system within which managers work. (CMS, 2014)

Thus, CMS challenges the fundamental normative assumption that managerial notions of efficiency are universally desirable, and that pursuing profit motives can only lead to positive outcomes for the workforce and society. Moreover, CMS is driven by the desire (even if it does not always articulate the means) to transform existing power relations in organizations with a view to encouraging less oppressive practices that do not harm social and environmental welfare. As Fournier and Grey (2000: 16) argue, ‘to be engaged in critical management studies means, at the most basic level, to say that something is wrong with management, as a practice and body of knowledge, and that it should be changed’.

Along with de-naturalization and reflexivity, Fournier and Grey (2000) suggest that the principle of non-performativity is crucial to the CMS project: What exactly do Fournier and Grey (2000) mean by non-performativity? Let us imagine a CMS researcher studying changing employment practices in the United Kingdom. S/he gains access to a subsidiary of a multinational enterprise that has started to use zero-hours employment contracts to maximize profits for its parent company. These contracts have been widely condemned as exploitative and unjust since they insist employees always be on call but guarantee zero-hours of paid work (see Guardian, 2013). Our non-performative orientated CMS researcher would not be interested in generating knowledge that enables the efficiency and instrumentalization of this new employment system. Nor would s/he be overly sympathetic to the operational manager’s ‘point of view’ because employees are so obviously disadvantaged and suffering as a result. So what is our CMS scholar seeking to achieve in undertaking this research? Generally speaking, change hopefully. But here is the nub of the problem. How can critical researchers make an effective intervention while tenaciously remaining aloof (both ideologically and practically) of the concrete activities being described? What aspects of performativity, whether critical or progressive, can engage with this clearly exploitative practice to create a fairer outcome? If zero-hours contracts are practices created by the language of neoliberal capitalism, what other utterances have the power and agency to counter these practices?

Towards a performative Critical Management Studies?

Recent commentators have addressed questions like these by suggesting that CMS scholars must stop being so negative about the idea of working with managers to help bring about practical change. In their strident critique of Fournier and Grey (2000), Spicer et al. (2009) maintain that,

. . . a potential consequence of holding strong to the credo of anti-performativity is that CMS withdraws from attempts to engage with practitioners and mainstream management theorists who are at least partially concerned with issues of performativity . . . an anti-performative CMS satisfies itself with attempts to shock the mainstream out of its ideological slumber through intellectually ‘pissing in the street’. (Spicer et al., 2009: 542)

Critical scholars should instead become actively involved with everyday practitioners and engage with the language they use in an attempt to construct new realities and opportunities.

Following Spicer et al. (2009), Wickert and Schaefer (2014: 20) also implore the CMS community to have ‘greater impact on what managers actually do’. They are concerned that critical scholars fail to provide ‘knowledge for dealing with those aspects of managerial life that have been identified as problematic . . . and overlooks potential points of engagement with managers’ (Wickert and Schaefer, 2014: 5). Middle-managers in particular ought to be enlisted by CMS researchers because they are likely to be less aligned with organizational elites and potentially more sympathetic with frustrated subordinates to trigger progressive social change. For this reason too, Hartmann (2014: 626) argues the CMS community could also engage with managerial texts that are often dismissed in favour of critical theory, Marxism and feminism, in an attempt to subvert mainstream approaches and shift the discourse towards more emancipatory objectives instead. At least managerial texts provide a non-alienating ‘vocabulary to think progressively about alternatives without setting itself against the goals of organizations (i.e. it is not directly opposed to performative ends)’.

Critical and progressive performativity

To rectify the pitfalls of non-performativity, Spicer et al. (2009) posit ‘critical performativity’ as a practical alternative for CMS scholars. This model of impact can be achieved through an affirmative stance (getting close to the object of critique to reveal points of revision), an ethic of care (providing space for management’s viewpoint and collaborating with them to achieve emancipatory ends), pragmatism (being realistic about what can be achieved given structural constraints), engaging potentialities (leveraging points of possibility for changing managerial practices in an incremental rather than radical ‘revolutionary’ manner) and asserting a normative orientation (ideals for ‘good’ organizational practice).

Three implications of this approach are noteworthy. First, Spicer et al. (2009) move beyond Fournier and Grey’s (2000) Lyotardian conceptualization of performativity (i.e. input/output maximization) by drawing on other philosophical traditions that highlight how language/speech might count as social action (see Gond and Cabantous [2015] for an extended overview of this literature in the social sciences and philosophy). Austin (1963) and Butler’s (1990, 1993) notion of performative utterances (i.e. words that are also deeds) is considered especially important in this regard. Rather than functioning only as a secondary descriptor, language can also perform reality, as when a judge utters ‘I sentence you to . . .’ CMS researchers might thus create equitable organizational practices by intervening in management discourse and experimenting ‘with metaphors that might be floating around in the organization’ (Spicer et al., 2009: 547). Second, an ethic of affirmation and care implies that CMS ought to listen to management’s side of the story and engage in a ‘loving struggle’ (p. 548) with their language rather than simply criticize: ‘CMS needs to appreciate the contexts and constraints of management . . . from this follows some degree of respect and care’ (Spicer et al., 2009: 545). Third, CMS must be less ‘utopian’ in its emancipatory ambitions. Incremental and piecemeal change is more doable given the economic pressures managers confront in their daily routines and practices.

A similar set of reforms are outlined by Wickert and Schaefer (2014) in their notion of ‘progressive performativity’. The weakness of CMS for them is that it ‘provides only limited guidance on how (counterbalancing) values could be embedded into organizational practices and procedures in collaboration with, rather than in opposition to, managers’ (Wickert and Schaefer, 2014: 7, emphasis in original). They too advance a broader understanding of performativity related to language: ‘The performative element, we suggest, requires researchers to “activate” the language that managers use . . . In that way, CMS scholars may support managers to “talk into existence” new (counterbalancing) behaviours and practices’ (Wickert and Schaefer, 2014: 3). Two elements of progressive performativity follow from this proposition. First, through micro-level engagement CMS researchers can actively ally themselves with selected managers (preferably middlemanagers) to raise awareness and identify alternative speech acts. Second, this may lead to reflexive conscientization, whereby scholars help create discursive spaces ‘in which managers are gently “nudged” to reflect on their actions and the organizational processes to which their actions relate . . . [it seeks to] raise the critical consciousness of managers’ (Wickert and Schaefer, 2014: 3).

This can only be credibly achieved, according to Wickert and Schaefer, if scholars put aside the classical emancipatory ideals of CMS since they discourage micro-collaborations with managers, introduce concepts that alienate practitioners and ultimately make progressive change seemingly impossible. Utopianism, in particular, according to Wickert and Schaefer, introduces ‘complex problems [that] fill people with anxiety and limit their capacity to think and act creatively’ (Wickert and Schaefer, 2014: 14). They recommend non-utopian and ‘small-win’ initiatives instead, ‘moving forward by actively working towards incremental, rather than radical transformation of unfavourable social conditions’ (Wickert and Schaefer, 2014: 9–10).

Limitations of the new performative turn in Critical Management Studies

Space does not permit a full elaboration of the critical and progressive models of performativity being recommended to CMS researchers. But it is no exaggeration to suggest that the argumentation involved presents a rather caricatured image of the CMS community when exhorted to ‘overcome its often hypocritical and unproductive claims that its output has no performative intent whatsoever’ (Spicer et al. 2009: 554). As Alvesson et al. (2009: 10, emphasis in original) argue, non-performativity ‘emphatically does not mean an antagonistic attitude to any type of performing’. CMS only refrains from instrumentally contributing to the mean-ends rationality of corporate managerialism. It is not against all impact, since that would render its criticism something of a self-serving exercise that rightly ought to be admonished. Having said that, advocates of a new performativity do have a good point when they highlight the vagueness and ambiguity around what mechanisms of impact CMS actually does favour. How can the community help make a practical difference to organizational life so that they are less exploitative and more equitable?

Critical and progressive performativity may hold promise in this regard. However, we feel these models of influence carry overtly optimistic assumptions about the power of language to change certain structural realities as well as the capabilities of CMS scholars to perform emancipatory change through discourse and micro-level engagement. There may certainly be some cases where getting close to managers, empathizing with their constraints and manipulating their language may indeed yield the (micro) fulfilment of aspects of the CMS mission. For example, scholars have engaged with managers in developing critical perspectives on leadership (Cunliffe, 2009; Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011) and promoting reflexivity in managerial practice (Barge, 2004). However, we are concerned that the conceptualizations of performativity proposed lack a realistic appreciation of the accumulated social forces guiding organizational behaviour in these institutionalized contexts, including the profit motive, shareholder value, cost externalization, means-ends efficiency and so forth. While these forces are no doubt social and linguistically constructed too (e.g. see Callon [2010] in relation to the economy), they have also been politically and institutionally embedded over time and cannot simply be talked away. It is these conditions, we argue, that need to be taken into consideration when assessing the impact of CMS scholarship. Without a wider political analysis of organizations, institutions and markets, the capacity to perform economic rationality differently will be limited, which in turn restricts the scope for politics, political subjectivity and dialogue (see Cochoy et al., 2010). Hence, we would expect the mechanisms recommended by critical and progressive performativities to frequently fail rather than succeed.

#### Current economic models are too entrenched to critique away—they should be responsible for proving solvency, not just a bigger impact.

Russi and Haskell, 15—Senior Lecturer in Sociology, Azim Premji University AND Assistant Professor, Mississippi College School of Law (Luigi and John, “Heterodox Challenges to Consumption-Oriented Models of Legislation,” Unbound: Harvard Journal of the Legal Left, 9:13, 2015, dml)

The difficulty of following these critiques from American Legal Realists and these other heterodox authors to any normative conclusion, however, seems two-fold. On the one hand, to think outside of consumption seems in some ways to border on a theological aspiration, to be ushered into the responsibility of remaking society according to some almost other-worldly dimensions: an economic order that conceives progress beyond growth, a socio-political structure that allows for systemic change without reducing the possibilities of human freedom, the normative agenda to substantiate egalitarian relationships, a global order that preserves the victories of industrial capitalism while simultaneously transcending its costs (ecological, human, etc.). On the other hand, critiques of consumption-led governance seem both anachronistic and violent. They are anachronistic because they either too readily rely on the possibilities of the Enlightenment assumption that there is a clear set of ‘truths’ that once disseminated to the population will enact meaningful change (e.g., if particular industries or products are demonstrated to be unsustainable to the environment, populations will demand alternatives) or they overly invest in the possibility of some benevolent, universalizing spirit that is capable of trumping the politico-economic exigencies of personal well-being (e.g., individuals are naturally willing to collectively do the right thing for the greatest amount of people even at personal cost in a consistent manner). They are violent because in calling for systemic change, such reversals would almost undoubtedly entail significant and most likely intensely hostile opposition from entrenched actors who benefit from the current economic legal arrangements. A liberal mode of economic management (e.g., consumerism) is itself undoubtedly more coercive and violent than its advocates tend to admit (e.g., it is part of the very problems it claims to address), but where the fundamental point of disagreement arises is over the question whether the current trajectory is occasioning a level of lost opportunity costs that warrant the effort and violence most likely necessary to enact an alternative mode of political life. Furthermore, if we accept the proposition of the necessity of coercive change, it still begs the question to what extent its proponents within intellectual circles are really willing to fully participate and accept the potential costs of radical struggle – they may, to put it vulgarly, simply have too much comfort to lose. To what extent, in short, are current left-oriented calls within academia and policy circles merely reflecting the more general postmodern crisis of identity versus the partisan militant residing at any revolutionary core? In giving normative bite to any alternative model, as the American Legal Realist Robert Hale pointed out, it seems undoubtedly the case that any future system would only find new constraints and forms of violence to sustain its cohesiveness.

