# 1NC

## 1

### 1NC – Topicality

#### Topicality:

Our interpretation is that affirmative teams must defend the desirability of a topical plan:

#### a---‘Resolved’ denotes a formal resolution.

**AWS ’13** [Army Writing Style; August 24th; Online resource dedicated to all major writing requirements in the Army; Army Writing Style, "Punctuation — The Colon and Semicolon," <https://armywritingstyle.com/punctuation-the-colon-and-semicolon/>]

The colon introduces the following:

a.  A list, but only after "as follows," "the following," or a noun for which the list is an appositive: Each scout will carry the following: (colon) meals for three days, a survival knife, and his sleeping bag. The company had four new officers: (colon) Bill Smith, Frank Tucker, Peter Fillmore, and Oliver Lewis.

b.  A long quotation (one or more paragraphs): In The Killer Angels Michael Shaara wrote: (colon) You may find it a different story from the one you learned in school. There have been many versions of that battle [Gettysburg] and that war [the Civil War]. (The quote continues for two more paragraphs.)

c.  A formal quotation or question: The President declared: (colon) "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." The question is: (colon) what can we do about it?

d.  A second independent clause which explains the first: Potter's motive is clear: (colon) he wants the assignment.

e.  After the introduction of a business letter: Dear Sirs: (colon) Dear Madam: (colon) f.  The details following an announcement For sale: (colon) large lakeside cabin with dock

g.  A formal resolution, after the word "resolved:". Resolved: (colon) That this council petition the mayor.

#### b---‘USfg’ is the 3 branches.

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

#### c---‘Increase’ means to make greater.

Kristl ’4 [Kenneth T, James R May, Keri N Powell, Howard I Fox, John D Walke, David G McIntosh, Ann B Weeks, Jonathan F Lewis; October 26; Partner at Winston & Strawn LLP, Former Law Clerk to District Court Judge William C. Lee, J.D. from Chicago-Kent College of Law; Westlaw, Appellate Brief in “the State of New York v. United States Environmental Protection Agency,” WL 5846438]

The sole textual basis EPA asserts for its extraordinary position is an argument based on the word “increases” in §111(a)(4). Specifically, EPA claims that, even when a change causes emissions to rise to the highest level reached in the past ten years, it does not “increase[]” them. EPA Br. 69-71, 86. According to EPA's untenable argument, Congress did not specify how an increase is to be measured, and thus left EPA free to interpret “increases” as it wishes. Id.

The term “increases” is not an empty vessel that EPA can fill as it chooses. Instead, absent further congressional guidance, the term must be given its ordinary meaning. Engine Mfrs. Assn. v. South Coast Air Quality Management District, 124 S. Ct. 1756, 1761 (2004); Bluewater Network v. EPA, 370 F.3d 1, 13 (D.C. Cir. 2004). The ordinary meaning of “increase” is “to make greater, as in number, size, strength, or quality.” Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 2d Ed. (1999), at 969. Thus, a change that makes emissions greater “increases” them. EPA's interpretation contravenes the Act's plain meaning under Chevron Step One, or in the alternative “diverges from any realistic meaning” under Chevron Step Two. See, e.g., NRDC v. Daley, 209 F.3d 747, 753 (D.C. Cir. 2000).2

#### d---‘Expanding’ means to increase and ‘the scope’ defines permissible behavior.

Collins ’21 [Collins English Dictionary; copyright updated 2021; Collins Cobuild, “Expand the Scope,” https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/expand-the-scope]

expand the scope

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I wanted to work internationally and expand the scope of my possibilities.

Times, Sunday Times

Labour has called for the government to expand the scope of the test to include consideration of the impact of any merger on research and development and science.

Times, Sunday Times

Most opponents are small-government conservatives who are outraged at any attempt to expand the scope of government, particularly when it involves their personal healthcare decisions.

Times, Sunday Times

The move was cited by the developer to be to expand the scope of indie videogames, and not as a market strategy.

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Such results expand the scope of asymmetric hydroboration to more sterically demanding alkenes.

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Definition of 'expand'

expand

(ɪkspænd)

Explore 'expand' in the dictionary

VERB

If something expands or is expanded, it becomes larger. [...]

See full entry

COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary. Copyright © HarperCollins Publishers

Definition of 'scope'

scope

(skoʊp)

Explore 'scope' in the dictionary

UNCOUNTABLE NOUN [NOUN to-infinitive]

If there is scope for a particular kind of behaviour or activity, people have the opportunity to behave in this way or do that activity. [...]

#### e---‘Its’ means belonging to the fed.

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.

#### f---‘Core antitrust laws’ are legal statutes.

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.

Key to limits and ground – they justify a proliferation of small, uncontroversial AFF’s that avoid core generics and water down the quality of debating.

#### Two impacts:

#### 1 – Competitive Equity – an unlimited, unpredictable topic disparately raises the research burden for the negative – treat this as a sufficient win condition because fairness is the logical structure that undergirds all impacts AND controls any benefit to debate.

#### 2 – Iteration – targeted research enables third and fourth-line testing necessary to motivate advocacy and argumentative reflection.

Iverson ’9 [Joel; 2009; Associate Professor of Communication at the University of Montana, Ph.D in Communication from Arizona State University Relations at the University of Sydney; Debate Central, “Can Cutting Cards Carve into Our Personal Lives: An Analysis of Debate Research on Personal Advocacy,” https://debate.uvm.edu/dybvigiverson1000.html]

Mitchell (1998) provides a thorough examination of the pedagogical implication for academic debate. Although Mitchell acknowledges that debate provides preparation for participation in democracy, limiting debate to a laboratory where students practice their skill for future participation is criticized. Mitchell contends:

For students and teachers of argumentation, the heightened salience of this question should signal the danger that critical thinking and oral advocacy skills alone may not be sufficient for citizens to assert their voices in public deliberation. (p. 45)

Mitchell contends that the laboratory style setting creates barriers to other spheres, creates a "sense of detachment" and causes debaters to see research from the role of spectators. Mitchell further calls for "argumentative agency [which] involves the capacity to contextualize and employ the skills and strategies of argumentative discourse in fields of social action, especially wider spheres of public deliberation" (p. 45). Although we agree with Mitchell that debate can be an even greater instrument of empowerment for students, we are more interested in examining the impact of the intermediary step of research. In each of Mitchell's examples of debaters finding creative avenues for agency, there had to be a motivation to act. It is our contention that the research conducted for competition is a major catalyst to propel their action, change their opinions, and to provide a greater depth of understanding of the issues involved.

The level of research involved in debate creates an in-depth understanding of issues. The level of research conducted during a year of debate is quite extensive. Goodman (1993) references a Chronicle of Higher Education article that estimated "the level and extent of research required of the average college debater for each topic is equivalent to the amount of research required for a Master's Thesis (cited in Mitchell, 1998, p. 55). With this extensive quantity of research, debaters attain a high level of investigation and (presumably) understanding of a topic. As a result of this level of understanding, debaters become knowledgeable citizens who are further empowered to make informed opinions and energized to take action. Research helps to educate students (and coaches) about the state of the world.

Without the guidance of a debate topic, how many students would do in-depth research on female genital mutilation in Africa, or United Nations sanctions on Iraq? The competitive nature of policy debate provides an impetus for students to research the topics that they are going to debate. This in turn fuels students’ awareness of issues that go beyond their front doors. Advocacy flows from this increased awareness. Reading books and articles about the suffering of people thousands of miles away or right in our own communities drives people to become involved in the community at large.

Research has also focused on how debate prepares us for life in the public sphere. Issues that we discuss in debate have found their way onto the national policy stage, and training in intercollegiate debate makes us good public advocates. The public sphere is the arena in which we all must participate to be active citizens. Even after we leave debate, the skills that we have gained should help us to be better advocates and citizens. Research has looked at how debate impacts education (Matlon and Keele 1984), legal training (Parkinson, Gisler and Pelias 1983, Nobles 19850 and behavioral traits (McGlone 1974, Colbert 1994). These works illustrate the impact that public debate has on students as they prepare to enter the public sphere.

The debaters who take active roles such as protesting sanctions were probably not actively engaged in the issue until their research drew them into the topic. Furthermore, the process of intense research for debate may actually change the positions debaters hold. Since debaters typically enter into a topic with only cursory (if any) knowledge of the issue, the research process provides exposure to issues that were previously unknown. Exposure to the literature on a topic can create, reinforce or alter an individual's opinions. Before learning of the School for the America's, having an opinion of the place is impossible. After hearing about the systematic training of torturers and oppressors in a debate round and reading the research, an opinion of the "school" was developed. In this manner, exposure to debate research as the person finding the evidence, hearing it as the opponent in a debate round (or as judge) acts as an initial spark of awareness on an issue. This process of discovery seems to have a similar impact to watching an investigative news report.

Mitchell claimed that debate could be more than it was traditionally seen as, that it could be a catalyst to empower people to act in the social arena. We surmise that there is a step in between the debate and the action. The intermediary step where people are inspired to agency is based on the research that they do. If students are compelled to act, research is a main factor in compelling them to do so. Even if students are not compelled to take direct action, research still changes opinions and attitudes.

Research often compels students to take action in the social arena. Debate topics guide students in a direction that allows them to explore what is going on in the world. Last year the college policy debate topic was,

Resolved: That the United States Federal Government should adopt a policy of constructive engagement, including the immediate removal of all or nearly all economic sanctions, with the government(s) of one or more of the following nation-states: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Syria, North Korea.

This topic spurred quite a bit of activism on the college debate circuit. Many students become actively involved in protesting for the removal of sanctions from at least one of the topic countries. The college listserve was used to rally people in support ofvarious movements to remove sanctions on both Iraq and Cuba. These messages were posted after the research on the topic began. While this topic did not lend itself to activism beyond rallying the government, other topics have allowed students to take their beliefs outside of the laboratory and into action.

In addition to creating awareness, the research process can also reinforce or alter opinions. By discovering new information in the research process, people can question their current assumptions and perhaps formulate a more informed opinion. One example comes from a summer debate class for children of Migrant workers in North Dakota (Iverson, 1999). The Junior High aged students chose to debate the adoption of Spanish as an official language in the U.S. Many students expressed their concern that they could not argue effectively against the proposed change because it was a "truism." They were wholly in favor of Spanish as an official language. After researching the topic throughout their six week course, many realized much more was involved in adopting an official language and that they did not "speak 'pure' Spanish or English, but speak a unique dialect and hybrid" (Iverson, p. 3). At the end of the class many students became opposed to adopting Spanish as an official language, but found other ways Spanish should be integrated into American culture. Without research, these students would have maintained their opinions and not enhanced their knowledge of the issue. The students who maintained support of Spanish as an official language were better informed and thus also more capable of articulating support for their beliefs.

The examples of debate and research impacting the opinions and actions of debaters indicate the strong potential for a direct relationship between debate research and personal advocacy. However, the debate community has not created a new sea of activists immersing this planet in waves of protest and political action. The level of influence debater search has on people needs further exploration. Also, the process of research needs to be more fully explored in order to understand if and why researching for the competitive activity of debate generates more interest than research for other purposes such as classroom projects.

Since parliamentary debate does not involve research into a single topic, it can provide an important reference point for examining the impact of research in other forms of debate. Based upon limited conversations with competitors and coaches as well as some direct coaching and judging experience in parliamentary debate, parliamentary forms of debate has not seen an increase in activism on the part of debaters in the United States. Although some coaches require research in order to find examples and to stay updated on current events, the basic principle of this research is to have a commonsense level of understanding(Venette, 1998). As the NPDA website explains, "the reader is encouraged to be well-read in current events, as well as history, philosophy, etc. Remember: the realm of knowledge is that of a 'well-read college student'" (NPDA Homepage,<http://www.bethel.edu/Majors/Communication/npda/faq2.html>). The focus of research is breadth, not depth. In fact, in-depth research into one topic for parliamentary debate would seem to be counterproductive. Every round has a different resolution and for APDA, at least, those resolutions are generally written so they are open to a wide array of case examples, So, developing too narrow of a focus could be competitively fatal. However, research is apparently increasing for parliamentary teams as reports of "stock cases" used by teams for numerous rounds have recently appeared. One coach did state that a perceived "stock case" by one team pushed his debaters to research the topic of AIDS in Africa in order to be equally knowledgeable in that case. Interestingly, the coach also stated that some of their research in preparation for parliamentary debate was affecting the opinions and attitudes of the debaters on the team.

Not all debate research appears to generate personal advocacy and challenge peoples' assumptions. Debaters must switch sides, so they must inevitably debate against various cases. While this may seem to be inconsistent with advocacy, supporting and researching both sides of an argument actually created stronger advocates. Not only did debaters learn both sides of an argument, so that they could defend their positions against attack, they also learned the nuances of each position. Learning and the intricate nature of various policy proposals helps debaters to strengthen their own stance on issues

## 2

### 1NC – Kritik

#### The affirmative allies with anti-humanism by denying the universal attributes of humanity and the potential for the future to change. That reflects a denial of the traditions of marginalized revolutionaries which is all-too-easily coopted by reactionary forces.

Brennan, 17—Professor of comparative literature, cultural studies, and English at the University of Minnesota (Timothy, “Introduction,” *For Humanism: Explorations in Theory and Politics*, Introduction, pg 1-7, dml)

To say that humans create is, of course, to say they can. And that means that they are free, have agency and can do what they have not done in the past regardless of, or rather because of, their nature. Logically, then, transformation is possible and the future open. Humanists do not believe humans are the only species that matters, only that it is impossible for any species to think outside the limits of its own being – a view that does not preclude ethical behaviour towards other species or respect for the natural environment. As Ludwig Feuerbach puts it in The Essence of Christianity (1841), ‘If God were an object to the bird, he would be an object to it only as a winged being – the bird knows nothing higher, nothing more blissful than the state of being winged.’1 Following from this, the humanist contends that every human, qua human, shares universal attributes – a vital tenet so that no one can be relegated to a subspecies or denied membership in humanity on the grounds of his or her particularities.

The body of ideas called humanism was never just a set of beliefs but a collection of contrarian intellectual practices. We are talking not only of positions but methods and habits of thinking. This aspect has been largely lost in the post-war flight from humanism so vigorously adduced in the pages of the present volume. It grew out of a body of study we today call the humanities, and the current attacks on the humanities can, to that degree, be seen as evidence of our culture’s mainstream antihumanism.

We should remember that humanism’s early exponents – in China and the Arabic world, not only Europe – all expressed their view in the form of a project of training in the liberal arts (expressed in the West as humanitas or paideia), and so we are talking about a revolution in learning based on the study of books, especially the forgotten wisdom of the past, just as the present volume (we might notice) – For Humanism – is involved in a similar recovery. Despite my just quoting Latin and Greek, the contributions to humanism are universal – a view that is frequently denied today. They can be found in the agnosticism, scepticism towards the supernatural, and emphasis on human choice and agency found within strains of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and Zoroastrianism.

As I have just laid them out, these foundations are obscured today for a number of reasons, and they contribute greatly to the confusion. For one thing, our historical moment is a uniquely disorienting one. Biotechnology obviates the long-standing debate over human nature by threatening to invent a new one according to a managerial plan. Venture capitalists declare openly that if yesterday’s economic game-changer was 0’s and 1’s, today’s are A’s, G’s, T’s and C’s – the bases of DNA. The classic question of what the human being is, then, has been gamed by forces that seek to control it to a degree unknown in any other historical period – picking up where the twentieth century’s innovations in this regard left off: the manipulation of libidinal drives by the commercial media and the merciless incantation of official ‘news’ in the major Western countries which has, many argue, short-circuited mental capacities. Between the managed emotions of overprescribed antidepressants and social media fixations (Twitter, Facebook) that blur the distinction between free time and advertising, how could it be otherwise than that coercion would be widely mistaken for freedom, and submission for resistance? What is Right and what is Left is no longer clear – and that more than any other point defines the current humanism debate.

For Humanism is for that reason very well timed, and also for that reason apparently untimely – as though holding on to ideas with a warm heart and unstifled hopes to prolong a dead (if sorely missed) historical moment of socialist internationalism. Again, our moment is unique. For it is only in the last four decades that attacks on humanism – until then, the standard-issue views of apologists of religious absolutism, Church censors and the reactionary wings of modernism – have been thought politically progressive. In fact, the lineages of antihumanist thought have always been aligned with aristocratic or theocratic privileges; or they assumed the form of apocalyptic amoralism for which the (equally aristocratic) Marquis de Sade is usually the emblem. It was de Sade, in fact, who by way of Georges Bataille helped bring antihumanism into post-war theory and made it a model of failed gods, sexual desire and a mockery of progress.2 It made people associate radical opposition with transgression and the non-normative rather than with social transformation – a realm explored in the illuminatingly revisionist chapter on the politics of gender and sexual desire by David Alderson in the present volume.

What For Humanism returns to, by contrast – these rich if now neglected mid-twentieth-century narratives of dissident humanism in figures like Karel Kosík, Jean-Paul Sartre, Raya Dunayevaska and the Yugoslavian Praxis group – is part of a wider historical arc than the recent form of the debate would have us think. This volume’s genealogies remind us just how much theory in recent decades represents an idiosyncratic detour. It is true, as theory had charged, that humanism may have been enlisted as a slogan of capital in its nineteenth-century colonial form – the technocratic fetish of managerial progress whose ‘dialectic’ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer sceptically diagnosed mid-century – but this was overall a co-optation. More typically it was the groundwork of antinomians, visionaries and iconoclasts.3 In this volume, Kevin Anderson describes how on the very heels of proclaiming existentialism a humanism, Jean-Paul Sartre distinguished himself from the ‘liberal and republican humanism’ that was theory’s real and only target. The ledgers of humanism abound, Anderson implies, with just the opposite: struggles against religious dogma, ideas imported from other cultures in order to curb ethnocentrism, and intellectual life brought face to face with politics so that reality might be thought something less to observe than make.