[T]he systems advocated by professed upholders of laissez-faire are in reality permeated with coercive restrictions of individual freedom, and with restrictions, moreover, out of conformity with any formula of “equal opportunity” or of “preserving the equal rights of others.” Some sort of coercive restriction of individuals, it is believed, is absolutely unavoidable, and cannot be made to conform to any Spenserian formula.161

If fundamental reform to consumer-centric governance is inherently violent – in that it will necessarily create only new winners and losers, and not without potentially violent conflict and disruption – the challenge is therefore not just a question of ethics or political will (e.g., the current distribution of resources is unjust/violent), but the feasibility of re-conceptualizing efficiency, both in terms of strategy and tactics: in other words, upon what standard might we measure progress (or stated differently, what are the lost opportunity costs of continuing on the current trajectory versus an alternative economic model), and how might this be actually accomplished.162 To set out on such a task is exactly the stakes of future progressive scholarship, and upon which we wish to close our study with a brief reflection.

### Competition Good—1NC

#### All their Ks of competition are ineffective and backwards—competition is more effective at generating social welfare than any alternative paradigm.

Tor, 19—Professor of Law and Director, Research Program on Law and Market Behavior, Notre Dame Law School (Avishalom, “Should Antitrust Survive Behavioral Economics?,” Notre Dame Legal Studies Paper No. 1919, dml)

Consumer bias and the malleability of consumer choice challenge the efficiency and welfare foundations of antitrust law and economics. Somewhat ironically, the same bounded rationality of real consumers that antitrust commentators often draw on to justify more assertive enforcement in fact may undermine the foundational economic justification for protecting and promoting competition. Yet, further analysis suggests two main lines of response to this challenge: First, a careful assessment of the empirical behavioral evidence reveals that though competition typically cannot maximize efficiency or welfare, it still has the general tendency of advancing these critical social goals. Second, a competition-favoring approach remains a more attractive policy baseline than its realistic alternatives despite competition’s substantial shortcomings in the presence of boundedly rational consumers. The following sections sketch the basic contours of these two responses, which I develop more fully elsewhere.7

A First Line of Defense—Competition Still Performs (Sort of)

Where biased consumer beliefs are concerned, those behavioral industrial organization models showing how substantial inefficiencies can remain in a variety of competitive settings also indicate that some market settings reasonably approximate the predictions of traditional rationality-based models even in the presence of real, boundedly rational consumers. For instance, consumers are likely to develop more accurate assessments of the quality of products and services they use frequently, particularly when good information and clear feedback are available. In addition, at least in some markets, sellers or information intermediaries can benefit from advising consumers. Such efforts will not always be effective or truly informative, even when they do take place, but their presence still tends to reduce consumer bias.

In some specific models, moreover, competitive markets with boundedly rational consumers that are not maximally efficient even outperform comparable markets populated with rational consumers. These results obtain, for example, when the nature of the product or the market are such that sellers facing perfectly rational consumers lack the incentive to offer certain superior products that they are incentivized to provide in the presence of boundedly rational consumers.

Notably, some factors that help consumers avoid systematic errors of judgment, including substantial experience in an environment that offers relatively clear and immediate feedback, may also attenuate our concerns regarding the malleability of preferences. Indeed, the empirical behavioral evidence clearly indicates that a substantial fraction of preferences is extant already prior to the time at which consumers demand specific products or services in the market, despite the extensive evidence for ad-hoc preference construction.

Furthermore, the evidence of lability concerns “final preferences” over specific products, services, or other immediate objects of choice—the same preferences aggregated by the consumer demand function in microeconomic models. Yet, observable final preferences are not the only preferences that consumers hold and, likely, not even the most important category of preferences for the purpose of establishing a meaningful link between consumer choice and consumer welfare. After all, consumers are usually more interested in what a given product offers in terms of the features they care about than in the detailed specifications of these features. In this case, however, so long as the constructed final preferences still satisfy consumers’ more abstract requirements, consumer choice is still significantly associated with consumer welfare.

To illustrate, a consumer contemplating the purchase of a digital camera may want a lightweight camera that produces high quality pictures at a low cost, all of which are somewhat abstract attributes and require further specification. Even a clear preference regarding a relatively straightforward attribute, such as the camera’s weight, must be further specified, and the consumer is unlikely to hold an extant preference for a specific camera weight over all other possible weights. Consequently, the consumer’s weight preference may well depend in part on the particular options she evaluated, the order of their evaluation, and other factors that have been shown to contribute to final preference construction. Yet, what most likely matters for the consumer’s welfare is not whether the camera they end up selecting weighs 4.94 oz or 5.14 oz—an outcome that may well depend on various construction processes—but rather whether they subjectively experience that camera’s weight as light.

Indeed, the very evidence for preference malleability and construction indicates that consumers do hold certain preferences, albeit sometimes process-oriented or more abstract instead of fully fleshed-out final preferences. Many documented behavioral effects succeed in influencing consumer choice precisely because consumers hold preferences for not choosing extreme options (and therefore tend to prefer intermediate ones), for getting “better” deals (and thus gravitate towards options that seem to offer such deals), and so on.

Finally, the behavioral findings regarding both consumer bias and preference construction reveal a significant degree of heterogeneity in rationality.8 That is, some consumers exhibit a greater degree of bias while the judgments of others better approximate the normative requirements of strict rationality. In the same vein, not all consumers are equally susceptible to framing, context effects, or any of the other factors that have been shown to contribute to the construction of preferences. Additionally, one finds only limited correlations among consumers’ different manifestations of bounded rationality. A consumer who tends to rely on anecdotes when judging product quality, for instance, is not necessarily also among those whose choices are more susceptible to the influence of framing effects. For this reason, any given market is populated by a mix of consumers who deviate to different degrees from perfect rationality. This heterogeneity in rationality, in turn, may limit the problematic consequences of consumers’ bounded rationality for efficiency and welfare. In this vein, some behavioral industrial organization models find that the efficiency of market outcomes tends to increase with the proportion of consumers that better resemble the hypothetical rational actor.

Hence, a closer inspection suggests that the challenges posed by consumer bias and the malleability of consumer preferences are substantial, but perhaps not as detrimental as they initially appear. In many market settings, competition is still likely to promote efficiency and consumer welfare even when the full benefits anticipated by the traditional microeconomic model are unattainable.

A Second Line of Defense—Competition Still is (Usually) Better than its Alternatives

The conclusion that competitive markets with real, boundedly rational consumers can still achieve some of the benefits expected of competition in rationality-based models is comforting. Yet, from a competition policy perspective, the most important comparison is not between real competitive markets and the traditional microeconomic model, but instead the comparison between more competitive markets with boundedly rational consumers and less competitive markets with the same consumers. Put differently, policymakers do not have the privilege of choosing the consumers that populate real markets. Rather, they must determine whether the protection of competition in markets with boundedly rational consumers tends to advance efficiency and consumer welfare better than its alternatives—that is, better than diminished competition in the form of increased market power or further direct market regulation.

Once the question is posed this way, however, the answer becomes quite clear. Even in behavioral industrial organization models, increased competition often improves market outcomes compared to monopoly or to diminished competition. And though in some cases competition generates further inefficiencies, the circumstances that bring about such “harmful competition” are usually limited in scope.

Moreover, competition may also offer a superior means for advancing consumer welfare in the face of preference malleability. We have seen that consumer choice may be less susceptible to ad-hoc construction processes when consumers have more product-specific experience, particularly if good information and clear feedback are available. As with consumer bias, a monopoly producer that can profit from shaping consumer choices will do so. A more competitive market, on the other hand, may generate competing efforts by other producers to offer alternatives and shape consumer choice, thus offering consumers at least some opportunity to identify those alternatives that better fit their underlying, more abstract but more meaningful preferences.

Where the comparison between competition and regulation is concerened, some models suggest the latter can outperform the former. Nonetheless, this advantage is typically limited to narrow market settings and, more importantly, depends on mostly unrealistic assumptions regarding regulators’ knowledge and ability. The limits of regulatory interventions are particularly significant, moreover, with respect to consumer choice. Indeed, interventions that limit sellers’ manipulation of consumer choice might be beneficial, but they function best as complements for competition-favoring policies. Regulatory efforts to directly constrain and determine consumer choice, in contrast, are usually unlikely to improve consumer welfare and cannot replace competition as the fundamental policy approach to market behavior across the board.

Frequently, the strategic responses of rational producers to the predictable mistakes of some boundedly rational consumers also render regulatory alternatives to competition inefficient or at least effective only under very specific circumstances. Even when simple models suggest that direct regulation of price or other product characteristics can outperform competition, the reality involved in implementing such regulation is likely to be far more challenging, as the public choice literature describes at length and amply illustrated by the empirical evidence.

Caution regarding the likely benefits of regulatory alternatives to competition is further suggested by regulators’ own bounded rationality. And while regulators are better positioned than individual consumers to avoid systematic error, they still are at a substantial disadvantage vis a vis sophisticated firms that react strategically to their interventions.

Finally, most significant markets in which competition may generate substantial inefficiencies are already subject to extensive regulatory schemes. Industries that revolve around credence goods—such as the services of professionals that most consumers cannot judge on their own, like medical or legal services—are subject to professional regulation. Similarly, the financial and telecommunications industries are subject to extant regulatory schemes that partly seek to address consumer protection concerns, even if these schemes are not explicitly and directly aimed at responding to the effects of consumers’ bounded rationality.