The case against humanism in the post-war period would have us think of humanism in terms of an exclusivist rhetoric of innate qualities and character found in figures like David Hume, Jeremy Bentham and Napoleon III. Historically, though, humanism belongs much more to the maverick secularity of Thales and Anaxagoras, the philological study of Roman law in Varro, the preservation of Oriental learning in the Islamic Golden age (Averroes, Avicenna), the great rediscovery of Egypt in Neoplatonism, the creation by scholasticism of the first European universities, the madrasas of the Maghreb and the Levant, and the triumph of reading in the Italian renaissance of Poggio Bracciolini and Erasmus, the great philological sociologies of ibn Khaldun and later, in an identical spirit, Giambattista Vico. The humanism of the French Revolution and, in its wake, the young-Hegelians, especially Ludwig Feuerbach and Marx, is usually staged as a radical fissure in history or a lamentable march down a dead end historical lane. And yet, left Hegelianism (including Marx) is only the continuation of a spirit of learning, of vernacular inclusiveness and political renovation that had preceded them in Eastern and Western antiquity.

It may be even more of a challenge to the idiosyncratic reigning story of recent decades to recall that the intellectual leaders of anticolonialism after World War II deployed humanist motifs consistently and very consciously. Edward Said’s well-known rallying to the cause of humanism (against the stream of theory) grew out of a broader understanding of the scholarship of George Makdisi on the Arabic contributions to humanism and to the revolutionary solidarities of his close friends Eqbal Ahmad and Mahmoud Darwish. He often illustrates those commitments, in fact, by quoting Aimé Césaire’s Notebook on a Return to my Native Land, where the poet reclaims the essential humanity of actors, black and white, on either side of the colonial divide at the ‘rendezvous of victory’, and bitterly satirises the antihumanist doctrines guiding a colonial enterprise propped up, as he puts it in Discourse on Colonialism, by ‘chattering intellectuals born stinking out of the thigh of Nietzsche’.4

John Dewey’s pragmatism took shape as an effort to reverse the nativism and racial panic of early twentieth-century anti-immigration trends, just as the Brahmo Samaj of Tagore and others in West Bengal set out to secularise the Hindu Right at the dawn of the Indian independence movements. M. N. Roy, the co-founder of the Mexican Communist Party, and a Bengali revolutionary who collaborated with Lenin on the writing of his ‘Theses on the National Question’, spent the final decades of his life building a movement tied to an Institute at Dehradun on behalf of what he called ‘a cultural-educational organization founded with the object of re-educating the educators and young intellectuals of India in spirit and with the ideas of Radical (or Integral) Humanism’.5 By the 1950s, humanism was for Roy the logical, secular, extra-party version of interwar Marxism.

So the very point of departure of antihumanism is politically vexed. To join its forces is to reject much more than hypocritical Eurocentric philosophies of ‘progress’ or imperious universals moulded in the image of Western males. It is rather to assault a centuries-long heritage of resistance and renovation. The symbolism, then, of the appearance of the locus classicus of post-war antihumanist thought, Heidegger’s ‘Letter on Humanism’ (1947), is notable, since it coincided almost exactly with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) – the most far-reaching practical statement of humanist convictions published in the century, and not coincidentally composed by UN delegates from Egypt, Chile, India and other former colonies. The two texts stand as mid-century antipodes – the former arguing that ‘Man [sic]’ cannot attain his proper ‘dignity’ under humanism since the latter relies on a system of logic and values that prove powerless to capture the plenitude of being; the latter, codifying the universal protections necessary to safeguard human subjects whose particularities vis-à-vis European and American norms had deprived them of the right to well-being, freedom and autonomy. The nature of antihumanism’s complaint, though, is not exhausted by these examples, and becomes more evident in the observation that humanism defined itself as an embrace of learning, literature and the book traditionally associated with philology.6 Since the ‘theory’ invoked in the subtitle of this volume grew out of an extreme position on language as grammatically fixed – to written as opposed to spoken language – we can begin to appreciate the motives of this peculiar philosophical demarche. Heidegger’s representative move in ‘Letter on Humanism’, in another flipping of the script, only appears to protest this tyranny when he appeals to ‘the liberation of language from grammar into a more original essential framework ... reserved for thought and poetic creation’. The freedom he has in mind is not the inventiveness of a vernacular speech making new rules but a freedom from ‘the dictatorship of the public realm’, returning language to ‘the house of being’ – that is, to see the communicative and expressive means on which all debate, discussion and sociality depends as being not about meaning or intention but a kind of medium within which the artist-thinker dwells.7

Heidegger’s famous declaration that language speaks Man rather than the other way around was one of the many ideas interwar phenomenology derived from Nietzsche, although, as Barbara Epstein crucially observes in this volume, figures like Maurice Merleau-Ponty (an important early influence on Said) and Sartre reappropriated aspects of phenomenology for humanist thought. And yet, in the end all modern antihumanism is Nietzschean, expanding on or adapting his philosophy’s central principles that free choice is an illusion; that knowledge, even if it were possible, has no ‘use’; that ethics constrain Man’s life-enhancing instincts; and that ‘truth’ is rhetorical, language a means of artful deception. Lying, states Nietzsche unequivocally, gives humans their evolutionary advantage over other animals. A professional philologist, Nietzsche’s revolt was precisely aimed at his own earlier training in the humanist tradition of letters with which he had grown disaffected. Not learning but art, creative illusion, are the dignity of Man for him; not making life anew but coming to admit what we are: unequal, visceral.

It is not going too far to say that understanding the contemporary recoil from humanism is impossible without becoming familiar with Nietzsche’s thought. Antihumanism derives from him more than from any other source – idea for idea, word for word. It is Bataille who in the late 1940s enshrines Nietzsche, announcing that ‘Nietzsche’s position is the only one apart from communism’,8 and whose fealty goes so far that he considers himself ‘the same as he’. Foucault’s and Deleuze’s later efforts to claim Nietzsche for the radical Left are taken very directly, although without acknowledgement, from Bataille’s earlier experiments in appropriating the language of the Hegelian Left for the purpose of destroying it from within. Bataille redeploys Hegelian terms like ‘totality’, ‘sovereignty’ and ‘negation’ on behalf of a human subject forced to reckon with its instinctive cruelty, its amoralism and its illusory subjectivity. Foucault’s ‘death of the subject’ and Deleuze’s ‘pure immanence’ are both echoes of Bataille’s already perfected gestures.

Antihumanism, nevertheless, passed through various phases.9 Anthropological antihumanism, to take a fascinating and little-known example, was a dominant aspect of culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, harmonising with aspects of Nietzsche’s critique. Loudly charging academic humanism with enshrining the ‘positivist, ratiocinating West’ and excluding Africans and Asians from the human as such, an insurgent anthropology arose with a counter-method that was both intellectually appealing and commercially viable. It appeared radical to many at first, producing a large number of popular museum exhibitions and pamphlets: ‘Rather than excluding the colonised other, anthropology would focus explicitly on societies that, all agreed, were radically separate from narratives of Western civilisation. Instead of studying European “cultural peoples” (Kulturvölker), societies defined by their history and civilisation, anthropologists studied the colonised “natural peoples” (Naturvölker).’10

As a populist discourse with the aim of displacing academic mandarins, anthropology promised Germans that they could reinvent themselves along the lines of the country’s new imperial ambitions. The conquest of foreign territories provided antihumanism with its ‘ethnographic performers, artifacts, body parts, and field sites that provided the empirical data’ and so linked the imperial, the natural, and the German in a style of thought that led directly to theories of ‘racial hygiene’.11 One particularly well-known anthropologist, Leo Frobenius, argued that ‘Germans like Africans were people of emotion, intuitive reason, art, poetry, image, and myth’, thereby establishing an antihumanist affinity with the peripheral subaltern that had the great merit of making Germanness unique within the family of Europe.12 A neo-Orientalist theory of absolute cultural and mental otherness, then, could portray itself as an insurrectionary ideology – a minority tendency reclaiming ‘difference’ for use against the establishment.

#### Their understanding of a Settler-Native antagonism [defined by innate relationships to land] creates ontological rifts among humanity that reifies the colonial project.

Sharma, 15—Director, International Cultural Studies Program, University of Hawai’i Manoa (Nandita, “Strategic Anti-Essentialism: Decolonizing Decolonization,” *Sylvia Wynter: Being Human as Praxis*, Chapter 7, pg 170-180, dml) [“nos”=Latin for “we”/“us”]

Emerging in the post–World War II era, indigeneity is a relatively recent mode of representation, one that encompasses very diverse people across the Americas, indeed across the world, often under a single, shared subjective understanding of being the “first” to live in any particular place.22 Being indigenous is a form of co- identification among people who previously did not see any connection with one another. It is also a way of laying claim to particular lands (or, more accurately, territories) on the basis of having (or having once had) specialized knowledge of that place. Yet, this mode of representation, however new or potentially expansive, remains particularistic. Indigeneity is a form of subjectivity that emerged because of the devastation wrought in the aftermath of 1492. Moreover, it is a form of subjectivity that interpellates people into efforts to gain national sovereignty within the global system of national states. Indigenous, then, as a mode of representation includes the often unacknowledged elision between native as a colonial state category of subjugation and indigenous as a category of resistance.

Indigenous conceptualized as such retains two interrelated problems that ensure that the kinds of unequal relationships organized in the aftermath of 1492 are reproduced. First, by denying the social constitution of the category of indigenous, it disavows people’s now-long history of connectivity across (and sometimes against) this category. Because this connectivity challenges the particularistic nature of indigeneity, recognition of interrelationality is itself represented as a threat. Second, by continuing to limit the criteria of membership of each nos, each is unable to accept as co-specifics those who are rendered as always-already oppositional others. Indeed, in making any particularistic nos, the significance of omitting certain others cannot be underestimated.

The category of indigenous, thus, does a sort of political work. It produces a particular nos (and thus a particular Other-to-indigenous nos).23 For some (though certainly not all) of those currently constituted as indigenous, it seems that one of the consequences of the enormously uneven Columbian exchange is the denunciation of the process of exchange itself. Today, the movement of life, plants, humans, and other animals is often cited as the cause for the devastation wrought on their native equivalent.24 Rather than focus on the hierarchical and exploitative relations of the Columbian exchange, some assume that the cause of the problem was / is mobility itself. Within such a worldview, that which moves is consequently denounced as inherently polluting, and, in an idiom that is gaining in popularity, movement and migration are posited as inherently colonizing.

An understanding of mobility as always colonizing is evident in the expansion of the term “settler colonist” to include all those deemed nonnative in any given space. Recently, within both indigenous studies and social movements for indigenous rights, the historical distinctions between the voyages of Columbus (and other colonizers) and those of slaves who survived the Middle Passage, indentured workers recruited in the wake of slavery’s abolition, and present- day migrants captured in a variety of state categories ranging from illegal to immigrant, have been collapsed. All, it is claimed, are agents of colonialism. It seems, then, that as there has been an expansion in the subjective understanding of people as indigenous, there has been a subsequent expansion in their other. Put differently, within some indigenous systems of belonging, all past and present people constituted as migrants are situated as colonizers.

In our present “great age” of migration, how did “colonizer” become a meaningful way to describe people who move across space?25 Indeed, how did “colonizer” come to be an increasingly dominant mode of representing indigenous people’s others, others who were once understood as cocolonized people or, at least, not as an oppositional other? Is there a relationship between these particularistic modes of representation and the false separation and hierarchical ranking of different but related experiences of colonization, such as the processes of expropriation and people’s displacement across space?

The answers to these questions lie within the logics of autochthonous systems of representation and the ways in which claims to indigeneity bring to life discourses of alienness or foreignness. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff argue, by “elevating to a first-principle the ineffable interests and connections, at once material and moral, that flow from ‘native’ rootedness, and special rights, in a place of birth,” autochthonous discourses place those constituted as natives at the top of a hierarchy of the exploited, oppressed, and colonized and insist on the centrality of the claims of natives for the realization of either decolonization or justice.26 Within the negative duality of natives and nonnatives that such discourses put into play, origins (and, in some contexts, claims of original, versus later, human discovery or inhabitation) become the key determinant of who belongs in any given space today—and who does not.

The quintessential alien or foreigner within autochthonous discourses is the figure of the migrant. This is because the hegemonic understanding of what it means to be a migrant in today’s world is one where migration is seen as movement away from one’s native land. Thus, migrants come to stand as the ultimate nonnative. Such a move works to shift the focus from a dialectics of colonialism—where the key historical dynamic is one of expropriation and exploitation, and the key relationship is one between the colonizers and the colonized—to one where the dichotomy between native and nonnative becomes central to both analysis and politics. Patrick Wolfe, a historian of Australia, captures this perspective well in his claim that “the fundamental social divide is not the color line. It is not ethnicity, minority status, or even class. The primary line is the one distinguishing Natives from settlers—that is, from everyone else. Only the Native is not a settler. Only the Native is truly local. Only the Native will free the Native. One is either native or not.”27

From such an autochthonous perspective, being native is both spatially and temporally dependent. Temporally, migrants may be identified as natives at some point in time and in some given space, but once having moved away from the spaces where such representations may be claimed, they become nonnatives. Spatially, migrants remain native but only to the places they no longer live in. Thus, some argue that migrants can continue to claim native rights to places they have moved from if they are able to show genealogical descendance from those with native status in that space.28 Candace Fujikane, in dismissing Asian claims to belong in the United States, puts it this way: “Indigenous people are differentiated from settlers by their genealogical, familial relationship with specific land bases that are ancestors to them. One is either indigenous to a particular land base or one is not. Asian Americans are undeniably settlers in the United States because we cannot claim any genealogy to the land we occupy, no matter how many lifetimes Asian settlers work on the land, or how many Asian immigrants have been killed through racist persecution and hate crimes, or how brutal the political or colonial regimes that occasioned Asians’ exodus from their homelands.”29

In this logic, indigeneity is racialized/ethnicized, and in the process, land—or more accurately, territory—is as well. Natives, it is assumed, belong in “their” native land and only there. Further, who can be recognized as native is dependent upon ancestry, thereby adding blood to the discourse of soil. Descent becomes of further importance in this distinction, for many indigenous people are, of course, also Asian (and European and African and so on) as well as vice versa. It is one’s ability to claim some indigenous ancestor that can allow one to be seen as indigenous today. While such claims can be social and not biological, many indigenous groups, following from certain governments’ own categorical recognition of indigeneity, rely on some form of blood quantum rule that requires a minimal indigenous lineage. Not surprisingly, such criteria for belonging (and for the rights and entitlements of membership) have not always worked for those subordinated through other axes of oppression and exploitation. Thus, many women have found that their claims to native status are often the first to be discounted.30

In this, there is an ironic historical continuity of autochthonous ideas and practices of belonging and the underlying logics of the colonial (and, in some places, postcolonial) state. Indeed, the meaning of native was one that was used to distinguish the colonized from the colonizer so that the natives could be represented as less human and, therefore, as legitimately colonized. Being native, then, was a signifier of being colonized and the ultimate signifier of abjectness. Nativeness as a mode of representation, then, was designed to institutionalize the new racist orders implemented by different colonial empires. Importantly, all colonized people were variously identified as “the” natives in order to signal their lack of membership in the propter nos of the colonizers.31

In the post–World War II era of postcolonialism, when, through much struggle, colonial empires were removed from the list of legitimate forms of political rule, the right to claim rights within and to any given space came, increasingly, to be seen as belonging to “the” natives. After all, we were told, the anticolonial project was often posited as fighting for the rule of the natives for the natives. Not surprisingly, then, the battle over resources and over place has, thus, increasingly become one about the meaning of nativeness.

In this way, autochthonous modes of belonging are significant in advancing particular nationalized regimes of rights, for the national subject is often defined through an exclusive racialized / ethnicized criteria through which political rights and rights to property, especially social property rights in land and natural resources, are to be apportioned within any claimed national space. Contemporary, postcolonial forms of racism are often based on ideas of autochthony. All those who are said to have migrated to the places where they live (or who cannot prove their prior inhabitance) are increasingly viewed as agents of (instead of co- victims of) colonial projects. The ruling ideology of nationalism has provided an explanation for belonging and has come to be a key way to distinguish between who is properly native to any given place and who is not. Today, the rhetoric of autochthony is evident throughout the world, including diverse sites in Europe, southern Africa, Central Africa, Latin America, North America, and the Pacific. Significantly, such a discourse spans the political spectrum from the Right to the Left. Here, I focus on the emergence of autochthonous discourses in indigenous nationalist politics (engaged in by both natives and nonnatives) in the territories claimed by Canada and the United States, with a particular focus on the Hawaiian archipelago, where this discourse is well rehearsed.

The position that all migrants are settler colonists has been advanced in a number of recent scholarly works in Canada and the United States. In the context of Hawai’i, it has been argued that “Asians” in Hawai’i (most of whom are the descendants of contractually indentured plantation laborers who began arriving in the mid- 1800s) are “settler colonists,” active in the colonization of native Hawaiians due to their nonnative status.32 The main distinction between the two groups, they argue, is that native Hawaiian claims are based on rights of national sovereignty over “their land, water, and other economic and legal rights,” while Asians, because they are not native, have no right to make such claims.33

In a Canadian context, Bonita Lawrence’s and Enakshi Dua’s article “Decolonizing Antiracism” (2005) in Social Justice makes some of the same arguments made by the contributors to the special issue of Amerasia Journal on “Asian Settler Colonialism in Hawai’i.”34 Like them, Lawrence and Dua also focus on those nonnatives who are nonwhite. They contend that the antiracist praxis of nonwhites has “contribute[d] to the active colonization of Aboriginal peoples.”35 Indeed, they contend that “antiracism is premised on an ongoing colonial project” and on “a colonizing social formation.”36 Postcolonial critiques of national liberation strategies, social constructivist critiques of the naturalness of races or nations, and arguments against ethnic absolutism, such as those made by Stuart Hall, become, for them, examples of how antiracism is a colonial practice.37 Lawrence and Dua maintain that these kinds of analyses colonize indigenous people by “contribut[ing] to the ongoing delegitimization of Indigenous nationhood.”38

In these essays, then, critiques of nationalisms or of the naturalization of social categories are tantamount to attacks against indigenous people. It is in such assertions that we can find the ideological character of autochthonous discourses. In arguing for the theoretical and political centrality of nativeness, there is an effort to depoliticize native nationalisms. By insisting that any critique of nationalism is tantamount to a colonial practice, the nationalist assumptions and politics of native nationalisms are taken out of the realm of that which can be contested. Consequently, native nationalisms are posited as the only strategy for decolonization.