Conclusion

The economic justification for policy makers’ reliance on the costly and cumbersome apparatus of antitrust law and its enforcement is based on the efficiency and welfare maximization properties of competitive markets. These beneficial outcomes of competition rest inter alia on the assumption that consumers are rational economic actors, whose judgments of the products available to them in the market are unbiased and who hold extant, complete and orderly preferences regarding these products. Yet, the reality of consumer behavior is dramatically and systematically different from that assumed by the traditional microeconomic market model. This discrepancy between theory and reality raises fundamental questions about the ability of competition and its protection to yield the efficiency and welfare benefits predicted by the standard neoclassical model.

All is not lost, however. The two lines of response outlined here may help justify the survival of antitrust law despite challenges posed by consumer bias and the construction of consumer preferences. First, while competition with real, boundedly rational consumers usually cannot maximize efficiency or welfare, it still has the general tendency of advancing these critical goals. Second, a competition-favoring approach remains a more attractive policy baseline than its realistic alternatives of diminished competition due to either increased private market power or enhanced governmental regulation, the substantial shortcomings of competition notwithstanding. Hence, further research and analysis are required to identify the specific market settings in which monopoly or additional regulation may outperform competition, but the present findings can still justify the law’s general policy orientation of protecting competition.

### Technocracy Good—1NC

#### Their totalizing depictions of speed elitism gets coopted by fascism—technocracy is the solution to violent individuation.

Gironi and Negarestani, 18—IRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Philosophy, University College Dublin AND Iranian philosopher (Fabio and Reza, “ENGINEERING THE WORLD, CRAFTING THE MIND,” <https://www.neroeditions.com/docs/reza-negarestani-engineering-the-world-crafting-the-mind/>, dml)

As long as, we are not willing to recognize education in the aforementioned sense as the scaffolding upon which any political movement should be built we are doomed to live in the status quo. Short of an unconditional prioritization of education, all we ever can hope for are quick fixes accompanied with phases of socio-political overexcitement which soon fizzle out, leading us to a position which was worse than before. Politics without education as its premise can never maintain its long-term traction. It effectively exempts itself from the concerns of the next generations. But what is a politics without the potential concerns for next generations—whoever or whatever they might be—if not an extension of our egotism and selfishness here and now? While I consider myself a leftist, I nevertheless think that my frustration with the left is precisely the issue of education. Look at something like left accelerationism: where is the acknowledgment of education or developmental psychology i.e. nurturing as the unconditional factor? Where is your logistical-financial and organizational plan for education? If you lack these then no matter how much you insist on egalitarian ends, you are not going to attain them. However, being the hopeless leftist that I am, I believe that left, has “in principle” more chance to concretely address the issue of education than the right.

I believe in something like a universalist paradigm of education or equality of minds. Here, the appellation universal does not mean a pre-conceived global paradigm that can be indiscriminately imposed upon everyone. Education is all about context sensitivity, fulfilling local exigencies. But at the same time, I think there are deep cognitive frameworks which are common to us all and can be augmented under a universal or global framework. I think Kant was onto something important. His hierarchies of faculties as elaborated under the rubric of transcendental psychology—i.e. the necessary conditions for the possibility for having a mind—are not merely a trivial or arbitrary list of faculties. They were as much a necessary list of abilities as they were an example of an epistemological inquiry into the specific modes of cognition required for critical and objective thinking. For example, what he calls sensibility, reproductive and productive imagination, understanding and reason are actually necessary “classes” or “types” for being a minded subject. If we believe in the equality of all minds then we ought to also believe in complex recipes that can universally augment such necessary classes, regardless of whether we belong to different geographic locations, ethnicities, or even species.

Fabio Gironi: The delicate question of universalism was indeed my next target. Those who grew up intellectually in the leftist academic environment of the late twentieth century were taught, more or less explicitly, that “universalism” is something of a taboo term. Indeed, you just mentioned the left’s penchant for intersubjectivity without objectivity—that is to say for a celebration of irreducible particularities, local practices, identities and so on—which renounces global and universalist ambitions. Now, I think that this anti-totalizing intellectual season (a former teacher of mine once told me how, sometime in the mid-80s, he witnessed a heckler shout “you totalizing bastard!” during a public talk by Fredric Jameson—this peculiar “insult” always makes me chuckle) was a necessary step, contextually justified by a certain post-World War II socio-political environment. However, it has now become unreflective doxa, leading to a counterproductive knee-jerk reaction against a whole constellation of ideas and concepts—many of which you are explicitly committed to. Universalism is one of those and (neo)rationalism is another, and the two are obviously related.

This stance of yours has occasionally led you to a collision course with, let’s say, more “orthodox” leftists, since all too often universalism is equated with authoritarianism, while neo-rationalism is confused with dogmatism and blinkered logicism (just like any talk of “norms” is taken to be an implicit call for normalization—may Foucault save us all!). As if “rationalism” in general was always necessarily guided by an ambition of comprehensive and total control: a reactionary intellectual orientation for the preservation of good societal order, the adversary of the philosophical and political projects prioritizing the bottom-up affective development of vectors of individual freedom. What are the methods and goals of the universalist rationalism?

Reza Negarestani: Calling yourself a rationalist universalist is even worse, it is doubly taboo. It is akin to identifying yourself as an agent of some totalitarian nightmare straight out a postmodern parody where you actually take pride in having a poor sense of humour, being cretinous and shamelessly insensitive. The corresponding image would be not O’Brien from 1984 but a villain from a Donald Barthelme’s story who just wants to liquidate people using absurdist methods for the sheer experimental joy of it. So, the question, as you brought it up, is: how did we come to have such a cultural perception about reason or universalism? Can we ever step outside of this culture? If the answer is positive, what can we accomplish by doing so? And correspondingly, if we continue to remain in this culture what do we lose or risk? The answer to these questions is obviously not straightforward. It requires not just a historical analysis of economic and social conditions using adequately objective diagnostic tools, but also a system of thought for imagining and concretely building an alternative world, one that does not begin with the year zero but is built in continuity with the existing one which we currently inhabit. Both, of course, require the adoption, refinement and development of our concepts of reason and universality as the first step.

As you mentioned, given the historical contamination of these concepts, there is an immense work to be done not just to gain the trust of people but also to repair or discard their negative aspects in theory and practice. Let me begin with universalism. I see universalism as a necessary, concrete and global labour of collectivization. It is very much in tandem with the idea of concrete self-consciousness or collective self-determination as a matter of practical achievement built simultaneously on inter-subjectivity and objectivity, particularities and universalities which are a priori. Even in our particularities and differences, we always begin with abstract or formal universalities, things like being concept-users, private thoughts which are modelled on a public language, deep cognitive faculties and categories which even in their specificity have universal logical structures. So, in a sense, we already live in a universalist state, albeit an abstract one. We are experiencing, thinking and acting individuals to the extent that we are socially constituted through and through. Kant and Hegel—despite their shortcomings in appreciating the true consequences of the sociality of mind—make this point quite clear: we could not have experience—through which it is possible to develop a conception of ourselves in the world—in the first place, if we did not have some shared repertoire of universal and necessary conditions. Speaking of experience as something originally particular or individual is hardly anything more than a symptom of a purely solipsistically perspectival view that is irreconcilable with the reality represented by cognitive science, logic, computation, mathematics, and even evolutionary biology.

However, there is nothing in this abstract universality that safeguards it from pathologies of individuation and particularism precisely because the real social conditions in which it is embedded can in fact be pathological as it is the case. So, universalism in its genuine form is the concrete and critical expression of universalities at the level of real social conditions. And its aim is the maximization of the capacities to think and act, to entertain and actualize possibilities beyond the confines of the existing world in which we live—a world that purports to be a completed totality. To achieve this aim, to build a new world in which the possibility of disenthralled thinking and action coincides with possibilities of a world in which the individual and social problems and pathologies are resolved, however, is impossible without first responding systematically and rationally to the constrains of the world in which we already live. In this sense, I would say universalism is at its core concerned with world-building or more precisely world-engineering to the extent that our premise, resource and space of labour is always this world and not some imaginary world or an afterlife heaven. The possible world cannot be one that is sealed off from this world, a universe or a commune that exists parallel to our world. The former is merely a fantasy, the latter is not only phantasmic but also parasitic upon the pathologies the real world without even realizing it.

To sum up, the path to concrete universalism always begins from particularities of our experience of the world which are constituted by abstract universalities. So, in a sense, the trajectory of universalism should always begin from local conditions of thinking and action, rather than a purported universal condition under which we can all be integrated and unified. But this trajectory does not end with the local, it must pass through stages and encompass the global conditions of thinking and action. Remaining in the ambit the local is actually what suffers from a delusive idealism, not universalism. Why? Because this localism abides by the myth of a closed system in which jobs can get done effectively and perfectly. But a closed system is simply an idealized state, to mistake an idealized model with the messy reality is a hallmark of credulity. Not to mention, the microlocalist setup is destined to be afflicted with what I call theoretical-practical Habsburg syndrome, i.e., you end up breeding thoughts and actions which are increasingly less optimal to address your initial ambitions and problems. In other words, the logarithmic curve of thinking and acting which were supposed to optimally solve your local problems suddenly drops after a sufficient time, precisely because you run out of computational or cognitive resources, the majority of them you have chosen to call enemies. Without interaction with the environment, your system becomes ever more fragile and soon a premature death knocks at your door.

Fabio Gironi: So what are the main obstacles and resistances posed to universalism by its detractors, and how can they be countered?

Reza Negarestani: With regard to the demand to resurrect rationalist universalism—or more broadly the rationalist reconstruction of the world to appropriate the Vienna Circle as opposed to the Frankfurt School—there are at least three major objections:

(1) Universalism will flatten differences and is ultimately, another form of imposed global order whose parameters are set in advance. In response to this objection, I would say that yes this was the case with old traditions of universalism coming from European thinkers such as Kant. But concrete universalism cannot be imagined without the non-trivial or synthetic integration of local conditions. A paradigm of universalism that does not respond to local exigencies in their own context is only a disguised imperialism.

(2) The second objection might come from a communitarian perspective: surely we can build a world sealed off from the pathological systems that plague this planet. I counter this claim by saying that this supposed world is built on two presuppositions: (a) You are implicitly endorsing a metaphysical totality in which everything that is going on in this world of ours has been assimilated by a pathological system (e.g., Capitalism) but this totality is only an illusion which you have chosen to take for reality; (b) your commune in fact parasitizes on the affordances provided by our world. The alleged purity of your thoughts and actions is actually made possible by the pathologies from which you think you have diverged. Your commune is not a solution but only another anonymous contribution to the status quo.