It is precisely the nationalism inherent within autochthonous discourses that helps to explain not only why all nonnatives are conceptualized as colonizers but also why the (varied) critics of nationalism (or those who argue for the social basis for ideas of race and ethnic purity, or those who uncover a politics of solidarity across such lines) are also colonizers. Negatively racialized persons, in this logic of nationalized self- determinacy, are relegated to being mere minorities of various nations and their existing or hoped- for national sovereign states. Thus, because they are not a people / nation as defined by hegemonic doctrines of self- determinancy, Asians, for example, in Hawai’i, or elsewhere in the United States and Canada, are represented as not- colonized and, therefore, in the dualistic mode of autochthonous representations, as colonizers.

Within autochthonous discourses one can only be colonized if they “belong” or are indigenous to that space itself. In this view, the colonization that people experience supposedly ends once one moves away from the colony (or, now, the postcolony). Instead, these migrants come to be represented as colonizers. Because a key aspect of the subjective understanding of indigenous is being a colonized person, only other colonized persons can be seen to be co-specifics. Neither those constituted as migrants nor their struggles can be perceived as part of anticolonial struggles. As such, they cannot be included as commensurate human beings within any colonial or postcolonial space.

This view imagines the space of colonialism as finite. It fails to see the broader field of power that processes of colonialism opened up. More specifically, it fails to see migration as a part of the colonial experience. The world as seen through an autochthonous lens is one of discrete, disconnected spaces, each belonging to its native people. This is the autochthonous view of the world prior to colonization and of the ideal decolonized space. It thus appears that as borders and relationships begin to realign to allow for new forms of subjective understanding and conspecificity, some scholars and activists are actively working to re- fix borders and territories through particularistic strategies of identification. The new mode of representation of indigeneity, which, ostensibly, appears to be an expansion in subjective understanding, creates a Manichaean dualism of native and nonnative. Such a logics of representation assumes that all past and present processes of exchange are inherently destructive. Colonialism, from such a view, was (and remains) about people moving about and that it was / is in this process of moving away from where they are native to places where they are not that has caused the enormous destruction of life. By casting all human mobility as colonial acts, autochthonous modes of representation, ironically, empty out from the meaning of colonialism the enormous violence that has been done by colonizers. It also minimalizes—or even denies—the violence done to people who moved and who move today.

Borders, including the borders between natives and nonnatives, although seemingly about the physical separation of those in the national nos from its foreign others, then, are primarily concerned with making differences within the same space that the nos and its others both live in. Because we—and, with Sylvia Wynter, I use “we” in all the fullness of the term “humans”—have long lived in a world that is connected across now-demarcated spaces, making claims to land, to livelihoods, and to belonging on the basis of particularistic claims, such as a racialized national membership, only works to ensure that the oppressions and exploitations wrought in the aftermath of 1492 are maintained, albeit in new guises.

Conclusion

Autochthonous discourses present the Columbian exchange as a zerosum game between putative “groups” of natives and nonnatives. Neglected within such discursive modes of representation is the fact that the gross inequalities engendered by this exchange were structured not by some inherent struggle between natives and nonnatives but by a set of struggles between expropriators and the expropriated, the exploiters and the exploited, the oppressors and the oppressed. Tragically, these struggles were won by those who cemented their victory in a set of social relations that institutionalized private property, an ever- expanding capitalist mode of production, colonial, and then national, state power, and an interlocking web of ranked hierarchies formed around ideologies of the noncommensurability of humans through ideas of “race,” gender, “nation,” and citizenship. Each of these has been normalized to the extent that even (some of) the expropriated, exploited, and oppressed people on earth have come to identify with these ideologies instead of with each other.

However, if we understand the New World not simply as a mistaken formulation of Columbus imagining himself in the western part of India but one that brought the four hemispheres together in a global field of power, we come to see that the New World was made in and across multiple geographic sites. The moments of New World invention necessarily involved people across the planet and came into being not suddenly, in 1492, but over a longer period through which “European” elites expanded the territories they controlled and responded to the incredible consolidation and spread of capitalism. Indeed, as Sylvia Wynter well shows, the shorthand of “1492” does not capture the fact that the processes leading to the colonization of people in the Caribbean and Americas were begun by much earlier imperial ventures in the Middle East, western Mediterranean, eastern Atlantic and West Africa.39 Encounters here established a specific pattern of relations that were to be extended not only to the Caribbean and Americas but, importantly, within the space of what we now call Europe.

The New World, then, was forged through processes that people across space and time would be able to recognize. Marcus Rediker calls these processes the “four violences”: the expropriation of the commons both in Europe and in the Americas; African slavery and the Middle Passage; the exploitation and the institution of wage labor; and the repression organized through prisons and the criminal justice system.40 Silvia Federici adds to our understanding of these shared experiences by showing that the persecution of women and the containment of their liberty (especially during various and ongoing hunts for witches) were crucial elements in the Columbian exchange.41

People’s shared experience of the terror of expropriation, exploitation, and oppression led to their shared resistance, something, unfortunately, left unexamined within Wynter’s oeuvre.42 Neither the ruling- class version of colonization- as- progress nor the autochthonous view that colonization was caused by “foreigners” entering native spaces tells us this story. Recent work by social historians, such as Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, or political theorists such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, however, show that there was indeed a serious struggle over the terms of what is now (too ahistorically and uniformly) often called “modernity.”43 That capitalists were victorious in this struggle should not blind us to the fact that they did not instigate the revolution (or the “root expansion in thought” that Sylvia Wynter discusses in relation to Columbus’s challenging of medieval European notions of space). The bourgeoisie, instead, were part of the counterrevolution against those actively challenging extant forms of ruling in Europe, including challenges to the medieval idea of transcendent power of all sorts (church, God, king / queen).

The actual revolutionaries were derisively called the multitude or the motley crew and were composed of the rural commoners, urban rioters, fishers, market women, weavers, and many others who mobilized countless rebellions to realize their immanent demand that producers fully realize the fruits of their labor, and do so on earth.44 As the spread of ruling relations moved across the planet, so too did communities committed to revolution. When the imperial elites in Europe expanded their territorial claims—and processes of expropriation and exploitation to the Caribbean, the Americas, and the rest of the planet—new communities of resistance across these spaces were formed on the basis of radical solidarities. Revolutionaries from spaces now imagined separately as Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, the Americas, Asia, and the Pacific encountered one another and, in many cases, saw in each other’s experiences a desire for their own common emancipation.

The motley crew, then, was very much a cluster of new world formations—new world because they stretched across the entire global field of power of expanding imperial states. They explicitly challenged emergent discourses of their innate noncommensurability, be it racialized, nationalized, or gendered lines of difference. As a result, as Linebaugh and Rediker uncover, these solidarities were considered as the greatest threat against the aspirations of the newly emerging elites—the traders, ship owners, slave owners, plantation owners, and leaders of imperial states. Significantly, it was ideas—and subjective identifications—of nation, race, and gender that severely weakened this “many-headed hydra” and set back its revolution.

It is precisely this revolution, this “root expansion in thought,” that Sylvia Wynter ignites with her call for a human species–wide sense of conspecificity. In her essay “1492: A New World View,” Sylvia Wynter creates an imaginative space for a new and expansive subjective understanding of who “we” are so that we can undo the continued exclusionary, uneven, and purposefully divisive legacy of 1492. While those who shamelessly celebrate the aftermath of 1492 continue to believe that they can act unilaterally and with impunity against groups they have identified as native and migrants with no consequence to their own lives, and while some native nationalists believe that the nos of natives is a liberatory one that will lead to a postcolonial state of their own, Wynter’s “new world view” allows us to see that both partial perspectives are ideological. Neither reflects the lived experiences of people the world over, which are organized through both shared experience and tangible connection. As a result, neither is able to seize the revolutionary promise of an expansion in our empathic and affective ties with those with whom we live our lives.

Wynter, by defining humanness as a social, historical, and discursive coproduction rather than merely a biological one, urges us to become cognitive revolutionaries, to see our potential to forge social relationships with one another—relationships that recognize not only the massive changes wrought by the events following Columbus’s voyage of 1492 but also the possibility of what we can do with these changes. The New World produced new social formations, and it is within these social formations that struggles for decolonization have taken place and continue to and need to take place. This does not mean that we must make a choice between the celebrants’ universality, which is little but a parochial concern of elites, or the alternative of dissidents that romanticizes an essentialized “community” set in battle against its others. Rather, we can, if we choose, reject both views and reorient ourselves—and respatialize ourselves—with one afforded to us by the world that we have inherited, a world wrought with strife and inequality but a single world, nonetheless. This project is and always has been, by necessity, a shared one. Indeed, the making of new social bodies is not an epistemological problem but an ontological one. It is in the ontological unity of our human intra-actions that we can come into being what we already are: a species of humans, one, no less, that is intimately involved with all other life on our shared planet.

#### Understanding historical oppression through a lens of human commonality creates collective subjectivities that prevent extinction.

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It is the beginning of Spivak’s planetarity (2003, 72) and Gilroy’s planetary humanism (2005, 4). To become “planetary subjects rather than global agents” involves reckoning with the planet as alterity, as an impossible other, and – always at the same time – as a part of ourselves (Spivak 2003, 73). As Spivak explains: “The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, on loan” (72). Planetarity – whether in the practice of comparative literary scholarship, pedagogy, or (especially) ethical and ecological living – transgresses normative oppositions (outer–inner, continuous–discontinuous) coextensive with capitalist globalization (72–73). It offers, alternatively, an “uncanny”, “defamiliarized”, “preemergent”, “(im)possibl[e]” view of what life on Earth could become (74, 77, 80, 72). Gilroy – who similarly considers the development of planetary humanism to be contingent upon the experience of “estrangement from one’s own culture and history” (2005, 67) – connects the development of planetary humanism to “a deliberate engagement with the twentieth century’s histories of suffering” in order to “furnish resources for the peaceful accommodation of otherness in relation to fundamental commonality” (4). Gilroy describes this fundamental commonality as part of a “cosmopolitan conviviality” (8), which can emerge, potentially, in multicultural societies that have worked through the racist suffering, violence, and damage historically produced by Empire (99). This historical reckoning by western imperial centres is, for Gilroy, an indispensable component of overcoming “postcolonial melancholia” toward the production of convivial multicultural relations (98– 106). It is the kind of historical reckoning the doors in Exit West produce by force; and the convivial life and planetary potential that unfolds as a result of ordinary encounters with otherness – as demonstrated in Mykonos, London, and Marin County – is the kind of common cosmopolitanism Gilroy envisions (67).

Mohsin Hamid’s Exit West – like numerous other, formally experimental works of anticolonial or postcolonial fiction – provides an imaginative cartography of the “what could happen if”. His speculative response in his speculative novel is “aspirational”, but it is neither impossible to achieve nor idealist in conception (Gandhi 2014, 165–166). To argue that fictional speculation can play no role in realpolitik is to foreclose in advance a range of discursive responses that might, in practice, produce more ethical outcomes than those that have unravelled in recent years. To argue that fictional speculation is idealist betrays a reductive understanding of what constitutes materiality.18 As Hamid’s novel so vividly illustrates, it is the imagined made real – by way of human connection, overlapping experiences, common causes – that makes possible responses other than fear and outcomes not automatically violent. The ahimsaic counter-askesis of Hamid’s novel of migratory passage unfolds an inclusionary ethics of “live and let live” rather than the exclusionary dogma of “kill or be killed”, currently driving so many global antagonisms. A global politics informed by Hamid’s fictional experiments may prove messy at first, difficult to coordinate or even to stomach. But, ultimately, it may produce the kind of inhabitants who, at the very least, work together soberly to ensure the sustainability of the planet we all share in common and without which we become extinct.

#### Vote neg for a theoretical alignment with radical humanist traditions. Reviving humanism begins at the level of scholarship by interrogating how our research comports with historically revolutionary ideals.

Spencer, 17—Senior Lecturer in Postcolonial Literatures and Cultures at the University of Manchester (Robert, “Postcolonialism is a Humanism,” *For Humanism: Explorations in Theory and Politics*, Chapter 3, pg 121-126, dml)

Nonetheless it is true that the unrepentant humanism of the field’s founder, Edward Said, is not glossed over quite so embarrassedly these days. Said’s repeated declarations that he was an unswerving humanist used to be met by his postcolonialist successors with a kind of uncomfortable silence. Now the situation is somewhat different. The war in Iraq and its calamitous aftermath no doubt alerted Said’s heirs and interpreters to what Neil Lazarus has called ‘the unremitting actuality and indeed the intensification of imperialist social relations in the times and spaces of the postcolonial world’.7 As a result, those critics have perhaps been induced to look more favourably at Said’s efforts to use humanism as a way of reproving imperialism and of imagining our way beyond it. The war in Iraq, in short, has made starkly visible a rampantly inhuman imperialist project that has obviously not, as our field’s moniker suggests, been drawing to a close but has on the contrary been seeking to expand (or at least prolong) American hegemony, extend corporate power and hijack international institutions of governance. Said’s humanism arraigns Iraq’s assailants in the name of universal principles and a vision of social transformation. The second edition of Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia’s book on Said in the Routledge Critical Thinkers series contains a broadly sympathetic, albeit slightly grudging, section on Said’s humanism,8 as does R. Radhakrishnan’s altogether more laudatory dictionary of Said’s key concepts.9

It is well over a decade since Bruce Robbins marked ‘a universalistic and humanistic impulse that has gradually emerged, within cultural studies generally and postcolonial studies in particular, but that was slow to be perceived as such because of the prevailing antihumanism.’10 Notwithstanding this renewed interest in Said’s humanism, I would maintain, however, that humanism’s partial rehabilitation has not gone very far at all. It has not yet affected fundamentally the kind of work that we postcolonialists do. It is one thing to concede that when it comes to, say, the assault on Iraq it is legitimate to talk about rights and duties, about war crimes and crimes against humanity. That is part of our obligations and activities as citizens. It is quite another thing, however, to let such convictions guide or animate fully our professional lives as critics too. My point in this chapter is not that we should all carry a card with the word ‘Humanist’ emblazoned on it, nor that we should begin each argument with a paean of praise to the idea, nor even that we should bother to use the word more often. I suppose I am arguing that in addition to being a critical undertaking postcolonialism ought also to be a moral and a political one as well. This being the case, I want to say, at the risk of sounding facetious, that postcolonial studies should be exercised above all not by crimes against hybridity but by crimes against humanity and by the moral and political aspirations of those movements that seek to withstand such crimes and to overthrow the system that inflicts them. Ours is the effort to understand where colonialism comes from as well as how colonialism can be superseded; ours is the responsibility to make connections between local injustices and then trace these to the general and related injustices of state and class power; ours is also the obligation to give due emphasis to the achievement of texts of various kinds in dramatising those injustices and exploring alternatives. This is another way of saying that, although Said’s humanism is not in such bad odour as hitherto, humanism has barely penetrated and informed the critical work that we do. Because humanism, at worst, conjures up images of men in pith helmets telling the world what to do, or else, at best, comes across as a quaint way of describing the convictions we employ when making political judgements, it has not been allowed to influence the priorities of a discipline that, alas, no longer sees itself, as its predecessors saw themselves, as part of a general movement for emancipation. It is now a trifling affair concerned with the ‘liminal’ spaces opened up by a global system that it either approves of or, more likely, that it despairs of being overturned.

Of course, it is not hard to find exclusionary and ‘metaphysical’ definitions of humanism that, far from being acclamations of universal rights and capacities, are in fact mere smokescreens for self-interest. Too many humanisms have excluded and denigrated certain groups whom they consider to be not (or at least not yet) fully human. This is especially true of the humanist rhetoric mouthed by the agents and spokespeople of colonial power. ‘The Mediterranean is the human norm’, according to the sententious narrator of A Passage to India, and through the Bosphorus and the Pillars of Hercules men ‘approach the monstrous and extraordinary’.11 So blatantly intolerable is this pompous and obnoxious way of thinking (remember it is, of course, not Forster himself speaking here) that Anthony Alessandrini observes that ‘it is becoming increasingly difficult to find anyone within the field of postcolonial studies willing to defend humanism in its most traditional form’.12 Impossible, in fact. What is more, it is of course quite right that this should be so. For the libertarian humanism that I am endeavouring to vindicate is as like the traditional version as a crab’s like an apple. Let nobody labour under the illusion that I am foolish enough to endorse the sort of crass, self-seeking and ultimately racist humanism for which to be black, say, in Aimé Césaire’s celebrated quip, is ‘like being a second-class clerk’: waiting for promotion, ‘en attendant mieux et avec possibilité de monter plus haut’. What one wouldn’t realise from the dismissal of humanism as a kind of unthinking belief in the superiority of white European men, is the sheer variety of humanisms that have come into being in response to such inadequate understandings of the term. In their Critical Humanisms, Martin Halliwell and Andy Mousley demonstrate the extraordinary durability and diversity of the humanist tradition.13 One thinks, in addition to their examples, of the ‘radical humanism’ of the Holocaust survivor Jean Améry,14 Karen Green’s feminist humanism,15 not to mention the variety of socialist humanisms enumerated by Barbara Epstein in this volume. Most of all, I believe our attention ought to be trained on the Marxist humanism of a tradition represented by Theodor Adorno, Ernst Bloch and Herbert Marcuse, and of Jean-Paul Sartre, to whose celebrated 1945 lecture ‘Existentialism is a Humanism’ this chapter’s title is a respectful nod.

My claim here is that the rejection over these last decades of the idea that human subjects are possessed of intrinsic rights and capacities bears out one of Theodor Adorno’s most cutting gibes: among its other functions, ‘philosophy is capable of making people stupid’.16 I therefore propose to describe what I believe are the deleterious consequences for postcolonial theory’s development of its constitutive antihumanism and especially of its neglect of the liberating resources of a specifically Marxist humanism. I hope it is not unfair to observe that the dominant though persistently disputed and by now fairly beleaguered variety of postcolonial criticism shares several identifying marks, or let us say precepts and assumptions, that might with some justice be termed ‘antihumanist’. I am referring less to such sophisticated as well as theoretically and politically distinct figures as Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, though I shall have a bit more to say in due course about the former, than to the myriad of other critics who draw on an idiom first promulgated by Bhabha and Spivak. I am not endeavouring to tick off, say, Bhabha for being a card-carrying antihumanist, not least because he has written in his preface to the new translation of Frantz Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth in a surprisingly sympathetic way about humanism.17 Rather, in addition to showing that what Bhabha means by the term could scarcely be further from Fanon’s extremely militant account of a ‘new humanism’, I want to identify a kind of disposition or outlook among most postcolonialists that is not so much stridently antihumanist, though God knows there is quite enough of that, as habitually or routinely and even automatically antihumanist. To be a postcolonialist, it seems, is to leave one’s humanism at the door. To peruse the contents of any issue of the major journals in the field is more often than not to be confronted with theoretical disquisitions and analyses of texts that, whatever virtues of acuity and originality they possess and notwithstanding their informativeness, usually address their readers from a position that is tacitly antihumanist. They champion difference at the expense of equality, deal with narratives of cultural ‘hybridity’ without sufficient regard for the continuing exigencies of conflict and struggle, and choose to abide by the tenets and idiom of post-structuralism to the detriment of the revolutionary language and horizons of the previous generation of anticolonial militants. In so doing, my claim goes, many postcolonial critics have either forfeited or have else been completely oblivious of the very valuable resources of the language of humanism. They therefore leave unexplored the larger realities in which such texts and theories circulate, the world of imperialism, of capitalism (from which imperialism is inseparable) and of the counter-struggles of imperialism’s victims.

The reasons for this aversion to humanism are complex, to put it mildly. They have to do with the discipline’s snug consolidation within (as opposed to within and against) the Anglo-American university system as well as within those countries’ radically neoliberal economic dispensations, dispensations which the world of higher education increasingly and quite willingly serves. Speaking only of the British system in which I work, it is a melancholy duty to have to report that any number of essential academic freedoms and responsibilities have been buried in the last few years beneath an avalanche of corporate waffle and management newspeak. Few of us will need reminding of the consequences of the annexation of British universities by the language and priorities of corporate power: of how large our class sizes have become, of the casualisation of the academic labour market, of funding crises and cost-cutting, of the extortionate price of tuition fees (the intention of which is not to save money but to turn students into indebted and thus pliant consumers), and of the distortion of scholarly research by measuring it against the risibly crude standard of ‘economic contribution’. All of these developments deflect the inhabitants of these embattled institutions from the proper business of advanced education in the humanities, which is the cultivation of an aptitude for asking difficult questions about culture and society.18 Postcolonial studies’ materialist critics have long complained that the most prominent figures in the field, indeed the field itself, has been co-opted by its privileged position within this world of conformity and privilege.19 And yet it would hardly be worth saying such things if universities were not at the same time also places in which it is still possible to foster the ability and the confidence to think knowledgeably, rigorously and above all critically about texts of all kinds and about the realities with which texts deal. My point is that the characteristic emphases of the postcolonial field cannot be understood without reference to its institutional, geographical and economic position. We need to be more self-conscious about that position and more willing to work both within and against it. Now more than ever there is a danger that if postcolonial studies does not present itself consciously as a discipline concerned centrally with questions of critique and liberation, then it will, at worst, end up as a kind of area office within an enfeebled humanities sector. At best, it will become a disgruntled subsidiary of the humanities, dissatisfied with the system of which it forms a part but whose favourite concepts are to that system like so many toy arrows.

To let fall the word ‘revolutionary’ where one might be accustomed to hearing terms like ‘liminality’ is already, therefore, to out oneself as a humanist. This is because the concern with systems and with systemic alternatives is usually seen as the preserve of an older anticolonial past rather than of the postcolonial present. By demonstrating the differences between Marxist humanism on the one hand and postcolonial antihumanism on the other, I hope at least to show that postcolonial theory as it is currently constituted does not possess anything like the system-challenging ambitions of humanism, which seeks to marry critical and theoretical work to the larger context of the struggle to replace the manifestly inhuman imperatives of imperialism and capitalism. This is a quintessentially theoretical question of course, by which I mean that it is a crucial question about the very purpose and context of the critical work that we undertake. We have, in my view, delayed for far too long a rigorous and open discussion of what I see as the very considerable disadvantages of the antihumanist theory that so many of us seem almost automatically to deploy. Imperialism and its transformation is the proper subject of our discipline; that being the case, we must return in a suitably critical and discriminating spirit to the humanist thinkers whose subject this was.

## Case

### AT: Boxell

#### Monopolistic capitalism worsens every form of oppression and antitrust advocacy strengthens every angle of resistance.

Greer and Rice, 21—co-founders and co-executive directors of Liberation in a Generation (Jeremie and Solana, “Anti-Monopoly Activism: Reclaiming Power through Racial Justice,” <https://www.liberationinageneration.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Anti-Monopoly-Activism_032021.pdf>, dml) [language modifications denoted by brackets]

Since the founding of the nation, people of color have been living an economic nightmare. People of color have persistently lagged behind white people in nearly every economic category, including employment, income, education, small-business ownership, home ownership, and asset-ownership. This is the result of the rise and reach of concentrated wealth and power, including monopoly power.

The Racial Wealth Gap

Economic racial disparities do not happen by accident. Rather, they are the product of centuries of systemic racism and have been built into the design of our economic system, which has created what we at Liberation in a Generation call the Oppression Economy. The Oppression Economy uses the racist tools of theft, exclusion, and 31 exploitation to strip wealth from people of color, so that the elite can build their wealth. In this Oppression Economy, racism is profitable, and it fuels a cycle of oppression 32 that depresses the economic vitality of people of color, suppresses our political power, and obstructs our ability to utilize democracy to change economic rules that make racism profitable in the first place.

Racial wealth inequality is the consequential disease caused by the Oppression Economy. Today, racial wealth inequality has reached astronomical levels and will continue to rise if nothing is done. Without drastic policy action it will take 228 years for average Black wealth and 84 years for average Latinx wealth to match the wealth that white households hold today. Further, if nothing is done—or we attempt to return 33 to “normal” and fail to distance racism34 after COVID-19—Black and Latinx wealth will reach zero sometime in the middle of this century. These disparities are driven by 35 36 two reinforcing phenomena connected to the issue of corporate concentration: 1) the systematic withholding of wealth from people of color and 2) the gross concentration of wealth held by the corporate elite.

Between 1983 and 2016, which coincides with the rise of corporate and monopoly power, average Black and Latinx wealth was dwarfed [outpaced] by the wealth accumulated by white households. In fact, average Black wealth decreased by more than 50 percent over this period. This is the result of a long history of economic oppression that has 37 actively blocked people of color from building wealth or has stripped their wealth through theft and predation. The beneficiaries and perpetrators of this ever-growing gap are the corporate elite who set the rules of the economy. The corporate elite’s actions have led to people of color being paid less for their labor and having to pay more for the basic necessities of life. Here are a few metrics that speak to this reality.

• Black, Indigenous, and Latinx women earn between 55 cents and 63 cents for every dollar earned by white men.38

• Low income people of color often pay a 10 percent poverty premium for essential goods and services.39

• Black and Latinx households are far more likely than white households to be unable to pay their monthly bills or cover unexpected expenses.40

• Black households are more likely to be denied mortgage credit and end up paying more when they are able to access credit.41

• Black households, in particular, suffer from a crippling debt burden composed of an array of predatory credit products (e.g., student, small-dollar, auto, and home loans).

The phenomenon fueling racial wealth inequality is the concentration of wealth in the hands of a small number of individuals. Today, the wealthiest 400 people in the US hold more wealth ($3.2 trillion) than the entire Latinx population ($2.4 trillion)and 43 more than 70 percent of the Black population combined ($4.41 trillion). While the 44 average wealth of Black people has decreased since the 1980s (as cited earlier), the average wealth of those on Forbes’s list of the 400 wealthiest people increased from $600 million in 1982 (adjusted for inflation) to $8.0billion in 2020.. You might be 45 asking, what does the Forbes 400have to do with monopoly? Well, it is a who’s who of corporate monopolists.

The people on this list are some of the most egregious perpetrators of driving down wages, expanding income inequality, degrading the health of workers, desecrating the environment, fleecing consumers, perpetuating racial residential segregation, driving community disinvestment, avoiding taxes, and corrupting our democracy. These monopolists utilize ruthless business practices to perpetuate their unquenchable thirst for maximized profits and for control of major segments of the US economy—and people of color bear the brunt.

America’s Legacy of Racism Drives and Sustains Corporate Concentration

The confluence of monopoly power and racial inequality is not new. The construction of an economy that relies on unchecked capitalism to create the modern-day monopolist relies on the construction and maintenance of America’s racial caste system. The legacy of theft, exclusion, and exploitation of people of color by corporate monopolists has been with us since the founding of the nation. In fact, prior to the Civil War, southern plantation owners were the equivalent of the modern-day Fortune 500 monopolists. The Mississippi Valley had more millionaires per capita than anywhere in the country, making it the Silicon Valley of that period. Prior to the Civil War, the combined value of America’s approximately 4 million slaves was $3.5 billion, making it the largest single financial asset in the entire economy, bigger than all manufacturing and railroads combined.46

As the roots of this problem run deep and disproportionately impact people of color, so too must the solutions. Today’s corporate monopolies are built on the foundation of an economy that also stole land from Indigenous people through genocide and forced removal, and built a labor market on the bodies of enslaved Black people. Nothing in our economy is race-neutral, including our work to dismantle monopoly power and the racial wealth inequality it causes, so we must seek race-conscious solutions.

Scholars have developed a catalogue of research confirming what many people of color experience on a daily basis: Corporations have seized control of many aspects of our lives that were once intended to serve the public good over private sector interests. Examples include the growth of charter schools and for-profit colleges as an alternative to public schools; the growth of private health insurance and private hospitals; the growth of private prisons and paid services in prison, such as phone calls and health care. However, more research is needed that connects the economic conditions of people of color to the growth of monopoly power, a call to action we further explore in Section 6.

Connecting Monopoly Power to Other Movements

There is no silver bullet to slaying the monster that is systemic racism. Leaders of color across the country are actively organizing people of color to advance bold and transformational economic and racial justice policies. These leaders are doing the hard work of transforming our economic systems by advancing liberatory policies such as a Homes Guarantee and a federal jobs guarantee; and by dismantling systems of oppression, including police and prison abolition, ending voter suppression, and curbing corporate power. To this end, anti-monopoly policy and advocacy work can be a powerful tool to advance these transformative, activist-led movement priorities.

To win the battle to advance movement priorities, we must seek to pull every lever of power at our disposal and to directly confront one of their most ardent political opponents: corporate monopolies. The Action Center on Race and the Economy (ACRE) is deftly integrating anti-monopoly tactics to advance their racial and economic justice mission. In advancing police abolition, for example, they highlight the fact that big banks (as discussed in Section 1) finance “police brutality bonds” that fund the payment of police department settlements for acts of police brutality.47 Additionally, they have highlighted for grassroots leaders of color the connections that corporate monopolies have to anti-Muslim bigotry, the Puerto Rican debt crisis, and pharmaceutical prices.48

Corporate monopolists, including big banks, big tech, and big pharma, are often primary opponents in the battles for bold, transformational movement priorities. For example, activists for bold environmental justice policies, such as the Green New Deal, have encountered strong opposition from fossil fuel monopolies, such as Exxon, Shell and BP; but also, Wall Street bank monopolies financing fossil fuel monopolies, in addition to other monopolies in the airline industry. In another example, Wall Street 49 monopolies have aggressively clashed with affordable housing advocates as their investments have displaced residents of color from their homes and businesses and have also gentrified communities of color from Harlem to Oakland and Detroit to New Orleans. Directly challenging the monopoly power of these corporations could prove to be a useful tactic for activists of color to further movement priorities.

#### Economic systems don’t act on their own or produce violence.

Boldizzoni, 20—Professor of Political Science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Francesco, “How Capitalism Survives,” *Foretelling the End of Capitalism: Intellectual Misadventures since Karl Marx*, Chapter 6, pg 255-259, dml)

Those who challenge the efficiency explanation generally do so because they start from an opposite interpretation of capitalism’s nature. These authors tend to emphasize the elements of irrationality in the capitalist process and in the belief system of its actors that work in favor of its perpetuation. Capitalism is thought to be sustained by the self-­estrangement it produces, by the repression (or stimulation) of desire, by irrational expectations, and more generally by its capacity to interact with the actors’ emotional sphere. Contributions to this interpretation come from currents of philosophy and social theory variously related to Critical Theory or poststructuralism. All of them share the idea that capitalism appropriates certain human needs and turns them to its advantage. Capitalism therefore persists either because of the power and seduction it exerts over people’s minds or because of the way it appeals to deep needs. We could call this broad perspective the “social unconscious thesis.”

Critical Theory combines Freud and Marx, not the later Marx but the earlier humanist Marx who had reflected, in the “Paris Manuscripts,” on the psychological mechanisms of alienation.45 Indeed, the concept of alienation is at the heart of Erich Fromm’s attempt to psychoanalyze twentieth-­century capitalist society and his idea that capitalist subjects, estranged from themselves, lose all connection with their “true needs” and embrace the senseless logic of the machine that enslaves them.46 Another version, unquestionably indebted to Freud’s analysis of “uneasiness in civilization,” is that capitalism obtains conformity from its subjects through the repression of desire. They live surrounded by things but are unable to recognize their “true desires,” whose satisfaction alone would lead them to a meaningful life. This repression affects all the actors of the capitalist process indiscriminately, regardless of their role, and hence of their relationship with capital. This is an idea that, with Marcuse’s Eros and Civilization (1955), marked the transition from the critique of capitalism as a critique of inequality to the critique of capitalism as a critique of repression, the kind of discourse that would inform the counterculture of the 1960s. This vision is irreparably linked to an era in which social conflict was reduced to a minimum. Since it was thought that the economic problems of capitalism had been solved, one could afford the luxury of moralizing about capitalist society. As such, it appears dated today. But beyond this, its main weakness as a theory of capitalist reproduction is that it does not explain what the causes of the success of alienation are or who are the agents of repression. Capitalism may be a diabolical machine, but it has no autonomous agency. This defect has not been remedied by recent work in the same vein, where the focus is shifted from the (natural) desires that capitalism represses to the (artificial) ones that it feeds—so the drive to consume and to accumulate is explained by the continuous and illusory quest for “a more complete satisfaction.”47 The most promising recent contribution to critical sociology’s understanding of capitalist reproduction comes from Jens Beckert’s concept of “fictional expectations.” Beckert claims that capitalism creates a regime of “secular enchantment,” which keeps actors enmeshed in its cogs thanks to the continuous, albeit unrealistic, expectations it fuels.48 Beckert certainly captures an important element. However, when he moves on to identifying the factors that keep this machine of illusions in motion, these turn out to be the institutional elements of competition and credit, which leaves open the problem of the material and cultural structures underpinning them, not to mention the question of the relationship between these structures.

Poststructuralist interpretations—a galaxy that goes from Foucault to Deleuze to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri—differ from critical-­theoretical approaches in that they solve the problem of agency by denying that contemporary capitalism has a manipulative power (power, in Foucauldian terms, is immanent in the structures of subjectivity, not externally imposed). At the micro level, poststructuralism underlines the compatibility of capitalism with the emotional structure of modern social actors who subject themselves to voluntary enslavement, drawing from it emotional satisfaction. This leads to curious claims, such as, for example, that “capitalism capitalizes on our inability to locate the sources of our anxiety and enjoins us to address our trauma by passing its effects on to others, thereby elaborating, intensifying, and widening the competitive imperatives of capitalist networks.”49 What “anxiety”? What “trauma”? one may wonder. Possibly the angst that results from the loss of traditional forms of attachment. Modernity becomes a convenient black box with which to explain the birth and evolution of the capitalist social character, in the same way as the gradual shift of modernity toward postmodernity heralds the character’s future redemption. Modernity and postmodernity are therefore used as conceptual passe-­partouts—tautological and ultimately meaningless. At the macro level, the biopolitical reorganization of power and its deterritorialization, which Hardt and Negri call “Empire,” does away with the modern regime of disciplinary power, thus generating a potential for liberation.50 For them, as for Deleuze and Guattari, the crisis of disciplinary power, as well as its dissolution into introjected mechanisms of control, “disrupts the linear and totalitarian figure of capitalist development. . . . Resistances are no longer marginal but active in the center of a society that opens up in networks; the individual points are singularized in a thousand plateaus.”51 This makes them dream about the construction of a global “counter-­Empire” by global desertion and coordinated acts of sabotaging.

The most serious responsibility of poststructuralism is to make assumptions about the cultural sphere, and to claim for the symbolic a space independent from the material conditions of existence, without having an organic concept of culture, and indeed rejecting it with contempt, as if one could understand a foreign language without knowing its grammar.52 Its denial of any order and rationality in reality, as reflected in its verbal obfuscations, hides confusion and logical contradictions. Capitalist reproduction cannot be understood without investigating the cultural sphere, but at the same time this undertaking requires a rigorous concept of culture.

### AT: Winnubst

#### The method of the 1ac turns inward on itself and reinforces Eurocentric paternalism. Individuation isn’t inherently violent.