(3) The third objection comes from the neoreactionary doctrine: the whole pursuit of universalism is misguided, for we are particular individuals so entrenched in the particularities of our experiences and ideologies that any recipe for universalism is nothing more than a fable for naive ideologues. My retort to this third objection is: ok, let us believe that universalism, hegemony-construction and consensus-building are just the logics of illusion. But surely your neoreactionary island requires a certain labor to integrate the like-minded individuals. In this process, you have assumed that doctrinal preferences trump over individual preferences, but you are sadly mistaken. For even in your neoreactionary island, you should deal with the problems of hegemony and consensus, albeit in a restricted scope. It is not that your idea of universalism is naïve—even though it really is but rather that you cannot even fathom the scope of particularities. Even in the case of people subscribing to the same agenda, we are always the creatures of our own particular experiences.

Now, an advocate of neoreaction might object that the institution of such islands does not require any form of unified ideology or consensus-building. Biorealism, or cybernetic circuitry of capitalism and untethered economic competition, can effectively consolidate those who have enlisted for neoractionary experimentations. But again, what is missing in such scenarios is a deeper understanding of the scope of human experiential particularities as dynamic perturbations of the system. Over time, even minor disturbances will have cumulative effects which, if not attended to in a context-sensitive manner, are guaranteed to throw the entire system into disarray. As for biorealist schemas, even if they were more than unscientific and dogmatic fantasies about nature—which they aren’t—that could consolidate and orient populations at an accelerated rate in the fashion depicted by Theodore Sturgeon in his story Microcosmic God: they will be still impinged upon by norms and personal desires of individuals. Not to mention, that the apt metaphor for natural selection is nature as a slow tinkerer rather than a great accelerator. What I would say to my neoreactionary friends is that to the extent that they do not take seriously the depths of incommensurable experiences, their island will eventually sink. For they think that in the Hobbesian game-theoretic jungle, all you need to do is to ward off enemies and make islands for those who believe in the same social experimentations. But as time passes, the Hobbes Inferno will exact its revenge upon you. Without an adequate understanding of particularities even when a common ideology or a so-called universal method of pruning is at stake, you will end up not just devouring your enemies but also eating your kin alive.

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(4) The final objection comes from various fatalist doctrines, particularly, the doctrine of anti-praxis with its slogan “let it go.” First of all, I think anti-praxis attempts to present itself as a zero-claim ideology, one that has no claim, no practical norm, and no recipe for collective political action. In this sense, one can get the impression that perhaps anti-praxis is more genuine than the other tenets I listed above, in so far as it does not deceive you with lofty promises of salvation, emancipation or the great outdoors. It is what it is and stands in sharp contrast to the illusions of collective political action. However, such an impression is fundamentally credulous. There is no such a thing as a zero-claim doctrine. If we look at the early doctrine of fascism—particularly its Italian offshoot—we realize that this is precisely how fascism took root. It began with the claim that we indeed have no claim, no recipe because all recipes are oppressive.

This is not to equate anti-praxis with fascism but to simply point out that a zero-claim doctrine—one that sees all practical norms as oppressive—is rife for fascist appropriation. When the proponents of anti-praxis tell us that they have no political norm or recipe, we should look at them with utter suspicion. They are either trying in the worst case to dissimulate their ulterior motives under the rubric of ideological innocence or, in the best case, they are not conscious of their own implicit practical norms because they have already dispensed with the responsibility, authority, presuppositions, and implications involved in consuming and producing norms. Saying that we must abandon all practical norms is already a normative recipe to the extent that is predicated on the impermissibility—i.e. what we ought not do—of practical norms. In this sense, anti-praxis is just a false consciousness of its so-called lack of normativity or purported innocence.

Therefore, either anti-praxis is an implicit normative recipe or it is not. If it is, then it is not really anti-praxis, and it means that it is unaware of its own normative and/or practical assumptions. If it is not normatively practical, then it must be a theoretical position and as such it is predicated upon theoretical norms such as the knowledge of the current state of affairs, and thus beholden to epistemological norms of attaining the knowledge of the current situation. In other words, how do we know that the current state of affairs is thus-and-so? Either we have a procedure of determination that is in accordance with the public norms of doing theory, epistemology, etc, or it is the case that anti-praxis assumes we do not follow norms of theory (which are fundamentally entangled with norms of practical reasoning). In the latter case, anti-praxis is just another variation of the myth of the given and/or private access to reality. Or, maybe it is the case that anti-praxis is not even a theoretical position. In that case, it should be an aesthetic position. But if that is the case, it then has no purchase on the knowledge of the state of affairs on which it is built, nor does it have any saying as to what ought to be done and what ought not, even doing nothing. We should realize that doing nothing is itself a practical norm to the extent that we can only say “do nothing” insofar as we assume we ought not do such and such things. I would say anti-praxis is more like a new age monotheistic religion that prohibitively feeds off of practical norms of other religions, all to present itself as the last religion you should embrace.

So, in a nutshell, the first concrete recipe of universalism is the realization of our world: the real world is not a division between us and them, but a trap or enigma in which we are all ensnared. Aiming towards the construction a better world, entails seeking more computational resources. To see an enemy as an enemy is the first unwise strategy. The enemy is he or she who gives us a perspective otherwise unavailable to our intuitive or so-called immediate experience of the world. The abolishment of our pathological particular traits can only start when we diagnose what these particularities are and strive to change them by global or universal conditions.

Fabio Gironi: Let us move deeper into a more explicit political register. Some of your comments above regarding universalism and its detractors remind me of the “first law” of what the late Mark Fisher infamously called the “Vampire Castle,” i.e. the priestly, resentment-ridden left-wing intelligentsia. As he put it: “the first law of the Vampires’ Castle is: individualise and privatise everything. While in theory it claims to be in favour of structural critique, in practice it never focuses on anything except individual behaviour”. Similarly, your polemic against communitarianism and particularism, and against an understanding of the “local” as terminal horizon rather than as synthetic step for the piecemeal construction of a global framework seems in broad agreement with those political-economic stances that in recent years have been assimilated under the banner of accelerationism (as most concretely expounded in Srnicek’s and Williams’ Inventing the Future). I know that you were a friend of Fisher, and that you know Srnicek and Williams well, but can you offer me a clear description of your political stance, in relation to this broad orthodoxy-breaking and future-oriented trend in leftist thinking? Do you have any prescriptive stance regarding political action?

Reza Negarestani: I’m afraid that my political stance—or rather my philosophical view concerning what ought to be done in the arena of politics—oscillates between deep pessimism regarding our methods and optimism about future possibilities. Yet, insofar as any possibility can only be actualized by adequate and malleable methods and tools, and to the extent that our methods, ways of systematization, intervention with socio-economic reality and so on are either quite rudimentary or disoriented with regard to the realization of consequential political changes, I think I am more comfortable to identify myself as a rational pessimist. I reject passive pessimism in the sense that as long as possibilities can be imagined, we have to actively gamble and push beyond any vestige of resignation. Without imagining possibilities and piecewise attempts at actualizing them, there is in fact no good justification for surviving as a species. As Seneca has pointed out, in complete absence of such a struggle, we must perhaps devise the most cunning and artful contrivance for bringing our death about. In that case, even the slogan “let it go,” once inflated, is nothing but a disingenuous pessimism that attempts to fabricate a semblance of profundity. In reality, it is the very exemplification of human conservatism and an adolescent disgruntlement which secretly hopes for a miraculous change even when it tries to seem detached from such concerns. After all, romantic fatalism is the shallowest form of passive optimism, rather than genuine pessimism.

Other than the question of methods and tools, another reason for my doubt is what I mentioned in my answer to your previous question and which you brought up through Mark. It is the enigma of the particular. It is enigmatic precisely because the particular as a real condition can shapeshift and come in different guises, play different even contradictory roles in the domains of both the individual and the collective, the local and the universal piecewise integration and mobilization of localities. Mark was one of the best critics of the Hobbesian myth of the state as that which guards the human from their complete transformation into wolves, as that without which humanity is inconceivable. In a sense, Mark was far more radical than Hobbes in that he fathomed the depth of the enigma of the particular. The particular can be pernicious or even illusory through and through. The absolutization of the particular, the individuals—whether in the name of the victim, the sufferer or in the name of individual choices and preferences—completely misses the fact that the conditions of individuation can themselves be pathological. The overemphasis on the particular or the local, accordingly, can very well the blind perpetuation of the conditions of exploitation and misery. But particulars can also be positively non-trivial and implicitly collective perspectives: by making these perspectives explicit, we can shed light onto the problems of the individual and the collective. However, one thing is certain—as Mark would have agreed—the depth of particularities is inexhaustible. So much that, as I argued earlier, even those who dismiss the universalist labour have to deal with its drastic implication within their neo-reactionary floating islands. Absent a diagnosis of different kind of particularities, and short of analysing them with regard to the mechanisms responsible for generating and distinguishing such causal factors or mechanisms at different levels of socio-economic reality, we are all—and I mean everyone—on the same Hobbesian Raft of the Medusa. We will eventually betray ourselves and eat one another, irrespective of whether we think we should strive for a future universalist collective project, we should denounce such endeavours, or we should do nothing and just let it go.

Given the endless series of particularities, of individuals, and of localities, as well as their protean nature, I think that—given our current tools, modes of thinking and action, methods, etc.—we have at this point a very slim, if any at all, chance to do anything that leads us beyond the nightmare of this auto-cannibalistic raft. While I wholeheartedly support the paradigms raised by people like Patricia Reed, Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams which are focused on consensus-building, hegemony-construction and the critical integration of particularities of the human condition, I think as a philosopher I should take side with the Socratic method of the courage of truth with regard to the political action. And as such, I believe the prospects are now very dim, shockingly so. This claim should not incite the cheer of the right-inclined, resignatory, neo-reactionary, and conservative thinkers. If anything, it should lead them to confront the prospects of their own reality as well in terms of a pure terror, insofar as this dim prospect is not exclusive to the emancipatory politics to which we have subscribed but also includes their recipes or the lack thereof.

This brings me to the main question you raised regarding my political stance. I think this question is predicated on the assumption that we can define our political position by rummaging through and resorting to the concretely instantiated political paradigms which have already been realized and then choose one that fits our methodological and ideal ambitions. I really fail to see such an exemplification that I can hold to or define as my political position. One should engage a great feat of self-deception to see contemporary political paradigms as adequate to respond the existing tribulations and problems. Sure, I am a leftist who believes in the reality of the class struggle, but this is not really a political position, only a consciousness of the socio-economic reality. I take seriously Marx and Engels’s thesis that communism “is not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality (will) have to adjust itself. Communism is the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence.” This is what I would call—again following Mark—the possibility of actualizing that which is possible but from our perspective, here and now, seem impossible. For me the task of politics in conjunction with the support of philosophy and technoscience is to not only show—in theory and in collective imagination—that the reality of our world is neither inevitable nor a completed totality, but also manages to concretely build a new world from whose perspective our reality will be exposed as the illusion of the inexorable and finality. But then again, even this, is not a clear-cut political position. It is merely a philosophical thesis on the possibility of a different world and the range of political actions that can fully actualize it.

Fabio Gironi: You merge this rational pessimism with the “engineering approach” for the construction of a better world, as you explained before. To some, this paradigm of political action will sound like you are vouching for a dispassionate and formalist approach to politics, and a government of experts—a “technocracy,” something that in recent times has become anathema in most public discussion (but that, the critic might enjoy pointing out, has been proven to be a failure at least since Plato’s political misadventure in Syracuse)—or even for a nefarious kind of “social engineering.” I suspect that in large part this depends precisely on am equivocation about the very concept of “engineering.” In our folk understanding “engineers,” broadly conceived, are often considered too naive to deal with the intricacies of politics, a domain fraught with normative considerations.

But if I am not mistaken, your expert engineer is as much a technically-minded problem-solver as it is a creative conceptual builder: a figure that applies his or her intelligence to the resolution of problems by means of more than the unilateral application of simple formulas or pre-packaged precepts. Indeed, it seems to me that this is where many contemporary ideas converge. Srnicek’s and Willams’ proposal to “move beyond folk politics and create a new hegemony” and their insistence on the practical/political concept of “repurposing.” Ben Singleton’s reflection on cunning reason (metis) as employed for the strategic and piecemeal construction of freedom from constraints. And of course, your own “speculative inquiry into the future of intelligence,” or functional reconceptualization of intelligence as an emancipatory tool of self- and collective improvement—as well as for practical action upon the world—where conception and transformation are two sides of the same coin. Is it then correct to say the concept of “engineering” (rather different from its “folk” equivalent) is at the core of both your philosophical and political thinking?

Reza Negarestani: Among computer scientists, there is this joke: when computer scientists go into a room full of political theorists, philosophers, cultural critics and linguists, they say to each other, “get rid of all of them and replace them with engineers.” Well, perhaps this joke is a bit too much but it has a grain of truth. Neither philosophers nor political theorists are able to design proper methods adequate to actualize possibilities, imagined or not. We need politically and philosophically informed engineers and designers. Engineers are indeed not mindless technicians, they are people who have one foot in the domain of thinking and one in the realm of an external reality or worldly affairs. They do not see action as a form of hubristic mastery to the extent that they know whatever we do at any level of reality—be it natural, social or cultural—will meet the resistance of that reality. To use a Sellarsian metaphor, reality in the broadest possible sense is not a block of wax ready to be imprinted. Engineers truly know that. They also never see reality in any sense as a flat universe, they see it as vast and deeply multi-scaled structure. In order to concretely intervene at any level of reality we must not only have a multi-level view of the reality but also know which methods, models or tools should be implemented, and at which level. To cut at the joints without splintering the bones is a description of what engineers—as Plato’s good butchers—do.

There are at least two other important tasks which are deeply entangled with the discipline and philosophy of engineering. One is the labour of modelling and the other, the design of approximation techniques. Michael Weisberg has recently written a wonderful book on models and modelling, a topic which in the past was not being taken seriously but was central to engineering. Weisberg elaborates why all our encounters with reality involve one or another kind of model, for example, descriptive, explanatory and predictive models. Even what we call empirical data are not ready-made, they are products of model projection, which means data can be distorted or even false data may be derived if the model is inadequate, too small or too big, misapplied to a target system or applied to a wrong sector of reality. The thing about models is that they are packed with all sorts of implicit and explicit theoretical, mathematical, logical and computational assumptions. Such assumptions encompass not just the model’s description but also the core of the model i.e. the structure and its interpretive factors or construals which include information about the scope, assignment, and fidelity criteria of the model itself. The latter criteria pertain to the exact information which specify the model’s representational, dynamic and resolution constraints for a given level or scale. Without proper attention to such details and the assumptions underlying them, all data and facts can be fundamentally distorted or erroneous. The whole myth of raw or pure data is perpetuated by people who have no clue about how data is mined—irrespective of what kind of data we are talking about.

The other task, the design of approximation techniques, is even trickier. Mark Wilson sums up the nature of the approximation techniques in his new book, Physics Avoidance. Engineers—like Ben Singleton’s designers as embodiments of metis or cunning intelligence—are adept at trickery, hacking the system and reality. They know that it is not the best solution to modify a given target system by intervening with lower levels or fine-grained scales (like for example, the atomic scale-length of a metal beam). Intervention at such bottom levels is rife for what Wilson calls computational hazards, due to extreme fine-grained details of lower levels, any attempt at modification and intervention will either fail or become sub-optimal. Not to mention that we often lack any solid grasp of lower level mechanisms, sometimes we don’t even have any indication as what these fine-grained scales are, we can only postulate them. So what engineers do is first they model scales or levels pertaining to the structure of the target system or the phenomenon in question. Such modelling always involves a controlled amount of simplification and/or idealization which can at a later time be revised or equipped with more details. Then, they think of how to carefully bridge lower levels to upper levels where the structure is less fine-grained and more accessible and more hospitable to intervention and modification. These bridges—which are essentially mixed-level in that they contain information regarding middle scales between the bottom and the top—are called approximation techniques. These are procedures by which engineers circumvent the messy problems of physics without forgetting about them. Such techniques allow engineers to modify a given system optimally without always the need to deal with all sorts of details which make intervention fundamentally impractical from an applied perspective, from the computational cost standpoint, etc.

Here, however, a problem arises that André Carus, in his critique of Wilson’s work, has elaborated with the utmost lucidity. What is this problem? It is the idea that engineering conceived this way would be anti-Enlightenment in the sense that all we can ever do is to reform our local concepts and descriptive pragmatic resources in a piecemeal manner, without hoping to achieve unification. We can no longer have ambitious concepts that can be applied across the board—those global concepts treasured by philosophers such as the Copernican imperative, reason, freedom, etc. Our situation is similar to that of a child who plays in the tub and is in command of a rubber duck. But, of course, the picture of reality is more like that a river where torrential flows, undertows, and chaotic behaviours take hold of the rubber duck. In order to make sure this rubber duck sails in the river, we can no longer adopt a global concept of sail or navigation. We should have atlases of local theory façades which are responsive to such turbulent quandaries. And of course, to conform to such a picture of reality, we can only develop local concepts and heuristic norms which are informational packages that reflect varying and non-unifiable perspectives such as the concept of hardness—as for example applied to a metal beam—which fundamentally varies across different scale-lengths of the metal structure.

While I have a sympathy for such view, I believe Carus is right. Our encounters with reality are not merely such heuristic or pragmatic devices. Engineers always have a main solution—a global concept—in mind. Then they try to bring various real-time scenarios under it such that neither the global concept nor local pragmatic concepts are mutually exclusive but are rather mutually positively constraining and self-reinforcing. Engineering, in this sense, is about the commensuration of the local and the global, the ideal and the messy, the strategic and the tactical. Engineering, therefore, incorporates two senses of the Enlightenment’s rational reconstruction of the world or—to use Carnap’s later term—explication. One in the sense of realism and one in the sense of idealism, naturalism and constructivism. To reengineer and recognize reality, one can neither adopt a universal concept or paradigm nor just local and perspectival concepts. Both the overarching paradigm and local malleable solution are needed.

Now, as you asked, how do we adapt this engineering paradigm to politics? My friend Ray (Brassier) cautioned me regarding this unconditional espousal of engineering as a political method. I fully agree with him. Politics fundamentally differs from engineering from the perspective of norms of political action. The philosophically and politically informed engineering as a political method is predicated on the hard labour of politics which, to a great degree, consists of diagnosing our current situation and then deciding how should we move forward, the work necessary for arriving the global concept. However, I do disagree with the idea that unlike the realm of politics where “what ought to be done” is a matter of antagonism and consensus-building, engineering is centred on a pre-established conventional norm (i.e., this is what the system should do, or this is the agreed upon norm by which the system should behave). Even in engineering, we know that the system can have multiple diverging trajectories of evolution. There is no pre-established norm or consensus as what the system is and how it should behave. For engineers, there is no pre-established function of a given system since such functions do change over time and in accordance with local contexts. Modelling a system is as daunting a task for engineers as it is for political theorists and activists to diagnose pathologies of society, and to find a way to eliminate them. Reality is not a given totality: sometimes you should approach it as a black box that can only be unveiled by systematically playing or intervening with it. Other times, you should do the hard work of modelling under epistemological constraints. All in all, the task is to integrate global concepts with contrasting local concepts.

So yes, in response to your question I take the paradigm of engineering as a profoundly composite—epistemological and practical—way of thinking about the world. And this also leads me to finally answer the question you posed earlier regarding what can be the concrete way of getting political ambitions done. Our first step in a concrete political project should be focused on diagnosing the precise causal mechanism responsible for the pathologies of individuation, to detect the levels at which such mechanism are entrenched, and then proceed to develop tools to intervene at those exact levels—like an engineer. If you don’t have the adequate tools to intervene at that level, then devise approximation techniques, resolve the problem at a different level. And, again like an engineer, attempt to lay out the logic(s) of existing worlds at different scales. Make new tools to construct new worlds from the detritus of the old one. The new different world is not a miracle or a religious afterlife, it is a world engineered from what is available to us. To recapitulate, we need to first understand the plural logics of this world almost like the multi-level ontologies of information science to even think what ought to be done and decide exactly what methods or tools at what level should be exercised.