Ruti, 17—Distinguished Professor of critical theory and of gender and sexuality studies at the University of Toronto (Mari, “The Ethics of Precarity: Judith Butler’s Reluctant Universalism,” *Remains of the Social: Desiring the Postapartheid*, Chapter 4, pg 98-108, dml)

Basing an ethics on our capacity to identify with the suffering of others rather than, say, on a priori principles of human rights, carries some risks, the first of which is that the failings of identification are so endemic that such an ethics might end up being unacceptably erratic. Though I wholeheartedly agree with Butler’s contention that global power imbalances make it hard for Westerners to acknowledge the equal humanity of non-Westerners, I do not think that the matter is quite this simple, for if Americans have a hard time mourning the Iraqis and Afghans killed by the United States military, Iraqis and Afghans might also have a hard time mourning those who are far away from them, including each other. Butler suggests that we identify with the suffering of some people more than others because their names and faces are familiar to us in the sense of being culturally and ethnically similar to us, and undoubtedly this is true. But there are other ways that alliances based on familiarity are forged, ways that cut across cultural and ethnic differences. For instance, that my friend is black, my colleague is Chinese and my downstairs neighbour is Muslim does not change the fact that if this friend, colleague or neighbour is harmed or killed, I – a white atheist woman – will mourn more intensely than I would mourn another white atheist woman harmed or killed somewhere in Sweden. In other words, there seems to be an important link between familiarity (and thus our ability to mourn), on the one hand, and intimacy, proximity and shared history, on the other, that is not necessarily in any way based on similarity of culture or ethnicity. From this perspective, the ability to mourn the other may be too haphazard, too random a basis for ethics.

The second risk that accompanies an ethics based on our ability to identify with the suffering of others is that it can replace political action with paralysing grief. Grief can be privatising, and thus potentially depoliticising, because it tends to result in a retreat from the social world. This retreat may, in part at least, be a defence against our own vulnerability, for grief reminds us of the immensity of our dependence on others: the fact that we can be undone by the loss of others highlights the flimsiness of our fantasies of sovereignty. Indeed, besides acute bodily suffering, there are few things in life that ‘interrupt’ the coherence of our being more than the anguish we feel when we have lost someone who feels irreplaceable to us. If desire, intimacy and sexuality already challenge our aspirations of autonomy, grief often results – at least momentarily – in the utter dissolution of the self. As Butler correctly remarks, we ‘cannot invoke the Protestant ethic when it comes to loss’ (Precarious Life 21); we cannot decide how the task of grieving is to be performed or when it is going to come to an end. Rather, we are forced to ride waves of sadness that mock our attempts at self-mastery, that call us back to prior experiences of dispossession. Some of these experiences relate to losses we can name, but, ultimately, what grief touches is the unnameable core of melancholia that connects us to our constitutive inability to attain closure (to disavow our dependence on others). Butler describes such melancholia as a kind of timeless enigma that ‘hides’ in each loss we mourn, as an indelible trace of a primary vulnerability that we can no longer access directly but that our losses touch indirectly. In a more Lacanian vein, one could say that every loss reanimates the primary loss – the loss of das Ding (the primordial non-object of desire) – that constitutes the melancholy core of our being. That is, when we lose another person, we not only mourn that loss but we also mourn, with renewed energy, our own incompleteness, our own helplessness, even if we are not aware that this is what we are doing.

Butler asserts: ‘On one level, I think I have lost “you” only to discover that “I” have gone missing as well’ (22). This can be understood to mean that when I lose you, I no longer know who I am because who I am is so intimately tied to you that losing you makes me unintelligible to myself. But it can also be understood to mean that in losing you I have come up against melancholy realms of my being that I usually keep at bay through my efforts to lead a self-sufficient and reasonably organised existence. Butler implies that there are ethical lessons to be learned from such an encounter with the melancholy foundations of my being in the sense that my heightened sensitivity to my own precariousness leads (or should lead) to my heightened sensitivity to the precariousness of others. As she posits: ‘Despite our differences in location and history, my guess is that it is possible to appeal to a “we,” for all of us have some notion of what it is to have lost somebody. Loss has made a tenuous “we” of us all’ (20).

Unquestionably, this is a poignant way to characterise the solidarity of suffering. But would it not be equally possible to argue that melancholia might lead to the kind of preoccupation with the self – the kind of solipsistic turning inwards that excludes all others from the self ’s sacred crypt of sadness – that represents the very antithesis of ethical accountability? Melancholia, even more than mourning, fends off others; it sacrifices present and future objects for the sake of the one that has been lost. As Sigmund Freud already argued, the melancholic copes with his or her loss by incorporating the lost object into his or her psyche, thereby translating a loss in the external world into an internal possession, with the result that this psyche, for the time being, becomes closed to other objects. The memory of the lost object, as it were, crowds out the possibility of new affective ties, which is why, for instance, we find it hard to cathect to a new love object when we are still mourning a lost one. In this sense, while grief may well function as an ethical resource in the way that Butler suggests, the melancholia that grief awakens may pull us in the opposite direction, away from others, from alterity, from the stimulation of new bonds. In addition, melancholia is difficult to translate into the vocabulary of ethical intervention because it arrests action; it is hard to get a depressed person out of bed, let alone into a political rally.

IV Though grief may be a potent source of indignation, as an ethical resource it may also be somewhat unreliable precisely in so far as it conjures up the melancholy ghosts of our constitutive despair. Moreover, it would be relatively easy to stage a critique of Butler’s ethics of mourning akin to the one that Wendy Brown stages in relation to Western notions of tolerance, namely that mourning – like tolerance – can function as a distraction from political and economic solutions to global problems. In the same way that discourses of tolerance make us feel that we are accomplishing something when in fact nothing has changed in concrete terms, the ethics of mourning can obscure the fact that mourning by itself does not transform things. If anything, as long as we get to focus on our grief, we do not actually need to do anything; we can feel good about ourselves because we experience ourselves as benevolent Western subjects who feel the appropriate remorse about the suffering and death of those far away from us. One could even propose that Brown’s argument about tolerance being what the powerful extend to the disempowered – about how tolerance merely debases the tolerated even further – applies to grief as well in the sense that the objects of our grief may become all the more disempowered (pitiable, pathetic) by that grief.

Along similar lines, there might be an argument to be made about the potentially patronising implications of Butler’s insistence that Western subjects are somehow uniquely responsible for grieving those who are less fortunate. Though she does not state the matter in these terms exactly, the implication of much of her discussion of shared precarity is that it is the Western subject in particular who must develop the capacity to mourn the violated other. The non-Western subject is, in this model, invariably the one who is the more violated, the more victimised and therefore in need of ‘our’ grief, while we, the Westerners, do not deserve the grief of non-Westerners but should, first and foremost, feel our guilt. There are of course excellent historical reasons for this line of reasoning. Obviously, the West should feel guilty about the colonial past and about the ways in which its ongoing aspirations of empire-building contribute directly to the suffering of non-Westerners. Yet there is also something questionable about the branding of the Western subject as one who is supposed to be racked by grief while it is the lot of the non-Westerner to be the suffering object of this grief. One could even say that, within this model, grief becomes the way in which Western subjects suffer. Does that mean that other forms of suffering have, once again, been relegated to the rest of the world (so that, say, they have their poverty while we have our grief)?

Yet Butler is also right in insisting that, under certain circumstances, grief can furnish a sense of political community, and that it can furthermore do so on a basis that is both more fundamental and more complex than mere identitarian identifications. If our goal is to transcend identity politics without thereby discarding our understanding of the reasons why various individuals and populations have sought shelter under identitarian labels (black, Muslim, queer and so on), then shared grief is a potentially powerful place to start. If I can get to the point where the other’s grief becomes my grief, then the other’s outrage about her oppression also becomes my outrage, with the consequence that I may be willing to overlook the differences between self and other to act on behalf of this other. There are alternative ways to arrive at the same place, and these include my rational assessment that the other has been unjustly treated, but Butler is correct in suggesting that there is something viscerally powerful about the grief we feel when the other’s vulnerability, particularly the other’s bodily vulnerability, has been exploited. Accounts of genocide, torture and rape, for instance, tend to move us even when we have no personal connection to the victims, which is precisely why Butler’s call for a rethinking of grievability as a foundation for alleviating the power imbalances of the global order strikes a chord, why her ethics of precarity makes such intuitive sense, why it is hard to deny her basic insight that ‘there can be no equal treatment without a prior understanding that all lives have an equal right to be protected from violence and destruction’ (Parting Ways 21).

This is precisely why public acts of grieving are so important, why it is essential to see the pictures, to apprehend the names and faces of those who have been wounded even when these names and faces are not immediately familiar to us. Butler is right that the prohibition against mourning is the flipside of the derealisation of loss, of the indifference we are asked to display with respect to the other’s suffering or even death. Furthermore, even when it comes to losses that are avowed, that ‘count’, we are encouraged to mourn as expediently as we can, so as to leave no debilitating residue of sadness that might impede the nation’s general robustness, let alone interfere with capitalism’s demand for efficiency; we are urged to grieve quickly, to get back on our feet, to brush ourselves off, to get back on track, to get ‘back to business’. After a catastrophe, such as 9/11, there is a haste to return the world to its previous order, whether by sending people back to work, by resorting to nationalist slogans of renewed prowess, or by staging flamboyant architectural competitions to prove technological (and, by implication, military) invincibility. In the Western world, money, the Protestant work ethic and extravagant displays of power are used to bandage the wounds of violence, to reestablish the fantasy of being inviolable, beyond the reach of dangerous, ‘irrational’ others. This is one reason Butler maintains that there might be ‘something to be gained from grieving, from tarrying with grief, from remaining exposed to its unbearability and not endeavoring to seek a resolution for grief through violence’ (Precarious Life 30).

V I appreciate Butler’s claim that overcoming grief too quickly might eradicate one of our most important ethical resources. But I also want to note the masochistic tendencies of her ethics of precarity because these, in my view, complicate the task of theorising (not to mention attaining) social justice. Butler has always been quick to equate subjectivity with subjection (disempowerment), but the masochistic strain of her outlook has become acutely pronounced with her turn to Levinas, who famously quotes Fyodor Dostoyevsky: ‘We are all guilty for everything and everyone, and I more than all the others’ (105). The obvious problem with this formulation is that it implies that I am responsible for the other regardless of what the other has done – that is, regardless of any normative considerations. This, indeed, is the crux of the Levinasian ethical attitude. However, Levinas does not stop here. He draws a clear distinction between ethics (where normative considerations have no place) and justice (which arbitrates between different ‘faces’ on the basis of a priori norms of right and wrong). Levinas, in short, recognises that justice places limits on our ethical accountability. Butler, in contrast, ignores for the most part the distinction between ethics and justice, attempting, as it were, to apply Levinasian ethics to questions of global justice. Moreover, undoubtedly in part because of her anti-Enlightenment poststructuralist predilections, she resists the ideal of a priori principles of justice, with the result that she sometimes speaks as if normative judgements had no place in her theory.

Levinas argues that our ethical responsibility for the other is unconditional and inescapable, that the other is inviolable and that, unfortunately for us, even the executioner, even the Nazi guard, has a face. We may feel tempted to attack such a face, but ethics demands that we resist this temptation. This seems reasonable: I do not take issue with the idea that I should not counter murder with murder, particularly given that, as I just stressed, Levinas maintains that it is the task of justice – as opposed to ethics – to mediate between different faces. The trouble begins when Butler translates this Levinasian (ethical) injunction into a general theoretical stance, which means that assigning responsibility – in the sense that normative justice strives to do – becomes virtually impossible. In this manner, Butler arguably – though no doubt unintentionally – shifts the burden of responsibility from the victimiser to the victim; after all, in the absence of normative judgements regarding the behaviour of the victimiser, what matters is not the content of this behaviour but rather the response (and responsibility) of the victim. As Butler, chillingly enough, writes in Precarious Life, ‘our responsibility is heightened once we have been subjected to the violence of others’ (16).

Consider also the following statement from Parting Ways: ‘The responsibility that I must take for the Other proceeds directly from being persecuted and outraged by that Other. Thus there is violence in the relation from the start: I am claimed by the other against my will, and my responsibility for the Other emerges from this subjection’ (59, emphasis added). The basic idea here is that because the other ‘interrupts’ the coherence of my being, impeding my self-closure, I am, in a sense, always ‘persecuted’ and ‘outraged’ by the other; yet because the other is always already an ingredient of my self, I cannot denounce my responsibility for this other. In this model, responsibility is the flipside of being impinged upon by the other in ways that sometimes feel persecuting and outrageous. As Butler reminds us, according to Levinas ‘precisely the Other who persecutes me has a face’ (Giving an Account 90). Consequently, ‘I cannot disavow my relation to the Other, regardless of what the Other does, regardless of what I might will’. Responsibility, in this sense, is ‘not a matter of cultivating a will, but of making use of an unwilled susceptibility as a resource for becoming responsive to the Other’: ‘Whatever the Other has done, the Other still makes an ethical demand upon me, has a “face” to which I am obliged to respond’ (91).

I understand why Butler’s appropriation of Levinasian ethics represents an effective critique of Enlightenment rationality, particularly of the individualistic pretensions of the autonomous subject, who – to borrow from Adriana Cavarero – is ‘too preoccupied with praising the rights of the I ’ (in Giving an Account 32). This critique, for good reasons, is longstanding in posthumanist theory. But does Butler’s version of it not swing too far to the other extreme, making a virtue out of masochism? Is there not, say, from a feminist perspective, something quite uncomfortable about the idea that I am responsible for others who violate me ‘against my will’? Along related lines, Butler’s critique of ‘the rights of the I’ tends to backfire whenever it comes up against accounts of extreme oppression, such as Frantz Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth, which voice the need of a traumatised collectivity to re-establish its autonomy and self-determination in the face of subordination. Likewise, individual trauma narratives – such as Holocaust memoirs or chronicles of rape – often emphasise that being able to recover a degree of agency is an essential part of surviving trauma. In other words, they reveal that the quest for sovereignty is not invariably a synonym for arrogant individualism. And they also illustrate the problematic nature of an ethics that operates wholly without norms, that asks us to sustain others indiscriminately, irrespective of how appallingly they might behave.

VI More generally speaking, the problem with Butlerian theory is that it consistently sets up a rigid dichotomy between bad autonomy and good relationality. Indeed, one could say that this is an instance where a vehemently anti-essentialist thinker falls into the kind of poststructuralist essentialism where some possibilities – such as the idea that autonomy might sometimes be an important component of human life – become unthinkable. Butler often talks as if the fact that we are not fully autonomous creatures means that we have no capacity for autonomy whatsoever. Yet in the same way that having an unconscious does not erase the conscious mind but merely complicates its functioning, our lack of seamless autonomy does not render us completely devoid of it. Moreover, as Jessica Benjamin, among others, has illustrated, autonomy is not necessarily always the repugnant antithesis of relationality, so that Butler’s depiction of autonomy as intrinsically violent comes off as overly simplistic. Butler asserts that there is ‘no recentering of the subject without unleashing unacceptable sadism and cruelty’: ‘To remain decentered, interestingly, means to remain implicated in the death of the other and so at a distance from the unbridled cruelty … in which the self seeks to separate from its constitutive sociality and annihilate the other’ (Giving an Account 77).

### AT: Liberal Individualism Thesis

#### Liberalism and individualism are ethically and strategically valuable. Endorsing it doesn’t require naïve optimism, but assuming its failure in advance stifles the chance for positive change.

Mills, 21—former Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at The Graduate Center, City University of New York (Charles, interviewed by Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins, “Charles Mills Thinks Liberalism Still Has a Chance,” <https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/charles-mills-thinks-theres-still-time-to-rescue-liberalism/>, dml)

CM: Liberalism is attractive on both principled and strategic grounds. You’re completely right, of course, about the failures of actual historical liberalism, which are manifest, indeed ubiquitous, all around us. But what is the source of these failures? If liberalism has never lived up to its ostensible principles and values, that goes no way in proving that the principles and values are themselves unattractive ones. The illuminating way to understand these violations of (ideal) liberal norms, I suggest in the book, is not as the consequence of an intrinsically self-undermining “illiberalizing” dynamic within liberalism but rather as a manifestation of the corrupting results of group power, whether of the privileged classes, men, or the dominant race, for liberal theory and practice. Hence the creation of a bourgeois, patriarchal, or racial liberalism (usually all three combined, of course).

But we can appeal to the idealized, non-group-restricted versions of liberal principles and values to critique the exclusionary versions—indeed, that is precisely what most American progressive social movements have historically done. Particularly at the present time of authoritarian ethnonationalism’s attack on liberal norms, it is all the more reason to affirm them. Moreover, liberalism as I understand it is certainly not committed to an opposition to socialism in the social democratic sense—arguably, that’s just left-liberalism. And any other variety of hypothetical socialism—market socialism, workers’ democracy—would presumably strive to sell itself by promising a deeper and more extensive realization of liberal values, not their abandonment. So I would claim that the socialist case can indeed be made within a liberal framework. It’s noteworthy that Rawls—surely a respectable liberal!—says explicitly in A Theory of Justice that his theory “includes no natural right of private property in the means of production.”

As for the strategic reasons: Liberalism (in the broad-spectrum sense that includes right-wing “classical” liberals) has uncontroversially been the dominant political ideology in US history, albeit in the restrictive incarnations just delineated. So in trying to win over a broad political audience rather than preach to the choir, as I presume progressives want to do, one immediately has the immense advantage of invoking the political ideology nominally endorsed by the majority. You don’t have to require them to first convert to Marxism or Foucauldian-ism or whatever; you can just say, “If you’re a good liberal, you should support this.” That doesn’t mean that you can’t get valuable insights from Marx or Foucault, of course, but they are ultimately going to have to be “translated” into a liberal framework.