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* Transition to service sector
* More resources for R+D
* Income level increases---demands on policymakers

Some seminal papers reveal that, within the process of economic growth, environmental pollution level first scales up and later scales down. This is an inverted U-shaped relationship between GDP per capita and pollution level (Grossman and Krueger [3,4], Panayotou [5], Shafik [6], Selden and Song [7]). Since this relationship resembles the relationship between GDP per capita and income inequality produced by Kuznets [8], Panayotou [5] calls it Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC). According to the EKC hypothesis, the level of environmental pollution initially intensifies because of economic growth, later tampers after GDP per capita reaches a threshold value (Panayotou [5], Suri and Chapman [9]; Stern [10]). Therefore, this hypothesis implies a dynamic process in which structural change occurs together with economic growth (Dinda [2]). Grossman and Krueger [3] first clarify how the EKC arises. They explore that economic growth affects environmental quality through three channels: (i) scale effect, (ii) structural effect, and (iii) technological effect. Fig. 1 presents the EKC within the periods of (i), (ii) and (iii). According to the scale effect, given the level of technology, more resources and inputs are employed to produce more commodities at the beginning of economic growth path. Hence, more energy resources and production will induce more waste and pollutant emissions, and the level of environmental quality will get worse (Torras and Boyce [11], Dinda [2], Prieur [12]). The structural effect states that the economy will have a structural transformation, and economic growth will affect environment positively along with continuation of growth. In other words, as national production grows the structure of economy changes, and the share of less polluting economic activities increases gradually. Besides, an economy experiences a transition from capital-intensive industrial sectors to service sector and reaches technology-intensive knowledge economy (the final stage of the structural change). Due to the fact that technology-intensive sectors utilize fewer natural sources, the impact of these sectors on environmental pollution will be less. The last channel of the growth process is the technological effect channel. Since a high-income economy can allocate more resources for research and development expenditures, the new technological processes will emerge. Thus, the country will replace old and dirty technologies with new and clean technologies, and environmental quality will deepen (Borghesi [13], Copelan and Taylor [14]). Consequently, environmental pollution initially increases and later decreases as a result of scale, structural and technological effect emerging along with growth path. Some studies of EKC hypothesis consider income elasticity of clean environment demand (Beckerman [15], Selden and Song [16], McConnel [17], Panayotou [18], Carson et al. [19], Brock and Taylor [20]). Accordingly, the share of low-income people’s expenditures for food and basic necessities is higher than that of high-income societies’ expenditures for the same type of commodities (Engel’s Law). As income level and life standards rise in conjunction with economic growth, the societies’ demand for clean environment advances. Besides, societies make often pressure on policy makers to protect the environment through new regulations. One might argue that, because of these reasons, clean environment is a luxury commodity and the demand elasticity of clean environment is higher than unity (Dinda [2]).

**2] Cap good---litany of reasons it solves structural violence and quality of life.**

**Bandler ‘17** (Aaron, Graduate from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a Journalism degree Economics minor, “5 Statistics Showing How Capitalism Solves Poverty”, Daily Wire, 3/18/17, http://www.dailywire.com/news/14525/5-statistics-showing-how-capitalism-solves-poverty-aaron-bandler#, 7/24/17, Comrade)

Here are five statistics showing how capitalism solves poverty.

1. The number of people living in extreme poverty worldwide declined by 80 percent from 1970 to 2006It i. People living on a dollar a day or less dramatically fell from 26.8 percent of the global population in 1970 to 5.4 percent in 2006---an 80 percent decline. s a truly remarkable achievement that doesn't receive a lot of media coverage because it highlights the success of capitalism. "It was globalization, free trade, the boom in international entrepreneurship," American Enterprise Institute (AEI) president Arthur Brooks said in a 2012 speech. "In short, it was the free enterprise system, American style, which is our gift to the world." 2. Poverty worldwide included 94 percent of the world's population in 1820. In 2011, it was only 17 percent. What is even more incredible is that the global poverty rate was 53 percent in 1981, causing the decline from 53 percent to 17 percent to be "the most rapid reduction in poverty in world history." "Since the onset of industrialisation---and as a consequence of this, economic growth — the share of people living in poverty started decreasing and kept on falling ever since," wrote Oxford University's Martin Roeser, who compiled the aforementioned data. 3. Globally, those in the lower and middle income brackets saw increases in pay of 40 percent from 1988 to 2008. According to the Adam Smith's Institute's Ben Southwood: Those in the middle and bottom of the world income distribution have all got pay rises of around 40% between 1988-2008. Global inequality of life expectancy and height are narrowing too---showing better nutrition and better healthcare where it matters most. What we should care about is the welfare of the poor, not the wealth of the rich. 4. The world is 120 times better off today than in 1800 as a result of capitalism. The Foundation for Economic Education's (FEE) Steven Horwtiz, citing author Deidre McCloskey, noted that the 120 times figure comes from multiplying "the gains in consumption to the average human by the gain in life expectancy worldwide by 7 (for 7 billion as compared to 1 billion people)." "The competitive market process has also made education, art, and culture available to more and more people," wrote Horwitz. "Even the poorest of Americans, not to mention many of the global poor, have access through the Internet and TV to concerts, books, and works of art that were exclusively the province of the wealthy for centuries." Horwitz added capitalism has also resulted in people spending "a much smaller percentage of our lives working for pay" due to the increased value of labor and has produced higher life expectancy "by decades." 5. Mortality rates for children under the age of five declined by 49 percent from 1990 to 2013. This is according to World Health Organization (WHO) data, a decline termed "faster than ever." Capitalism results in lower child mortality rates by producing better access to medicine and standards of living. In sum, the wealth and innovation spurred by capitalism has done more to help the poor than any government program ever could. Singal is simply wrong to suggest that "capitalism is not designed" to solve poverty.

**3] It solves global poverty and structural violence---prefer long-run, macro-level trends over short term disruptions---reject their Trumpian moralizing**

**Bowman 17** [Sam, September 2017, Executive Director of the Adam Smith Institute (British think tank) in London, “IN DEFENCE OF NEOLIBERALISM,” <https://www.cis.org.au/app/uploads/2017/09/33-3-bowman-sam.pdf>]

To free marketeers, there is little question that this change is worth it. Automation and technological progress **may disrupt people’s lives** but ultimately we think of new things for people to do and the extra wealth and tools that technological advances create raise everybody’s living standards in the long run. Trade, **usually blamed** for hurting ordinary workers while helping the rich, is actually especially good for the poor. A 2014 study in the United States estimated the gains from trade to different parts of American society based on baskets of goods designed to represent **different consumption patterns along the income distribution,** and then calculated how much poorer the bottom 10% would be without global trade, compared with the top 10%.5 The gains from trade accruing from cheaper goods were not felt equally between rich and poor: the real income loss from closing off trade is 63% at the bottom 10% of the income distribution and 28% for the top 10%. Globally, extreme poverty has fallen **from 44%** of the world’s population in 1981 **to 9.6% today**.6 Openness to trade, better property rights and the de-nationalisation of state-run industries in China have between them driven at least two-thirds of that country’s growth since 1980, **lifting millions** of people out of poverty. Under communism, Chinese GDP per capita was $300 a year. Today it’s **$10,000 a year and rising.** Migration, generally a mild net positive for natives, can make the migrants themselves far richer. World Bank officials have argued that there is ‘simply no contest’ between guest worker programs and other anti-poverty programs like cash transfers or microfinance—participants in New Zealand’s seasonal worker program experience huge increases in income, greater subjective well-being, and more schooling for their kids.7 But the shocks are real enough and the trend is not particularly encouraging. David Autor, David Dorn and Gordon Hanson recently evaluated the ‘China shock’ of greater Chinese imports to the US between 1990 and 2007.8 They found that in areas with existing manufacturing that were competing with Chinese imports, rising imports raised local unemployment, cut wages, and drove more people out of the labour force altogether, whether onto disability benefits or into early retirement. Other studies have looked at the declining labour share of GDP—a trend observable in most OECD countries since the early 1990s, ending a previously stable ‘stylized fact’ of the ratio between returns to capital and labour.9 The reason seems to be entirely driven by the rise of so-called ‘superstar firms’ like Google, Facebook and Amazon in new kinds of markets where very low marginal costs mean there is no inherent ceiling on firm size. Software often does not have the same diseconomies of scale that normal products do, so one firm would be expected to dominate each market at a time. These ‘winner takes all’ markets are not inherently monopolistic, because these large firms are still vulnerable to rivals with better products, but whoever has the best product on offer at a given time is likely to have a very large amount of market share. Low marginal costs and high fixed costs (of innovating better products) have, so far, meant that only a small number of extremely talented workers are necessary for success. The result has been something of a divergence between economic growth and wage growth which may continue. Trying to reverse or undo these trends would be counterproductive, yet this is often the usual political answer. Regulation to try to brute-force firms into paying workers more usually backfires, and protectionism is not the answer to disruption caused by trade. As Paul Krugman writes: The lesson I took from the widely cited Autor, Dorn, and Hanson paper on the China shock was that Ricardo and Heckscher-Ohlin were less relevant to the political economy of trade than the sheer pace of change, which disrupted local manufacturing concentrations and the communities they supported. The point is that a protectionist turn, reversing the trade growth that has already happened, would be the same kind of shock given where we are now. It’s like the old joke about the motorist who runs over a pedestrian, then tries to undo the damage by backing up— and runs over the victim a second time.10 The neoliberal agenda There is no new ‘neoliberal moment’, though it is convenient to suggest that France’s Emmanuel Macron represents one. But for a group of us the term is a useful differentiation from fellow travellers (see the box overleaf on how to spot a neoliberal). We are globalist consequentialists who have concluded that free markets, property rights, free trade and liberal migration policies are effective tools for **fostering** economic growth and improving the well-being **of the global poor**. We’re suspicious of politics; democracy is not the panacea for our problems that many on the left and, increasingly, the populist right seem to think. We **cannot** hope to **solve political problems** by **chucking out experts** and replacing them with politicians or referendums. We are comfortable with redistribution of income, done simply through cash transfers instead of a complicated welfare state. In a sentence, a neoliberal’s worldview might be something like this: Governments should facilitate **as much wealth creation as possible**, and redistribute some of it after. This differs from left-liberal Blairism in its scepticism about the effectiveness of government as a piecemeal problem-solver and its prima facie preference for markets in most cases where scarce resources must be allocated. It differs from libertarianism and classical liberalism in its support for a fairly large degree of income redistribution, though done differently to how most developed nations do this at present. Neoliberals are alarmed at the right’s **embrace of nationalism** and the populist idea that economics and good policy doesn’t matter, that ‘experts’ are systematically biased and should be ignored. At the same time, the lurch towards the hard left in the form of people like Jeremy Corbyn, Bernie Sanders, Beppe Grillo and Jean-Luc Melenchon suggests that the old ideological battles that many thought had been settled must be fought once again. The ‘neoliberal agenda’, then, is to resist both zombie Marxism and right-wing populism in the areas where these are making the biggest gains. Trade, in particular, is vulnerable. Defending and **extending the global liberal order** means, above all, resisting moves away from **trade openness** favoured by the Trump administration and some ‘hard’ Brexiteers who have toyed with the idea of tariffs and subsidies to protect British jobs from better foreign competition. **Seen costs dominate unseen benefits**. The negative consequences of trade openness and automation—the ‘destruction’ of some old jobs and the low status of many of the new ones—seem to be much more salient to people than the benefits. A cheaper iPhone is seen as a frivolity compared to a rewarding, high status job in manufacturing, and the other benefits of trade and automation are nearly invisible. Welfare and labour market reforms may at least mitigate some of the harms here. Replacing complicated welfare systems (in Britain there are over 50 different kinds of benefit payments available) with simple cash payments, whether in the form of a Negative Income Tax, a workcontingent payment (similar to the Earned Income Tax Credit) or wage subsidies to employers may make uneconomic jobs that give workers a greater sense of self-worth (such as some of those involving manual labour or manufacturing) more viable. Combined with labour market deregulation, greater innovation about how to use workers may stop or reverse the shift of income away from workers’ wages. Ultimately, a lack of economic growth across much of the developed world seems like the biggest cause of our present woes. People will put up with a lot if they feel like their family’s lives are getting better. ‘Going for growth’ involves a focus on the lowesthanging policy fruit. For example, in most Englishspeaking countries, urban zoning and planning laws have created housing crises in prosperous cities. Living in Sydney, London or San Francisco is astonishingly expensive now by historical or international standards. Apart from the first-order effects this has of raising people’s cost of living, the second-order effect is probably a significant drag on growth. By preventing people from moving to where they could be most productive, expensive housing holds economic growth back. This ‘spatial misallocation’ is estimated by Chang-Tai Hsieh and Enrico Moretti to have lowered aggregate US growth by more than 50% between 1964 and 2009.11 The same is likely true in other Englishspeaking countries. (Continental Europe has different problems.) Another example is tax, where the structure of corporation tax is such that investment is usually taxed heavily. This need not be the case: full capital expensing would effectively shift the burden of corporation tax away from investment towards consumption and be far less of a drag on growth. This would also probably allow the creation of more manufacturing jobs in developed countries, since it is machinery and property investment that are typically hit hardest by corporation tax. (In the UK, former Chancellor George Osborne funded his headline corporation tax cuts by increasing the relative tax burden on machinery and property investment.) Neoliberals will always be a small group. But the idea of neoliberalism has captured some people’s imaginations and seems to be filling an **open niche in the political market**. Online especially, many younger people who are uncomfortable with libertarianism’s dogmatic image and enjoy the naughtiness of re-appropriating a political swear word have adopted the label.