And insofar as legal change will be crucial for progressive structural reform—necessary if not sufficient—need I make the obvious point that the American and broader Western juridical systems are founded on liberal principles and assumptions? The “Black radical liberalism” I am advocating will thus be able to engage directly with its conservative juristic opponents in a way that nonliberal political ideologies will not. The Republicans generally, and the Federalist Society specifically, are certainly in no doubt themselves about the importance of fighting for particular interpretations of the Constitution and the law, which is precisely why they set out years ago to gain control of the courts. Black rights, and nonwhite rights in general, will have to be advanced by liberal arguments and liberal jurisprudence in this liberal (in the broad sense) arena.

DSJ: In a retrospective 2015 forum devoted to The Racial Contract in the journal Politics, Groups, and Identities, you issued a response to your critics which you entitled “The Racial Contract revisited: still unbroken after all these years.” What do you see as remaining fundamentally unbroken, and given your commitment to liberalism, what, if anything, has changed? What gives you hope?

CM: What I saw as unbroken at the time was the continuing reality of unjust structural white domination and unjust structural white advantage, even in the final years of the Obama presidency. The racial contract can survive such changes of personnel in governing circles; what counts, as I’ve emphasized throughout, are the structures and institutions. And I should stress that liberalism is not, in my reading, committed to the optimistic Whig progressivism traditionally ascribed to it, especially when we need to think of it as predominantly a racialized liberalism historically.

In my 2015 response, I cited a statistic mentioned by New York Times columnist Charles Blow that a 2011 survey had revealed that a majority of white Americans saw themselves as the primary victims of racial discrimination. Not an encouraging figure! But even before the Floyd killing, and before last summer’s huge multiracial demonstrations, such white racial attitudes had shifted. So that is the kind of development that gives me hope, along with the potentiality for the huge wealth disparities of the “New Gilded Age” to create the objective basis for a transracial class alliance of the socially disadvantaged. But a nonzero chance of positive racial change, however small, is obviously going to be diminished even further if one adopts a political quietism predicated on assuming its hopelessness in advance.

### AT: Patel

#### Focus on slavery misses a wider account of history.

Saldanha, 20—Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Minnesota (Arun, “A date with destiny: Racial capitalism and the beginnings of the Anthropocene,” Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, Vol 38, Issue 1, 2020, dml)

A growing number of theorists are elaborating on racial capitalism, though not always using the term, working broadly in the Fanonian tradition but pushing the ontological envelope on how race pries open the consistency of the notion of humanity as such (from Chakrabarty, 2012 in postcolonial theory to Yusoff, 2018 in new-materialist feminism via Mirzoeff, 2016 in critical race studies). It can be said there is an “ontological turn” in the theorization of race in that long-standing philosophical questions of “man,” being, life, death, temporality, historicity, embodiment, the thing, the earth, language as such, and the limits of knowledge have come to the fore (Wynter, 2013). In black studies, the ontological turn often has implicit and explicit echoes of Heidegger, ethically assuming an “Afropessimist” or even black-nihilist stance in that the hopefulness associated with African American political aspirations is shown to itself perpetuate the structural erasure of the possibility of black human-being as inaugurated in the Middle Passage and the commodification of African bodies, which are continued directly in the present (Sexton, 2016; Sharpe, 2016; Warren, 2018). Antiblackness is in this literature a fundamental feature of both modernity and scholarly thought itself. The erasure of Indigenous peoples has a similar and related profundity, and the category of settler-colonialism has in recent years allowed Indigenous scholars to radically question the legal, metaphysical, and political parameters of the socius (Byrd, 2011; Coulthard, 2014; Whyte, 2018; Wolfe, 2016). While there is no space to do justice to the nuances and sophistication of this new effervescence in black, Indigenous, and decolonial theoretical discourse—in particular their varying relations to Marxism, feminism, ecological thought, and poststructuralism—their growing international influence warrants some brief comments to distinguish the approach sketched here.

First, while the social death imparted on Indigenous Americans and enslaved Africans are certainly two originary catastrophes forming the basis of global modernity and systematically repressed in discourse, the question is not only how they are entwined, but how they interact with later violent as well as ostensibly more benevolent racializing processes, from the European conquest of the Pacific to multiculturalism in Scandinavia and Singapore, from Soviet Union ethnic policies to the exploitation of South Asian workers in the Middle East and Palestinian workers in Israel. Insofar as capital intrinsically “aims” to become-planetary, we cannot limit ourselves to the Atlantic world, or even primitive accumulation, when explaining its racial implications. Following internationalist black feminists like Angela Davis and historians of global settler-colonialism like Patrick Wolfe (2016), racial capitalism can be seen to have from the beginning involved multiple continents at once, potentializing all of the human species and planet for marketization, with varying degrees of annihilatory biopower and differential inclusion.

Second, pointing out that coercion, warfare, and letting die are at the heart of the global system does not necessarily deny the forcefulness of more seductive ideological processes. To put it bluntly, there must be more benignness to the capitalist system or it would have been overthrown long ago. Deleuze and Guattari’s work insists on the immense functionality of consumerism in chaining populations to the very megamachine which oppresses them. When Glen Coulthard (2014) takes aim at Canada’s liberal politics of recognition which slots its Indigenous peoples into a capitalist state while leaving intact the property codes which have always benefited white settlers, he tells Marx(ists) primitive accumulation encompasses not only the violences of genocide but an inculcation of possessive individualism amongst Native populations which continues unabated today (cf. Hartman, 1997 on such individualism amongst legally emancipated African Americans). If Wolfe and Coulthard conceive settler-colonialism (and primitive accumulation) as a “structure” rather than an “event,” they are in effect saying it had to transform itself from a regime of outright elimination and dispossession into a more subtle one of legalistic recognition, exploitation, and sentimental exoticization. This is not to say physical violence against Indigenous peoples is no longer prevalent. Ontologically, however, following Deleuze and Guattari (1987), more than annihilation, it is life, flow, desire, and productivity that racial capitalism feeds off, and this makes it all the more insidious.

In Christina Sharpe’s influential theorization (2016), blackness is a hole in human “being” itself, the reduction of a part of humanity to thinghood. Like others in the Afropessimist idiom, Sharpe (2016: 11–14) challenges the hegemonic assumption that the Shoah embodies modernity’s most radical evil, noting the violences of trans-Atlantic slavery not only include the still-ongoing eradication of sociocultural rootedness but have been neglected and misrepresented. In a move parallel to Coulthard’s on settler-colonialism, Sharpe conceives slavery not as a past event but the anchor of the structure of (Euro-American) society, which is in itself “antiblack” in that it is premised on the total suppression of black subjecthood. She thereby formally emulates a line of European thinkers like Giorgio Agamben on the role that the absolute abjection of Auschwitz plays in constituting the humanist mythology of modernity: if the intrinsic link between modernity and the Shoah must be disavowed for humanity to continue conceiving itself in liberal-progressivist vein, the more unspeakable disaster for Sharpe is that of slavery. But while European Jewishness constituted itself successfully after its near eradication—controversially in the form of Zionism—black being is for Sharpe always already a structural impossibility (black being as written in Heideggerian typography by Warren, 2018).

Rethinking blackness by way of modernity’s effort to extirpate it, Afropessimism’s position is radical, and it is conscious of the risk of repeating the oft-noted exceptionalist manner in which Israel puts the Shoah to use towards settler-colonial ends (see Wolfe, 2016). Black activists including Angela Davis (in a YouTube video, 2018, with Gayatri Spivak agreeing) have taken issue with this exceptionalist tendency, as inscribed in the term antiblackness and the resurgence of a black nationalism (see also Olaloku-Teriba, 2018 amongst others). Notwithstanding Sharpe’s eloquence in tracing antiblackness from the Middle Passage to refugee drownings in the Mediterranean, a Deleuze–Guattarian approach to racial capitalism differs markedly in that it seeks to map the specific modalities, gradients, and absurdities of institutional racism. Comprehending police brutality, for example, requires concepts like gentrification, securitization, and masculinity, and cannot follow directly from a negativity of blackness at the metaphysical level. We thereby avoid the quasi-theological dispute about which group has historically endured the most suffering. And while the global archives of violence against black peoples must continue to be elaborated, is it the case that slavery and racism seek to absolutely evacuate humanity from the enslaved or incarcerated body? Is it not precisely as humans capable of resistance, farming, crime, and sex that slaves were savagely oppressed? While conceptualizing blackness as dehumanized “nonbeing” makes sense in a Heideggerian framework, for Deleuze and Guattari and (broadly internationalist) feminists like Davis and Spivak, there can be no such sweeping binary between black and everything else (another critique of Afropessimist binarization is found in Day, 2015).

Finally, the historical question is how genocide and slavery prepared for capitalism. The integration of the United States of America as a white-majority nation-state and superpower could only be achieved with rapid immigration, urbanization, and fossil-fuelled transport. During the time when “pioneer” families and farmers were moving in, there were still sizeable areas controlled by Native confederations. When we look at specific regions like William Cronon (1991) does with the Midwest, the eradication of Native ecosystems and the concomitant creation of new European-derived ones—what Alfred Crosby (1986) from a more conservative angle calls “Neo-Europes”—became possible with aggressive new urban assemblages and foodways. White farmers and Indigenous populations have lived in constant tension on the Great Plains. What environmental histories like Cronon show, complementing accounts like Coulthard’s, is that there was a decisive shift in the settling of the American interior when banks could supply loans for parceling land and establishing large infrastructure and industry projects. Tellingly, movies and museums fantasize about the fleeting symbiotic relationships which are supposed to have existed between Indigenous and white. In retrospect, however, such fantasies and the ensuing lamentations about the vanishing Indian were but ideological fig leaves hiding how industrialization in Britain, intra-European imperial wars, and mass consumerism conspired to continue genocide by other means (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). If Indigenous populations had somehow become resistant to Old World diseases and continued using guns and horses efficiently, it is conceivable a patchwork of white and Indigenous states might have persisted, if it were not for a giant wave of capital and migrants coming over from Europe (and later elsewhere). With Indigenous Americans contained and plantation slavery and its quasi-feudal and patriarchal ways outlawed, capital could wipe the continent clean for a new megamachinic arrangement.

Hence ontologizing racial capitalism as always already tethered to slavery and/or genocide avoids the question when exactly “modernity” and the Anthropocene started. For the perspective I am developing, industrialization and related transformations like wage-labor, urbanization, motorized transport, and mass communications are fundamental shifts. While the slave trade and the displacement of Indigenous peoples were essential to enriching Europe for global hegemony, it is manufacturing with its intrinsic relation to proletarianization and slums, accelerating technological innovation, and an irrepressible invitation to consume which spread around the planet, which meant that extermination and coerced labor became slower and more covert processes. Doubtless there are work and mobility conditions approaching chattel slavery in all continents, and there is plenty of biopolitical domination approaching genocide even during alleged peace times. But it is difficult to see how multinational corporations, megacities, and mass migration could have obtained were it not for industrial capitalism overcoming the severe limitations built into the mercantile, plantation, colonial, and eliminationist models.

In the US itself, as scholars from WEB Du Bois (1935) onwards have shown, slavery had to be formally abolished for manufacturing and cities to kick off, spurring processes like the Great Migration of African Americans and, more fortuitously, black music. Following Deleuze and Guattari (and Marx), however dire the extraction of surplus-value from the laboring body, racial capitalism involves some degree (and ideology) of “freedom.” Saidiya Hartman’s (1997) excavation of the terroristic, legal, and psychical aspects of slavery living on after legal Emancipation demonstrates there are strong but disavowed continuities in institutional racism and misogyny. But however violent the post-Emancipation United States has been, from lynching to the prison-industrial complex to the war on crack, there was also the slow rise of black subjectivity, as testified by the black radical tradition to which Hartman herself belongs. She presents one of the finest analyses of the libidinal economies and legal codifications precluding a real black liberation from racial capitalism and individualism, hence of the hypocrisy underneath the official nationalist ideology of “we the people.” Yet an overemphasis on abjection deters from appreciating the enduring plasticity of racism.1 Politically speaking, there must be room, as there is for Du Bois, Fanon, Angela Davis, and the Black Panthers, for theorizing how a black elite could possibly emerge against such backdrop of violence and despair, and why it does not dismantle the system of privilege it gains from itself (from Booker Washington to Jay Z). To wit, if blackness is modernity’s quintessential site of abjection, it becomes difficult to explain why the “most powerful man on Earth” has been black. Afropessimists have of course passionately critiqued the deep complicity with an antiblack system shaping Barack Obama and all liberal antiracism, but true to their pessimistic stance consistently eschew formulating where exactly hope for black people (and other minorities) could come from.

#### The settler psyche thesis fails.

Rowse, 14—Professorial Fellow at the University of Western Sydney (Tim, “Indigenous Heterogeneity,” Australian Historical Studies, 45:3, 297-310, dml)

Those who cite these formulations of the logic of settler colonial society may offer compelling illustrations of ‘erasure’ or ‘elimination’: frontier violence, the removal of Indigenous children and (as some see it) the Northern Territory Emergency Intervention. However, if the ‘erasure’ thesis is to be paradigmatic, then many other illustrations must be possible. The intention of those offering the settler colonial paradigm is to outline the persistent determinant logic of a pervasive settler colonial structure, making it reasonable to ask of any instance of settler colonial authority: how does it manifest the structure of ‘elimination’ (or ‘erasure’ or ‘transfer’)?

The possible answers to that question are more numerous and diverse to the extent that we accept a feature of Wolfe’s account of the logic of elimination in the settler state and society: the concept of ‘repressive authenticity’. 11 The phrase refers to one of the ways that ‘elimination’ is effective. In performing ‘repressive authenticity’ the settler society recognises Indigenous people as bearers of a precontact culture that remains always different from the culture of the settler society. Benefits—both material and symbolic—may accrue to the Indigenous people who claim such recognition, but to gain these benefits Indigenous Australians have to perform according to certain settler colonial notions of their authenticity as Indigenous people. In a 1994 paper, Wolfe called these prescriptive notions ‘state-conceded Aboriginalities’. 12

The jurisprudence of native title could be cited as an example of ‘repressive authenticity’ or of a ‘state-conceded Aboriginality’. As critics of native title determinations—not least Noel Pearson—have pointed out, judges have spelled out what the customs of the claimants were and then translated those customs into incidents of title that are specific to each adjudicated case. The resulting ‘bundles of rights’ have been criticised for not entitling Indigenous owners to do some of the things that—as modern Indigenous people—they would now like to do with their land.13 ‘Repressive authenticity’ prescribes Aborigines’ pre modernity. Thus fortified with the concepts of ‘repressive authenticity’ and ‘state-conceded Aboriginalities’, the historian can find the settler colonial structure of elimination to be pervasive, right up to our apparently more progressive present times. For example, Wolfe invites us to see Australian land rights legislation as a ‘culturalist’ continuation of the ‘logic of elimination that the initial invasions had expressed’. 14

This settler colonial paradigm thus has the appealing quality of being empirically exhaustive: whether through the removal of children or the erection of a monument to the Stolen Generations, through the denial of native title or the recognition of native title, through the remembrance of violence or the forgetting of violence, the structure of erasure/elimination/repressive authentication does its work. The discursive power of the settler colonial state and society is inexorably effective. All representations of Indigenous Australians and all selfrepresentations by them are subject to the suspicion that they are best understood as the tactical moves of a deeply cunning settler colonial governmentality.

I have three concerns about this influential paradigm. First, can it account for itself? If the settler colonial narrative is so pervasive, how can we be sure that our self-consciously critical historiography is not just another one of its tactics? If that question seems merely a clever debating point, consider my second point: those writing within this paradigm have trouble dealing with Indigenous agency. The ‘elimination thesis’ logically requires its adherents to postulate Indigenous difference and Indigenous agency. Rarely do they forget to note and honour Indigenous agency, crediting it with indomitable persistence against the shapeshifting settler colonial hegemony. However, the paradigm encourages hesitation about characterising Indigenous difference, for to formulate Indigeneity— that is, to describe the contingent content of its difference—risks falling into the trap set by the paradigm’s own critical hermeneutics: any construction of agency as ‘Indigenous’ might be just another version of that ‘authenticity’ that is said to be repressive. Every instance of Indigenous agency is under suspicion of being ‘state-conceded’. For practitioners of the eliminationist paradigm, the inscription of ‘Indigenous agency’ is something to be left to others; for the practitioners of the eliminationist paradigm any such characterisation is always already known to be yet another manifestation of elimination’s inexorable logic. Honouring Indigeneity as ineradicable ‘difference’ tends to be a gesture made at the end of a description of the settler colonial edifice. The tendency of this paradigm is to render Indigenous agency either as ‘state-conceded’ or as an empty, counterfactual narrative space, mentioned out of political piety. The resistant Indigenous subject is beyond empirical specification, an unrepresented and unrepresentable thing that is always already external to the exhaustive discursive work of the settler colonial imagination.

Sovereignty’s moral complexity

My third point has to do with the evocation of settler colonial collective agency as tactical, shape-shifting, never absent, but variously manifest. There seem to be two quite different versions of this settler colonial agency. On the one hand, one evokes its adaptive fluidity, as the structure of settler colonial society somehow finds and invents the agents that perform the myriad tasks of elimination, erasure and repressive recognition; the settler colonial structure is always tactically resourceful in the agencies of its deployment. On the other hand, settler colonial agency is evoked as a collective agent, an enduring national psyche that is anxious, divided, ambivalent, troubled by unresolvable tensions within its project. The attribution of affect to the settler colonial mentality or archive preserves the idea of a singular collective settler agency, as if settler colonies were persons.

It would be easy to exaggerate the idea that settler colonial ambivalence can be narrated as ‘anxiety’. While I have no doubt that there have been anxious agents, the characterisation of particular settler colonial agents as ‘anxious’ is not easy to support empirically, and as a reader I have often had the feeling that the writer depicting ‘anxiety’ is ‘presentist’: ‘From the standpoint of my values, what you did and said back then should have made you anxious’.

A more impersonal analysis enables us to move from anxious agents to contending structures. It is more productive, I suggest, to account more impersonally for ‘settler colonial society’, to evoke it in terms of structures and tendencies to which agents get recruited; I am sympathetic to Wolfe’s structuralism. However, I am not persuaded by his presentation of a singular structure’s relentless consistency, its inexorable logic (of ‘elimination’ or of anything else). Wolfe’s emplotment of settler colonialism interpellates the historian/reader in a compact of epistemological and political certainty: we know what’s going to happen because it always does. My contrary preference is to see history as less predictable, messier, more surprising and occasionally more hopeful. The recent contention of ‘Indigeneities’ has invigorated my uncertainties.

### AT: Da Silva

#### Da Silva’s method must account for the context and consequences of theoretical uptake outside of debate, and how institutions respond—otherwise they reproduce material exclusion. Empowering collective legal actions is emancipatory—social oppression determines psychic oppression, not the other way around.

Nayak and Sheehy, 20—senior lecturer in social work at the University of Salford AND graduate student in International Labour and Trade Union Studies at Ruskin College, citing numerous scholars internally (Suryia and Chris, “Black feminist methods of activism are the tool for global social justice and peace,” Critical Social Policy, 2020, Vol. 40(2): 234–257, dml) [this card references sexual violence]

Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward: ‘the chief question to be examined must inevitably be the relationship between what the protestors do, the context in which they do it, and the varying responses of the state’ (Fox Piven and Cloward, 1979: xx)

Suryia Nayak: In my experience, the context and responses of the establishment become dislocated from the thinking and shaping of our activist actions. Consequently, too often, the constraints on our activist actions and outcomes become internalized; this fuels burn-out, reinforces feelings of failure and risks cessation. The relationship between the establishment and what we do as activists is complicated by the inherent tension that it is the establishment that we are both dependent upon and fighting against. Context includes our personal domestic responsibilities like paying bills, raising our children, being unwell and generally staving off pressures on multiple fronts. Context also includes prevailing social structures such as, patriarchy, racism and capitalism. The constraining dynamics between, what we do, context, and the responses we receive, must be explicit in evaluating all of our activist work. Recriminations, fragmentation and exhaustion must be re-positioned from ourselves to the source of the problem, namely context and establishment responses. Angela Davis: ‘In the heat of our pursuit of fundamental human rights, black people have been continually cautioned to be patient. We are advised that as long as we remain faithful to the existing democratic order, the glorious moment will eventually arrive when we will come into our own as full-fledged human beings. But having been taught by bitter experience, we know that there is a glaring incongruity between democracy and the capitalist economy which is the source of our ills.’ (Davis, 1971: 39, emphasis in original)

Chris

Sheehy: The incongruity is that the establishment uses all manner of force when the oppressed lose their ‘patience’ and respond in the same vein. A meagre amount, if any, commitment is given to interrogating injustice.

The activist refuses to be indifferent to the acts and alienating consequences of structural oppression. The activist is hungry to challenge the words and actions of the powerful. In addition to offering individual support, proportionate to loss, and context, the activist, imagines social transformation, and organises using ideological persuasion, negotiation, advocacy, protest, education, and militancy, to achieve change (Sewell, 2003; Schock, 2015).

June Jordan: ‘Nevertheless, people lose their jobs or their lives and still the reaction is cooperative. We try to speak clearly and to spare the feelings of the listener. We shave and shower and put on a clean shirt for the meeting. We volunteer to make phone calls, or coffee, or submit to the outcome of a vote about what shall I do. I have been raped: Who will speak for me? What are the bylaws? The courtesies of order, of ruly forms pursued from a heart of rage or terror or grief defame the truth of every human crisis. And that, indeed, is the plan: To defuse and to deform the motivating truth of critical response to pain’ (Jordan, 1981: 178)

Suryia Nayak: One of the earliest messages given me in ending violence against women and girl campaigns and services, was, that our refusal as women of colour to remain silent goes against every message, strategy and plan this oppressive world has for us. We are not meant to realise our power to resist and transform. We are swimming against the tide. It is little wonder that the truth of women’s pain is defused, defamed and deformed – the function of which is to shut us up. In the 2012 ‘Declaring the Activism of Black Feminist Theory’ gathering in Manchester, Black women asked why people could not hear what they were saying, ‘Do I need to be more articulate? Is it the words I am using? How can I say it clearer? How do I make it more accessible? Kimberlé Crenshaw replied, ‘the problem is not a matter of how your message is transmitted, the problem is a refusal of the message.’ The point is, re-position the problem!

I am reminded of the tension between talking about what needs to be done and actually doing what needs to be done! Of course, strategies, policies and mechanisms of accountability and quality assurance are necessities, particularly in a commissioned funding economy. In my experience within Rape Crisis centres, there must be vigilance around the balance between holding onto non-hierarchical Black feminist collective working practices and the requirement to construct governance structures that fit with the likes of the Charity Commission and funding bodies. In order to sustain ourselves, each other and our activism, the ‘motivating truth of critical response to pain’ must shape everything we do and say. This keeps the relationship between what we do, contexts in which we do it, and the responses we receive, explicit; this requires a level of conscious rigorous consistency and discipline of thinking. I argue for ‘[p]utting a hypervigilant anti-racist remembering to work’ (Nayak, 2017: 205). I have found that having Black feminist texts like Lorde’s ‘Sister Outsider’ (1984) and the Combahee River Collective Statement (1977) present and referred to at activist meetings, gatherings and discussions, function as invaluable orientating touch-stones.

Chris Sheehy: Revisiting our own and others’ past activism is essential; not a sentimental melancholic missing to longingly retire to past familiar struggles for reminiscence sake. Revisiting activist struggles across a temporal spectrum is for reflexive scrutiny, to identify the elements of the current crisis. This historical comparative method reveals what has been achieved and what still has to be done. Scrutiny has to enable an intersectional acuity that goes beyond a single issue frame: a Black feminist intersectional lens (Kanneh, 1998).

Patricia Hill Collins: ‘What criteria, if any, can be applied to ideas to determine whether they are in fact Black and feminist?’ (Hill Collins, 2000: 18)

Suryia Nayak: Black feminist ideas are constituted of the dialectic and the dialogical; the dialectic is that Black feminist concepts are born out of Black women’s intersectional experiences of racist oppression, in order to confront that very same intersectional racist oppression. The dialogical is that Black feminist ideas are born out of a continual dialogue with struggles for intersectional anti-racist social justice – and this is what sets Black feminist methodologies of activism apart from other methodologies.

Solidarity: Organizing across difference

Chris Sheehy: History is a ‘moment’ in time. This ‘moment’ is characterised by crisis: lack of solidarity across differences; inability to organise due to the perceived enormity of the task; struggling conceptually; and the establishment failing the poorest and powerless (Fanon, 2008; Jones, 2015; Sassoon, 2014).

Building inclusive, active coalitions is urgently required. Despite the crisis, the losses, the failed attempts, dialogue across difference must continue. I am conscious of having this dialogue with Black women, me a white woman, each living a different experience, and communicating with one another about oppression, power, vulnerability, and imagining change about what is to be done, separately, and in alliance, and what we can win!.

Barbara Smith: ‘The only way that we can win – and before winning, the only way we can survive is by working with each other, and not seeing each other as enemies’ (Taylor, 2017: 64)

Chris Sheehy: You imagine the gains of struggle across difference when taking a socialist stance. ‘Not seeing each other as enemies’, does not negate differences, deny apprehensions and discord, or suspend healthy scepticism. Black Trade Unionists positively use models of separate organising, separate reflective spaces, to advise specific strategies for specific intersectional oppressions.

Claudia Jones: ‘We can accelerate the militancy of Negro women to the degree with which we demonstrate that the economic, political and social demands of Negro when are not just ordinary demands, but special demands flowing from special discrimination facing Negro women as women, as workers, and as Negroes . . . Yes, and it means that a struggle for social equality of Negro women must be boldly fought in every sphere of relations between men and women so that the door of Party membership doesn’t become a revolving door because of our failure to conduct the struggle’ (BoyceDavies, 2008: 29)

Chris Sheehy: My own activism included casework, organising, and supporting Black Trade Unionists’ grievances concerning intersections of racism, which disproportionately also denied the professional recognition our Black members deserved. Black members spoke about racism and how their voices were ignored, their research marginalised, their right to promotion ignored, and their Black Feminist scholarship attacked. Black members endured a shortage of Black representatives available as caseworkers, when it was important to have access to experienced skilled Black representatives who recognised the specificity of racism. I viewed equality cases as structural oppression, and was simultaneously tenacious to ensure that individual equality cases had the strength of our union to overcome the toughest resistance, made their way on to the collective bargaining table, and were escalated and prioritised within the national Union. We represented all cases from Black members to ensure the best possible advice and strongest action. Our Black members’ cases became collective campaigns, locally, regionally, and nationally; and became Union legal priorities. My experience of working on cases of intersectional racisms is that they should receive expert legal advice as early as possible, to develop case law in this area. This would then constitute an intersectional strategic approach, which simultaneously addresses racism, identity and context. An intersection of strategic approaches to intersectional racism, including, from the local and national to the global, would build a context of remedy; thereby serving the need of the individual bringing the case and future collective protection for the broader membership to import a preventative function, provoking change in all workplaces. To date, I have not attended one formal employee complaint where an intersectional lens was suggested, other than when I forced the issue. Without the entirety of the workplace having proper access and ongoing inclusion, a Trade Union is lost. My learning is, when a member is assisted and welcomed; when representations of the diversity of membership is publicised; when word of mouth recommendations testify that equality is fought for vociferously; this begins to assist in building hard won solidarity across intersectional differences.

Activism includes the headache of resourcing; logistics; logistical arguments; long hours; mental and physical exhaustion; lack of sleep; witnessing hostility; prematurely ending of action; bureaucratic controls; and vicarious trauma. In my experience, activism across difference is complex to organise but vital for building solidarity.

Suryia Nayak: Speaking as a woman of colour, for whom Trade Union advocacy and support was instrumental in confronting racism, I ask, can the racial grief of Black women speak? The difference between mourning and melancholia is that mourning is a grief that can be gotten oven. In contrast, melancholia is a grief that cannot be gotten over. I believe that, as long as there is racism, there is no getting over the grief racism causes. So, in this racist world, I am in racial melancholia. The multiple interconnected losses of racism are far reaching. My racial melancholia, shaped by daily micro-aggressions of intersectional racism, and the specificity of formally confronting racism through available institutional processes, include: finding out, who is there for me/us and who is not; finding out, what is bearable in terms of being knocked down, disappointed and exhausted and being able to rise up again; and, finding out, how easily my self-confidence can take a bashing. Mindful that it is not the job of Black people to educate white people about racism, I was conscious of the delicate balance of exposing my levels of vulnerability and teaching white Trade Union activists about the intimate details of the damaging psychological impact of intersectional racism.

Combahee River Collective: ‘As Black feminists we are made constantly and painfully aware of how little effort white women have made to understand and combat their racism, which requires among other things that they have a more than superficial comprehension of race, color, and Black history and culture. Eliminating racism in the white women’s movement is by definition work for white women to do, but we will continue to speak and demand accountability on this issue’ (Combahee River Collective, 1977: 270). Suryia Nayak: In my experience, this was and continues to be an extra task for Black Trade Union members in relation to white Trade Union representatives, on whom I was reliant for their skills of negotiation and advocacy; a task, white Trade Union members, and white people generally, don’t confront. Furthermore, I recognize that working with cases of racism isn’t easy for antiracist white Trade Union representatives, who have the challenge of not retreating into defensive responses, but have to hold the emotional and material pain of the issues of racism they are working with for Black members.

Barbara Smith: ‘There are ethical principles that you can see in any significant political intervention in history. You will see – one of the things that you should see in positive movements move forward toward justice – not toward power – because there are many interventions that were just about the accrual of power, where you didn’t really have that mentality and that principle of "We must all be in this together." But if it’s a forward movement towards justice, you will see that people with different backgrounds and different places in a social structure actually at times come together’ (Taylor, 2017: 64–65)

Suryia Nayak: I believe that showing and articulating my vulnerability due to my experiences of intersectional racism, strengthened the quality of my interactions with the white Trade Unionist who was helping me, which in turn strengthened the quality of how we were able to represent my grievances. Once I batted away insidious creeping suspicion that predominantly white Trade Unions use cases of racism, including my own, for the status, profile and power-base of the Trade Union movement, I do believe that we had solidarity across our differences in a united demand for justice.

Audre Lorde: ‘Our future survival is predicated upon our ability to relate within equality. As women, we must root out internalized patterns of oppression within ourselves if we are to move beyond the most superficial aspects of social change . . . The future of our earth may depend upon the ability of all women to identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of relating across difference. The old definitions have not served us, nor the earth that supports us . . . the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house [ ] Change means growth, and growth can be painful. But we sharpen self-definition by exposing self in work and struggle together with those whom we define as different from ourselves, although sharing the same goals. For Black and white, old and young, lesbian and heterosexual women alike, this can mean new paths to our survival’ (Lorde, 1980: 123)

The interregnum

Antonio Gramsci: ‘The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear’ (Gramsci, 1971: 276).

Chris Sheehy: I understand the term ‘interregnum’ to mean, a gap, a pause, an ‘in between’ position, loss of confidence in the old. The conditions of an ‘interregnum’ are consistent with an established power dying, not dead, and hence ‘crisis’and fracture. The transformation of social, political, economic relations is yet to be initiated, plans for transformation will meet resistance, and repressive reaction before the old order replaced.

Suryia Nayak: Taking the concept of the ‘interregnum’ into the lived experience of activism, we must think about an ‘interregnum’ functioning intersectionally on a material, structural, psychological, macro and micro level. The importance of placing the idea of an ‘interregnum under the lens of intersectionality, is that inhabiting an ‘interregnum’ space is inevitably a multidimensional context. In this intersectional frame, the sum of the variables is greater than the sum of the material (resources), plus the structural (institutional/organizational apparatus), plus the psychic (the emotional toll), and these operate simultaneously on a macro (national and international) and micro (daily interactions) dimension; where the macro level is re-produced on a micro level. The lens of intersectionality, offers high resolution pictures of the multifaceted nuances of the difficulties felt in a borderland space, where ‘the old is dying and the new cannot be born’. This level of scrutiny is vital for building strategies to survive and transcend the ‘interregnum’ borderlands. For example, in the early 1990s, I worked to establish a Black women’s Rape crisis service in a predominately white women’s service. Drawing on the legacy of Black feminism with the support of a Black feminist activist called Andrea Tara-Chand, I had an objective, yet to be ‘born’, and sure enough, just as Gramsci warned ‘in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear[ed]’ (Gramsci, 1971: 276). On a macro organizational level, morbid symptoms were manifest in the membership and structure of this Rape Crisis collective. Within months of designing and delivering a Black feminist Rape Crisis volunteer training course, one by one, for their own legitimate reasons, the existing white women volunteers and paid workers of this established Rape Crisis service left. In addition, the new Black women members questioned the viability of the existing collective structure in regards to transparency of power and responsibility.

I hung onto the belief that these ‘morbid symptoms’ were not a measure of the legitimacy or value of the objective, methodology and outcome of creating a Black women’s Rape Crisis service. As Black women, the internalised ‘injurious interpellations’ (Butler, 1997: 104) of racism can too quickly become equated with the morbid symptoms of being in the in- between space of giving birth to a new way of doing things. It is no coincidence that the final stages of labour, before giving birth, is called the ‘transition’ phase; contractions are intense and the woman’s body makes the shift, from opening the cervix, to the beginning of the baby’s descent. It is a painful, exhausting stage, typified by physical symptoms of shaking, nausea and vomiting, interwoven with feeling overwhelmed.

On a micro level, such was the power of this Black feminist Rape Crisis consciousness raising process, that the Black women on the course, including Andrea and myself, experienced our own personal, psychological ‘interregnum’ and our own particular ‘variety of morbid symptoms’. For example, we all started to question, the power dynamics in our marriages and personal relationships; our silences; the inadequacy of language to express our sensuality and sexuality; the putting up with aspects of our lives that went beyond compromises; and our internalised racist hatred and harm of self and each other. On a collective and personal level, this was/is not an easy questioning – hence the ‘morbid’. The training created a space of thinking and feeling as Black women together, where old, established patterns of thinking and feeling were fading; for example, the equation of ‘vulnerability as weakness’ and the yet to be born, equation of ‘vulnerability as strength’. Through deep connection with the activism of Black feminist theory, we gained increasing confidence in questioning the ‘cannot’ in our lives and ultimately Gramsci’s idea that ‘the new cannot be born’.

Antonio Gramsci: ‘The question I ask is ‘[w]ill the interregnum, the crisis whose historically normal solution is blocked in this way, necessarily be resolved in favour of a restoration of the old?’ (Gramsci, 1971: 276).

Chris Sheehy: To avoid ‘a restoration of the old’, we use this interregnum to build something solid, to struggle for socioeconomic and political justice, Globally. Our songs and beliefs are hopeful, but, in truth, there isn’t the solidarity that is anywhere near what is required.

Dan Gallin: ‘Comrades: The European labour movement is today the target of an onslaught not experienced since the 1930s. This is not a passing phase. There will not be a return to what was considered normal social relations in the thirty years after the war. The project of contemporary capitalism is the destruction of the labour movement, in Europe in North America and eventually everywhere else. Their project is the reorganization of world society without organized labour. What they want is a society of slaves.’ (Gallin, 2014: 258)

Chris Sheehy: We undermine fellow workers across the world, we buy cheap disposable clothing, made in unsafe sweat shops, where workers receive barely enough to exist, then we discard the same products, our planet is further threatened. As a Health and Safety Rep, recalling dialogue with comrades seeking justice since Bhopal, reminds us, we fail to organise around workers safety globally. Our comrades, in the sweat shops are driven harder, and we are further alienated from one another. We, as workers witness other workers and their communities’ suffer for profit. Deregulated corporate production of antibiotics, clothing and chemicals, means that safety is compromised to secure profit. The premises go on fire, exits are not visible, cheap goods are piled high and block exits, workers die, families and communities are devastated, the planet suffers, we all suffer further alienation, and solidarity moves further from our grasp.