**4] Capitalism lessens the intensity and quantity of wars.**

**Adorney 13** Julian, economic historian, entrepreneur, and contributor for the Ludwig von Mises Institute. He’s citing Professor McDonald who teaches courses on international relations theory, international political economy, and international security at University of Texas at Austin. (, Foundation for Economic Education, “Want Peace? Promote Free Trade”, 10/15, http://www.fee.org/the\_freeman/detail/want-peace-promote-free-trade

Frédéric Bastiat famously claimed that “**if goods don’t cross borders, soldiers will."** Bastiat argued that free trade between countries could reduce international conflict because trade forges connections between nations and gives each country an incentive to avoid war with its trading partners. If every nation were an economic island, the lack of positive interaction created by trade could leave more room for conflict. Two hundred years after Bastiat, libertarians take this idea as gospel. Unfortunately, not everyone does. But as recent research shows, the historical evidence confirms Bastiat’s famous claim. To Trade or to Raid In “Peace through Trade or Free Trade?” professor Patrick J. McDonald, from the University of Texas at Austin, empirically tested whether greater levels of protectionism in a country (tariffs, quotas, etc.) would increase the probability of international conflict in that nation. He used a tool called dyads to analyze every country’s international relations from 1960 until 2000. A dyad is the interaction between one country and another country: German and French relations would be one dyad, German and Russian relations would be a second, French and Australian relations would be a third. He further broke this down into dyad-years; the relations between Germany and France in 1965 would be one dyad-year, the relations between France and Australia in 1973 would be a second, and so on. Using these dyad-years, McDonald analyzed the behavior of every country in the world for the past 40 years. His analysis showed a negative correlation between free trade and conflict: The more freely a country trades, the fewer wars it engages in. Countries that engage in free trade are less likely to invade and less likely to be invaded. The Causal Arrow Of course, this finding might be a matter of confusing correlation for causation. Maybe countries engaging in free trade fight less often for some other reason, like the fact that they tend also to be more democratic. Democratic countries make war less often than empires do. But McDonald controls for these variables. Controlling for a state’s political structure is important, because democracies and republics tend to fight less than authoritarian regimes. McDonald also controlled for a country’s economic growth, because countries in a recession are more likely to go to war than those in a boom, often in order to distract their people from their economic woes. McDonald even controlled for factors like geographic proximity: It’s easier for Germany and France to fight each other than it is for the United States and China, because troops in the former group only have to cross a shared border. The takeaway from McDonald’s analysis is that protectionism can actually lead to conflict. McDonald found that a country in the bottom 10 percent for protectionism (meaning it is less protectionist than 90 percent of other countries) is 70 percent less likely to engage in a new conflict (either as invader or as target) than one in the top 10 percent for protectionism. Protectionism and War Why does protectionism lead to conflict, and why does free trade help to prevent it? The answers, though well-known to classical liberals, are worth mentioning. First, trade creates international goodwill. If Chinese and American businessmen trade on a regular basis, both sides benefit. And mutual benefit disposes people to look for the good in each other. Exchange of goods also promotes an exchange of cultures. For decades, Americans saw China as a mysterious country with strange, even hostile values. But in the 21st century, trade between our nations has increased markedly, and both countries know each other a little better now. iPod-wielding Chinese teenagers are like American teenagers, for example. They’re not terribly mysterious. Likewise, the Chinese understand democracy and American consumerism more than they once did. The countries may not find overlap in all of each other’s values, but trade has helped us to at least understand each other. Trade helps to humanize the people that you trade with. And it’s tougher to want to go to war with your human trading partners than with a country you see only as lines on a map. Second, trade gives nations an economic incentive to avoid war. If Nation X sells its best steel to Nation Y, and its businessmen reap plenty of profits in exchange, then businessmen on both sides are going to oppose war. This was actually the case with Germany and France right before World War I. Germany sold steel to France, and German businessmen were firmly opposed to war. They only grudgingly came to support it when German ministers told them that the war would only last a few short months. German steel had a strong incentive to oppose war, and if the situation had progressed a little differently—or if the German government had been a little more realistic about the timeline of the war—that incentive might have kept Germany out of World War I. Third, protectionism promotes hostility. This is why free trade, not just aggregate trade (which could be accompanied by high tariffs and quotas), leads to peace. If the United States imposes a tariff on Japanese automobiles, that tariff hurts Japanese businesses. It creates hostility in Japan toward the United States. Japan might even retaliate with a tariff on U.S. steel, hurting U.S. steel makers and angering our government, which would retaliate with another tariff. Both countries now have an excuse to leverage nationalist feelings to gain support at home; that makes outright war with the other country an easier sell, should it come to that. In socioeconomic academic circles, this is called the Richardson process of reciprocal and increasing hostilities; the United States harms Japan, which retaliates, causing the United States to retaliate again. History shows that the Richardson process can easily be applied to protectionism. For instance, in the 1930s, industrialized nations raised tariffs and trade barriers; countries eschewed multilateralism and turned inward. These decisions led to rising hostilities, which helped set World War II in motion. These factors help explain why **free trade leads to peace, and protectionism leads to more conflict.** Free Trade and Peace One final note: McDonald’s analysis shows that taking a country from the top 10 percent for protectionism to the bottom 10 percent will reduce the probability of future conflict by 70 percent. He performed the same analysis for the democracy of a country and showed that taking a country from the top 10 percent (very democratic) to the bottom 10 percent (not democratic) would only reduce conflict by 30 percent. Democracy is a well-documented deterrent: The more democratic a country becomes, the less likely it is to resort to international conflict. But reducing protectionism, according to McDonald, is more than twice as effective at reducing conflict than becoming more democratic. Here in the United States, we talk a lot about spreading democracy. We invaded Iraq partly to “spread democracy.” A New York Times op-ed by Professor Dov Ronen of Harvard University claimed that “the United States has been waging an ideological campaign to spread democracy around the world” since 1989. One of the justifications for our international crusade is to make the world a safer place. Perhaps we should spend a little more time spreading free trade instead. That might really lead to a more peaceful world.

#### 5] The spread of capitalism causes world peace

Mousseau, 19—Professor in the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs at the University of Central Florida (Michael, “The End of War: How a Robust Marketplace and Liberal Hegemony Are Leading to Perpetual World Peace,” International Security, Volume 44, Issue 1, Summer 2019, p.160-196, dml)

Is war becoming obsolete? There is wide agreement among scholars that war has been in sharp decline since the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945, even as there is little agreement as to its cause.1 Realists reject the idea that this trend will continue, citing states' concerns with the “security dilemma”: that is, in anarchy states must assume that any state that can attack will; therefore, power equals threat, and changes in relative power result in conflict and war.2 Discussing the rise of China, Graham Allison calls this condition “Thucydides's Trap,” a reference to the ancient Greek's claim that Sparta's fear of Athens' growing power led to the Peloponnesian War.3

This article argues that there is no Thucydides Trap in international politics. Rather, the world is moving rapidly toward permanent peace, possibly in our lifetime. Drawing on economic norms theory,4 I show that what sometimes appears to be a Thucydides Trap may instead be a function of factors strictly internal to states and that these factors vary among them. In brief, leaders of states with advanced market-oriented economies have foremost interests in the principle of self-determination for all states, large and small, as the foundation for a robust global marketplace. War among these states, even making preparations for war, is not possible, because they are in a natural alliance to preserve and protect the global order. In contrast, leaders of states with weak internal markets have little interest in the global marketplace; they pursue wealth not through commerce, but through wars of expansion and demands for tribute. For these states, power equals threat, and therefore they tend to balance against the power of all states. Fearing stronger states, however, minor powers with weak internal markets tend to constrain their expansionist inclinations and, for security reasons, bandwagon with the relatively benign market-oriented powers.