Angela Davis: ‘But having been taught by bitter experience, we know that there is a glaring incongruity between democracy and capitalist economy, which is the source of our ills . . . The people do not exercise decisive control over the determining factors of their lives. Official assertions that meaningful dissent is always welcome, provided it falls within boundaries of legality, are frequently a smokescreen obscuring the invitation to acquiesce in oppression’ (Davis, 1971: 39).

Suryia Nayak: The ‘smokescreen’ is not just a mechanism of the oppressor; smokescreens are alive within spaces of activism. It brings to mind Bhabha’s’ idea of ‘sly civility’ (1994: 93–102), whereby, well intentioned mission statements, posters on walls, books on shelves and fair trade products in kitchens, constitute smokescreens that obscure silent ambivalence towards the giving up of privilege. In my experience of feminist collective working, where anti-hierarchical structures are a defiance of patriarchy, the ‘invitation to acquiesce in oppression’ (Davis, 1971: 39) is a tricky ‘smokescreen’, because it functions under the guise of feminist equality. However, the division of labour: who washes up; empties bins; photocopies; and lifts boxes, in contrast to, who chairs meetings; who takes and is given space to have voice; and who represents the organization externally, replicate unequal relationships of power and appropriation that collective working is meant to address. In short, activist or not, we are all implicated, because oppressive social structures create oppressive psychic structures (Nayak, 2015: 1, 51; Oliver, 2001: 34).

### AT: Vimalassery

#### Their understanding of the state as unified, immutable, and inevitably dangerous to Indigenous actors creates a pessimism trap that stifles Indigenous agency and activism.

Lightfoot, 20—associate professor in First Nations and Indigenous Studies and the Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia, Ojibwe (Sheryl, “The Pessimism Traps of Indigenous Resurgence,” *Pessimism in International Relations*, Chapter 9, pp 162-170, SpringerLink, dml)

Pessimism Trap 2: The State is Unified, Deliberate and Unchanging in Its Desire to Dispossess Indigenous Peoples and Gain Unfettered Access to Indigenous Lands and Resources

In other words, colonialism by settler states is a constant, not a variable, in both outcome and intent. Further, the state is not only intentionally colonial, but it is also unifed in its desire to co-opt Indigenous peoples as a method and means of control.

In 2005’s Wasase, Alfred presents the state as unitary, intentional and unchanging in its desire to colonise and oppress Indigenous peoples noting, ‘I think that the only thing that has changed since our ancestors first declared war on the invaders is that some of us have lost heart’.22 Referring to current state policies as a ‘self-termination movement’, Alfred states, ‘It is senseless to advocate for an accord with imperialism while there is a steady and intense ongoing attack by the Settler society on everything meaningful to us: our cultures, our communities, and our deep attachments to land’.23

Alfred’s Peace, Power, Righteousness (2009) also argues that the state is deliberate and unchanging, stating quite plainly that ‘it is still the objective of the Canadian and US governments to remove Indians, or, failing that, to prevent them from benefitting, from their ancestral territories’.24 Contemporary states do this, he argues, not through outright violent control but ‘by insidiously promoting a form of neo-colonial self-government in our communities and forcing our integration into the legal mainstream’.25 According to Alfred, the state ‘relegates indigenous peoples’ rights to the past, and constrains the development of their societies by allowing only those activities that support its own necessary illusion: that indigenous peoples today do not present a serious challenge to its legitimacy’.26

Linking back to the aim of co-option, Alfred argues that while the state’s desire to control Indigenous peoples and lands has never changed, the techniques for doing so have become subtler over time. ‘Recognizing the power of the indigenous challenge and unable to deny it a voice’, due to successful Indigenous resistance over the years, ‘the state has (now) attempted to pull indigenous people closer to it’.27 According to Alfred, the state has outwitted Indigenous leaders and ‘encouraged them to reframe and moderate their nationhood demands to accept the fait accompli of colonization, (and) to collaborate in the development of a “solution” that does not challenge the fundamental imperial lie’.28

In a similar vein, Coulthard’s central argument is centred on his understanding of the dual structure of colonialism. Drawing directly from Fanon, Coulthard finds that colonialism relies on both objective and subjective elements. The objective components involve domination through the political, economic and legal structures of the colonial state. The subjective elements of colonialism involve the creation of ‘colonized subjects’, including a process of internalisation by which colonised subjects come to not only accept the limited forms of ‘misrecognition’ granted through the state but can even come to identify with it.29 Through this dual structure, colonial power now works through the inclusion of Indigenous peoples, actively shaping their perspectives in line with state discourses, rather than merely excluding them, as in years past. Therefore, any attempt to seek ‘the reconciliation of Indigenous nationhood with state sovereignty is still colonial insofar as it remains structurally committed to the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of our lands and self-determining authority’.30

Concerning the state in relation to Indigenous peoples on the international level, Corntassel argues that states and global organisations, for years, have been consistently framing Indigenous peoples’ self-determination claims in ways that ‘jeopardize the futures of indigenous communities’.31 He claims that states frst compartmentalise Indigenous self-determination by separating lands and resources from political and legal recognition of a limited autonomy. Second, he notes, states sometimes deny the existence of Indigenous peoples living within their borders. Thirdly, a political and legal entitlement framing by states deemphasises other responsibilities. Finally, he claims that states, through the rights discourse, limit the frameworks through which Indigenous peoples can seek self-determination. Like Alfred and Coulthard, Corntassel has concluded that states are deliberate and never changing in their behaviour. With this move, Corntassel limits and actually demeans Indigenous agency, overlooking the reality that Indigenous organisations themselves chose the human rights framework and rights discourse as a target sphere of action precisely because, as was evident in earlier struggles like slavery, civil rights or women’s rights, these were tools available to them that had a proven track record of opening up new possibilities and shifting previous state positions and behaviour. Indigenous advocates also cleverly realised, by the 1970s, that the anti-discrimination and decolonisation frames could be used together against states. States did, in no way, nefariously impose a rights framework on Indigenous peoples. Rather, Indigenous organisations and savvy Indigenous political actors deliberately chose to frame their self-determination struggles within the human rights framework in order to bring states into a double bind where they could not credibly claim to adhere to human rights and claim that they uphold equality while simultaneously denying Indigenous peoples’ human rights and leaving them with a diminished and unequal right of self-determination. But, because he is caught in the pessimism trap of seeing the state only as unified, deliberate and unchanging, Corntassel overlooks and diminishes the clear story of Indigenous agency and the potential for positive change in advancing self-determination in a multitude of ways.

Pessimism Trap 3: Engagement with the Settler State is Futile, if Not Counter-Productive

Since the state always intends to maintain, if not expand, colonial control, and is seeking to co-opt as many Indigenous peoples as possible in order to maintain or expand its dispossession and control, it is therefore futile, at best, and actually dangerous to Indigenous existence to engage with the state. Furthermore, all patterns of engagement will lead to co-optation as the state is cunning and unrelenting in its desire to co-opt Indigenous leaders, academics and professionals in order to gain or maintain control of Indigenous peoples.

Alfred argues, in both his 2005 and 2009 books, that any Indigenous engagement with the state, including agreements and negotiations, is not only futile but fundamentally dangerous, as such pathways do not directly challenge the existing colonial structure and ‘to argue on behalf of indigenous nationhood within the dominant Western paradigm is self-defeating’.32 Alfred states that a ‘notion of nationhood or self-government rooted in state institutions and framed within the context of state sovereignty can never satisfy the imperatives of Native American political traditions’33 because the possibility for a true expression of Indigenous self-determination is ‘precluded by the state’s insistence on dominion and its exclusionary notion of sovereignty’.34 Worst of all, according to Alfred, when Indigenous communities frame their struggles in terms of asserting Aboriginal rights and title, but do so within a state framework, rather than resisting the state itself, it ‘represents the culmination of white society’s efforts to assimilate indigenous peoples’.35

Because it is impossible to advance Indigenous self-determination through any sort of engagement with the state, Coulthard also advocates for an Indigenous resurgence paradigm that follows both his mentor Taiaiake Alfred but also Anishinaabe feminist theorist Leanne Simpson.36 As Coulthard writes, ‘both Alfred and Simpson start from a position that calls on Indigenous peoples and communities to “turn away” from the assimilative reformism of the liberal recognition approach and to instead build our national liberation efforts on the revitalization of “traditional” political values and practices’.37 Drawing upon the prescriptive approach of these theorists, Coulthard proposes, in his concluding chapter, five theses from his analysis that are intended to build and solidify Indigenous resurgence into the future:

1. On the necessity of direct action, meaning that physical forms of Indigenous resistance, like protest and blockades, are very important not only as a reaction to the state but also as a means of protecting the lands that are central to Indigenous peoples’ existence;

2. Capitalism, No More!, meaning the rejection of capitalist forms of economic development in Indigenous communities in favour of land-based Indigenous political-economic alternative approaches;

3. Dispossession and Indigenous Sovereignty in the City, meaning the need for Indigenous resurgence movements ‘to address the interrelated systems of dispossession that shape Indigenous peoples’ experiences in both urban and land-based settings’38;

4. Gender Justice and Decolonisation, meaning that decolonisation must also include a shift away from patriarchy and an embrace of gender relations that are non-violent and refective of the centrality of women in traditional forms of Indigenous governance and society; and

5. Beyond the Nation-State. While Coulthard denies that he advocates complete rejection of engagement with the state’s political and legal system, he does assert that ‘our efforts to engage these discursive and institutional spaces to secure recognition of our rights have not only failed, but have instead served to subtly reproduce the forms of racist, sexist, economic, and political confgurations of power that we initially sought…to challenge’.39 He therefore advocates expressly for ‘critical self-refection, skepticism, and caution’ in a ‘resurgent politics of recognition that seeks to practice decolonial, gender-emancipatory, and economically nonexploitative alternative structures of law and sovereign authority grounded on a critical refashioning of the best of Indigenous legal and political traditions’.40

Corntassel also demonstrates the third pessimism trap, that all engagement with the state is ultimately futile. For the most part, however, Corntassel’s observation is that the UN system operates like a reverse Keck and Sikkink ‘boomerang model’ and ‘channels the energies of transnational Indigenous networks into the institutional fiefdoms of member countries’, by which an ‘illusion of inclusion’ is created.41 He argues that, in order to be included or their views listened to, Indigenous delegates at the UN must mimic the strategies, language, norms and modes of behaviour of member states and international institutions. Corntassel fnds that ‘what results is a cadre of professionalized Indigenous delegates who demonstrate more allegiance to the UN system than to their own communities’.42 In his final analysis, he charges that the co-optation of international Indigenous political actors is highly ‘effective in challenging the unity of the global Indigenous rights movement and hindering genuine dialogue regarding Indigenous self-determination and justice’.43

Finding that states deliberately co-opt and provide ‘illusions of inclusion’ to Indigenous political actors in UN settings, Corntassel comes to the same conclusion as Alfred concerning the futility of engagement, arguing that because transnational Indigenous networks are ‘channeled’ and ‘blunted’ by colonial state actors, ‘it is a critical time for Indigenous peoples to rethink their approaches to bringing Indigenous rights concerns to global forums’.44

Imagining a Post-Colonial Future: Pessimistic ‘Resurgence’ Versus the Optimism and Tenacity of Indigenous Movements on the Ground

All of these writers advocate Indigenous resurgence, through a combination of rejecting the current reconciliation politics of settler colonial states, coupled with a return to land-based Indigenous expressions of governance as the only viable, ‘authentic’ and legitimate path to a better future for Indigenous peoples, which they refer to as decolonisation. While inherently critical in their orientation, these three approaches do make some positive and productive contributions to Indigenous movements. They help shed light on the various and subtle ways that Indigenous leaders and communities can become co-opted into a colonial system. They help us to hold leadership accountable. They also help us keep a strong focus on our traditional, cultural and spiritual values as well as our traditional forms of governance which then also helps us imagine future possibilities.

As I have pointed out here, however, all three theorists are also caught in the same three pessimism traps: authenticity versus co-option; a vision of the state as unified, deliberate and never changing in its desire to colonise and control; and a view of engagement with the state as futile, if not dangerous, to Indigenous sovereignty and existence. When combined, these three pessimism traps aim to inhibit Indigenous peoples’ engagement with the state in any process that could potentially re-imagine and re-formulate their current relationship into one that could be transformative and post-colonial, as envisioned by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The pessimism traps together work to foreclose any possibility that there could be credible openings of opportunity to negotiate a fairer and just relationship of co-existence with even the most progressive state government.

This pessimistic approach is not innocuous. By overemphasising structure and granting the state an enormous degree of agency as a unitary actor, this pessimistic approach does a remarkable disservice to Indigenous resistance movements by proscribing, from academia, an extremely narrow view of what Indigenous self-determination can and should mean in practice. By overlooking and/or discounting Indigenous agency and not even considering the possibility that Indigenous peoples could themselves be calculating, strategic political actors in their own right, and vis-à-vis states, the pessimistic lens of the resurgence school unnecessarily, unproductively and unjustly limits the field of possibility for Indigenous peoples’ decision-making, thus actually countering and inhibiting expressions of Indigenous self-determination. By condemning—writ large—all Indigenous peoples and organisations that wish to seek peaceful co-existence with the state, negotiate mutually beneficial agreements with the state, and/or who have advocated on the international level for a set of standards that can provide a positive guiding framework for Indigenous-state relations, the pessimistic lens of resurgence forecloses much potential for new and improved relations, in any form, and is very likely to lead to deeper conflicts between states and Indigenous peoples, and potentially, even violent action, which Fanon indicated was the necessary outcome. The pessimism traps of the resurgence school are therefore, likely self-defeating for all but the most remote and isolated Indigenous communities. Further, this approach is quite out of step with the actions and vision of many Indigenous resistance movements on the ground who have been working for decades to advance Indigenous self-determination, both domestically and globally, in ways that transform the colonial state into something more just and may eventually present creative alternatives to the Westphalian state form in ways that could respect and accommodate Indigenous nations. Rather, it aims to shame and blame those who wish to explore creative and innovative post-colonial resolutions to the colonial condition.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration or UN Declaration) was adopted by the General Assembly in 2007 after 25 years of development. The Declaration is ground-breaking, given the key leadership roles Indigenous peoples played in negotiating and achieving this agreement.45 Additionally, for the first time in UN history, the rights holders, Indigenous peoples, worked with states to develop an instrument that would serve to promote, protect and affirm Indigenous rights, both globally and in individual domestic contexts.46

Many Indigenous organisations and movements, from dozens of countries around the world, were involved in drafting and negotiating the UN Declaration and are now advocating for its full implementation, both internationally and in domestic and regional contexts. In Canada, some of the key organisational players—the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), the Assembly of First Nations, and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, or their predecessor organisations—were involved in the drafting and lengthy negotiations of the UN Declaration during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. In the United States, organisations like the American Indian Law Alliance and the Native American Rights Fund have been involved as well as the Navajo Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, who represent themselves as Indigenous peoples’ governing institutions. From Scandinavia, the Saami Council and the Sami Parliaments all play a key role in advancing Indigenous rights. In Latin America, organisations like the Confederación de Nationalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE) and the Consejo Indio de Sud America (CISA) advocate for implementation of the UN Declaration. The three, major transnational Indigenous organisations— the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, the International Indian Treaty Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Council—were all key members of the drafting and negotiating team for the UN Declaration, and the latter two, which are still in existence, continue their strong advocacy for its full implementation.

Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples requires fundamental and significant change, on both the international and domestic levels. Because implementation of Indigenous rights essentially calls for a complete and fundamental restructuring of Indigenous-state relationships, it expects states to enact and implement a signifcant body of legal, constitutional, legislative and policy changes that can accommodate such things as Indigenous land rights, free, prior and informed consent, redress and a variety of self-government, autonomy and other such arrangements. States are not going to implement this multifaceted and complex set of changes on their own, however. They will require significant political and moral pressure to hold them accountable to the rhetorical commitments they have made to support this level of change. They will also require ongoing conversation and negotiation with Indigenous peoples along the way, lest the process becomes problematically one-sided. Such processes ultimately require sustained political will, commitment and engagement over the long term, to reach the end result of radical systemic change and Indigenous state relationships grounded in mutual respect, co-existence and reciprocity. This type of fundamental change requires creative thinking, careful diplomacy, tenacity, and above all, optimistic vision, on the part of Indigenous peoples. The pessimistic approaches of the resurgence school are ultimately of little use in these efforts, other than as a cautionary tale against state power, of which the organisational players are already keenly aware. Further, by dismissing and discouraging all efforts at engagement with states, and especially with the blanket accusations that all who engage in such efforts are ‘co-opted’ and not ‘authentically’ Indigenous, the resurgence school actually creates unnecessary negative feelings and divisions amongst Indigenous movements who should be pooling limited resources and working together towards better futures.

# Block

## Topicality

### Should

#### Should requires government action.

**Ericson’3**(Jon M., Dean Emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts – California Polytechnic U., et al., The Debater’s Guide, Third Edition, p. 4)

The Proposition of Policy: Urging Future Action In policy propositions, each topic contains certain key elements, although they have slightly different functions from comparable elements of value-oriented propositions**. 1.**An agent doing the acting ---“The UnitedStates” in “The United States should adopt a policy of free trade.” Like the object of evaluation in a proposition of value, the agent is the subject of the sentence. 2. The verb should—the first part of a verb phrase thaturges action. 3. An action verb to follow *should* in the *should*-verb combination. For example, *should adopt* here means to put a program or policy into action though governmental means. 4. A specification of directions or a limitation of the action desired. The phrase *free trade*, for example, gives direction and limits to the topic, which would, for example, eliminate consideration of increasing tariffs, discussing diplomatic recognition, or discussing interstate commerce. Propositions of policy deal with future action. Nothing has yet occurred. The entire debate is about whether something ought to occur**.** What you agree to do, then, when you accept the *affirmative side* in such a debate is to offer sufficient and compelling reasons for an audience to perform the future action that you propose.