I argue that this liberal global hierarchy is unwittingly but systematically buttressing states' embrace of market norms and values that, if left uninterrupted, is likely to culminate in permanent world peace, perhaps even something close to harmony. My argument challenges the realist assertion that great powers are engaged in a timeless competition over global leadership, because hegemony cannot exist among great powers with weak markets; these inherently expansionist states live in constant fear and therefore normally balance against the strongest state and its allies.5 Hegemony can exist only among market-oriented powers, because only they care about global order. Yet, there can be no competition for leadership among market powers, because they always agree with the goal of their strongest member (currently the United States) to preserve and protect the global order based on the principle of self-determination. If another commercial power, such as a rising China, were to overtake the United States, the world would take little notice, because the new leading power would largely agree with the global rules promoted and enforced by its predecessor. Vladimir Putin's Russia, on the other hand, seeks to create chaos around the world. Most other powers, having market-oriented economies, continue to abide by the hegemony of the United States despite its relative economic decline since the end of World War II.6

To support my theory that domestic factors determine states' alignment decisions, I analyze the voting preferences of members of the United Nations General Assembly from 1946 to 2010. I find that states with weak internal markets tend to disagree with the foreign policy preferences of the largest market power (i.e., the United States), but more so if they are major powers or have stronger rather than weaker military and economic capabilities. The power of states with robust internal markets, in contrast, appears to have no effect on their foreign policy preferences, as market-oriented states align with the market leader regardless of their power status or capabilities. I corroborate that this pattern may be a consequence of states' interest in the global market order by finding that states with higher levels of exports per capita are more likely than other states to have preferences aligned with those of the United States; those with lower levels of exports are more likely to have interests that do not align with the United States, but again more so if they are stronger rather than weaker.

Liberal scholars of international politics have long offered explanations for why the incidence of war may decline, generally beginning with the assumption that although the security dilemma exists, it can be overcome with the help of factors external to states.7 Neoliberal institutionalists treat states as like units and international organization as an external condition.8 Trade interdependence is dyadic and thus an external condition.9 Democracy is an internal factor, but theories of democratic peace have an external dimension: peace is the result of the expectations of states' behavior informed by the images that leaders create of each other's regime types.10 In contrast, I show that the security dilemma may not exist at all and how peace can emerge in anarchy with states pursuing their interests determined entirely by internal factors.11

#### 6] Spreading capitalism creates global prosperity and environmental sustainability. Abandoning it is disastrous.

Rhonheimer, 20—teaching professor at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Martin, “Capitalism is Good for the Poor – and for the Environment,” <https://austrian-institute.org/en/subjects-en/catholic-social-doctrine-2/capitalism-is-good-for-the-poor-and-for-the-environment/>, dml)

It is not social policy but capitalism that has created today’s prosperity.

What is important is that what made today’s mass prosperity possible – a phenomenon unprecedented in history – was not social policy or social legislation, organised trade union pressure, or corrective interventions in the capitalist economy, but rather market capitalism itself, due to its enormous potential for innovation and the ever-increasing productivity of human labour that resulted from it.

Increasing prosperity and quality of life are always the result of increasing labour productivity. Only increased productivity enabled higher social standards, better working conditions, the overcoming of child labour, a higher level of education, and the emergence of human capital. This process of increasing triumph over poverty and the constantly rising living standards of the general masses is taking place on a global scale – but only where the market economy and capitalist entrepreneurship are able to spread.

From industrial overexploitation of nature to ecological awareness

The first phase of industrialisation and capitalism was characterised by an enormous consumption of resources and frequent overexploitation of nature, which soon gave the impression that this process could not be sustainable. Since the end of the 19th century, disaster and doom scenarios have repeatedly been put forward, but in retrospect they have proved to be wrong: The combination of technological innovation, market competition, and entrepreneurial profit-seeking (with the compulsion to constantly minimise costs) have meant that these scenarios never occurred. The ever-increasing population has been increasingly better supplied thanks to innovative technologies, ever-increasing output with lower consumption of resources less harmful to the environment – e.g. less arable land in agriculture, or oil and electricity instead of coal for rapidly increasing mobility. More recent disaster scenarios, such as those spread by reputable scientists since the late 1960s and in the 1970s, have also proved to be inaccurate.

The reason things developed differently was the always underestimated innovative dynamism of the capitalist market economy, a growing ecological awareness and, as a result, legislative intervention that took advantage of the logic of market capitalism: As a result of the ecological movement that had come out of the United States since 1970, wise legislation began to use the price mechanism to apply market incentives to internalize negative externalities. Environmental pollution was given a price-tag.

This led to an enormous decrease in air pollution and other ecological consequences of growth, which is only possible in free, market-based societies, because the production process here is characterized by competition and constant pressure to reduce costs, i.e. to the most profitable use of resources. On the other hand, all forms of socialism, i.e. a state-controlled economy, have proved to be ecological disasters and have left behind destruction of gigantic proportions, without providing the population with anything that is near comparable in prosperity, often even by destroying existing prosperity, such as happened in Venezuela.

Capitalist profit motive combined with digitalization as a solution: Increasing decoupling of growth and resource consumption

Moreover, technological innovations combined with capitalist profit-seeking and market competition have led to a new and surprising phenomenon over the past decades, which is still hardly noticed in the public debate: the decoupling of growth and resource consumption (“dematerialization”). In a wide variety of industrial sectors, the developed countries, above all the U.S., are now achieving ever greater productive output with increasingly fewer resources. This has a lot to do with technology, especially the digitalization of the economy and of our entire lives.

As the well-known MIT professor Andrew McAfee shows in his book More from Less, published in October 2019, this process also follows the logic of capitalist profit maximization. To get it going, we do not need politics, even though wise, properly incentivizing legislation can be helpful and sometimes necessary. Above all, however, it is the combination of technological innovation, capitalist profit-seeking, and market-based entrepreneurial competition that will also solve the problem of man-made global warming.

In addition, property rights and their protection are decisive for the careful use of natural resources. And where this is not possible, legal support for collective self-governing structures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, are important—as is analysed by Nobel Economic Prize winner Elinor Ostrom. By contrast, the growing ideologically motivated anti-capitalist eco-activism, and the policies influenced by it, are leading in the wrong direction, distracting precisely from what would be best for the climate and the environment—and distracting us from what could help protect us against the inevitable consequences of global warming.

#### 7] Attempts to transition away from capitalism fail without meaningful blueprint and ensure horrific violence

Condit 15 [Celeste, Distinguished Research Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Georgia, “Multi-Layered Trajectories for Academic Contributions to Social Change,” Feb 4, 2015, Quarterly Journal of Speech, Volume 101, Issue 1, 2015]

The theories of social change that dominated American Communication Studies at the close of the twentieth century echoed those of the Western humanities. These theories spurred extensive thought about the performances of individual identity and the relationship of identity to mass media and culture, and they probably had some laudable influence on the broader culture. They are, however, inadequate to the evolving contexts I have described. One can sum up the most widely circulating theories of social change among “critical social theorists” of the twentieth century in the following, admittedly simplified, statement: There is an (evil) Totality (fill in the blank with one or more: patriarchy, whites, the West, the U.S., neo-liberalism, global capitalism) that must be overturned by a Radical Revolution. We don't know the shape of what will come after the Revolution, but The Evil is a construction of the Totality, so anything that comes after will be better. All you need is … (fill in the blank: Love, Courage, Violence, etc.). For an example, read Slavoj Žižek's attack on the evil Totality (“capitalism,”5 pp. 41/49), which requires the “excess” of violence named as “courage”6 (pp. 75, 78, 79), via “a leap”7 (p. 81), to eliminate “democracy” for a yet-to-be-imagined “new collectivity” (p. 85).8 The resilience of this social theory identifies it as a rhetorical attractor; a predispositional symbolic set that readily transmits emotive potency. To appropriate Kenneth Burke's terms, the bio-symbolics of human political relationships readily create a “grammar” and “rhetoric” in the form of a unified enemy that can be imagined as defeated in a singular battle, after which, things in “our” tribe may be harmonious. To identify this fantasy theme in this way is to suggest that it may not merely be the product of “Western” or “capitalist” imaginations, but rather that it arises from an intersection of the structural characteristics of language systems and the nature of human biologies (which readily adopt both tribal social cooperation and inter-tribal competition). Because neither biology nor symbolics are deterministic systems, this fantasy theme is avoidable, even if it is powerfully attractive. Because both biology and symbolics are material, however, specific kinds of work are necessary in order to avoid the lure of that predisposition. This point is crucial, because it invalidates the twentieth century (idealist) approaches to social change, which envisioned a single (violent) leap away from the social as sufficient to create and maintain better worlds. Thus, when Žižek and others urge us to “Act” with violence to destroy the current Reality, without a vision of an alternative, on the grounds that the links between actions and consequences are never certain, we can call his appeal both a failure of imagination and a failure of reality. As for reality, we have dozens of revolutions as models, and the historical record indicates quite clearly that they generally lead not to harmonious cooperation (what I call “AnarchoNiceness” to gently mock the romanticism of Hardt and Negri) but instead to the production of totalitarian states and/or violent factional strife. A materialist constructivist epistemology accounts for this by predicting that it is not possible for symbol-using animals to exist in a symbolic void. All symbolic movement has a trajectory, and if you have not imagined a potentially realizable alternative for that trajectory to take, then what people will leap into is biological predispositions—the first iteration of which is the rule of the strongest primate. Indeed, this is what experience with revolutions has shown to be the most probable outcome of a revolution that is merely against an Evil. The failure of imagination in such rhetorics thereby reveals itself to be critical, so it is worth pondering sources of that failure. The rhetoric of “the kill” in social theory in the past half century has repeatedly reduced to the leap into a void because the symbolized alternative that the context of the twentieth century otherwise predispositionally offers is to the binary opposite of capitalism, i.e., communism. That rhetorical option, however, has been foreclosed by the historical discrediting of the readily imagined forms of communism (e.g., Žižek9). The hard work to invent better alternatives is not as dramatically enticing as the story of the kill: such labor is piecemeal, intellectually difficult, requires multi-disciplinary understandings, and perhaps requires more creativity than the typical academic theorist can muster. In the absence of a viable alternative, the appeals to Radical Revolution seem to have been sustained by the emotional zing of the kill, in many cases amped up by the appeal of autonomy and manliness (Žižek uses the former term and deploys the ethos of the latter). But if one does not provide a viable vision that offers a reasonable chance of leaving most people better off than they are now, then Fox News has a better offering (you'll be free and you'll get rich!). A revolution posited as a void cannot succeed as a horizon of history, other than as constant local scale violent actions, perhaps connected by shifting networks we call “terrorists.” This analysis of the geo-political situation, of the onto-epistemological character of language, and of the limitations of the dominant horizon of social change indicates that the focal project for progressive Left Academics should now include the hard labor to produce alternative visions that appear materially feasible.