# Cap K vs K Aff---BFHR

## core

### 1nc communist horizon vs anti-blackness [short]

#### The aff’s appeal to a univocal black politics that transcends material interests colludes with neoliberal regimes of accumulation to sustains racial inequalities and foreclose building coalitions necessary to dispossess the capitalist classes

---link to historical analogies

---link to “black” politics as monolith

**Reed 19** [Adolph Reed Jr., professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, “What Materialist Black Political History Actually Looks Like,” January 8, 2019, <https://nonsite.org/editorial/what-materialist-black-political-history-actually-looks-like>]

As the argument has progressed, a de facto alliance between ostensibly progressive identitarians and Wall Street Democrats has come together around asserting, along with Paul Krugman and others,3 that “horizontal inequality”—i.e., inequality between statistically defined racial/ethnic groups—is a more important problem than “vertical inequality,” characterized as inequality between individuals and households. That distinction instructively makes class and class inequality disappear, which is consistent with the trajectory of American liberalism across the more than seven decades since the end of World War II. Moreover, in a sort of mission creep, opponents of what they decry as a “class-first” position increasingly have come to denounce any expressions of concern for economic inequality as in effect catering to white supremacy. This tendency, which Touré Reed has argued rests on a race-reductionism,4 has surfaced and spread within the newly revitalized Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), as even many among those who consider themselves socialists object to the organization’s selection of Medicare for All as its key political campaign on the ground that pursuit of decommodified health care for all is objectionable because doing so does not sufficiently center antiracist and anti-disparitarian agendas. I submit that there’s clearly a problem when anti-socialism is defined as socialism. The race-reductionist argument is propelled by a combination of intense moral fervor and crude self-interest. I’ve argued in 2018 articles in nonsite, The Baffler, and Dialectical Anthropology, that, as it has evolved, the post-2016 debate has thrown into bold relief the class character of antiracist and other expressions of identity politics.5 That could be a salutary product of the controversy. It’s good in this sort of debate for the mist of ideology to burn off and the material stakes involved to be clear and in the open. However, many people who have followed or even participated in the debates have not connected the dots to see that obvious point or to acknowledge its implications. One reason for failure to do so is summed up pithily in Upton Sinclair’s quip, “It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.” Not only would pursuit of an agenda focused on addressing “horizontal inequality,” if successful, disproportionately benefit upper-status, already well-off people—as Walter Benn Michaels and I have noted tirelessly over the past decade at least, the reality of a standard of justice based on eliminating group disparities is that a society could be just if 1% of the population controlled 90% of the resources so long as the one percent featured blacks, Hispanics, women, lesbians and gays, etc. in rough proportion to their representation in the general population; also, advocacy of defining the only meaningful inequality as disparities between groups is itself a career trajectory in the academy, as well as in the corporate, nonprofit and freelance commentary worlds. There’s no point trying to communicate with those whose resistance stems from such material investment; no matter what their specific content, their responses to class critique always amount to the orderly Turkle’s lament to McMurphy in One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest—“This is my fucking job!” Purblindness to identitarianism’s ever more clearly exposed class character also rests on naively habituated ideological thinking. Most of us operate with more or less vague or inchoate recognition that the past included bad old-timey times marked by openly racist practices like slavery and compulsory racial segregation, genocide against Native Americans, Chinese Exclusion, imposed gender hierarchies, etc. In lieu of examining the discrete sources of inequality in the present, antiracist ideology in particular depends on asserting superficial analogies to those earlier historical periods when racial exclusion and discrimination were more direct impediments to black Americans’ and other nonwhites’ social position and well-being. Thus, for example, Michelle Alexander proposes that contemporary mass incarceration be understood as a “new Jim Crow”6—though even she allows that the analogy doesn’t work—and expressions of outrage at miscarriages of justice in the present commonly allude to practices associated with slavery or the segregation era. As I have argued, such assertions are not to be taken literally as empirical claims; they are rhetorical. No sane or at all knowledgeable person can believe that black Americans live under similarly constrained and perilous conditions as they did a century ago or longer. Those analogies and allusions carry a silent preface: “(This incident/phenomenon/pattern makes it seem as though) Nothing has changed.” Yet the claim itself presumes that things have changed because the charge is essentially a denunciation of objectionable conditions or incidents in the present as atavistic and a call for others to regard them as such. Attempting to mobilize outrage about some action or expression through associating it with discredited or vilified views or practices is a common gambit in hortatory political rhetoric, more or less effective for a rally or leaflet. But this antiracist politics is ineffective and even destructive when it takes the place of scholarly interpretation or strategic political analysis.7 Political controversies in contemporary New Orleans provide an apt frame of reference for demonstrating antiracism’s limitations, and class character, as a politics. Antiracist political critique failed abysmally after Katrina to mobilize significant opposition to elimination of low-income public housing or to the ongoing destruction of public schools. In a context in which black people participate as administrators, functionaries, contractors, and investors—all in the blesséd name of racial representation—in the commercial opportunities provided by privatization and destruction of those institutions, that politics, which posits an abstract “black community” against an equally abstract “racism,” could not provide persuasive responses to the blend of underclass ideology that stigmatizes public housing as an incubator of a degraded population or that proffers culturalist explanations for failing schools.8 Debate over displacement for upscaling redevelopment, including proliferation of the Airbnb industry, is another powerful case in point in that city as elsewhere. In opting for a language of “gentrification,” opponents of displacement, often without necessarily intending to do so, cloud a simple, straightforward dynamic—public support of private developers’ pursuit of rent-intensifying redevelopment—with cultural implications that shift critique away from the issue of using public authority to engineer upward redistribution and impose hardship on relatively vulnerable residents. Instead, discussion of gentrification slides into objections about display of privilege, and lack of recognition or respect that, notwithstanding the moral outrage that accompanies them, accept the logic of rent-intensifying redevelopment as given and demand that newcomers acknowledge and honor aboriginal habitus and practices and that the “community” be involved in the processes of upgrading. The same racial or cultural discourse has unhelpfully shaped opposition to charterization of public education by focusing on the racial dimension of the process. The fundamental problem with Teach For America and the corporate privatizers for whom TFA are shock troops, after all, is not that the missionaries are mainly white and unfamiliar with native culture or even that many of them are tourists building extracurriculars for their graduate and professional school dossiers. Those are only idiosyncratically distasteful features of a particular line of attack on one front in a broader war on public goods and the idea of social solidarity, in line with marketization of all human needs. And that sort of culturalist discourse also opens opportunities for petty, and not so petty, entrepreneurship in the name of respect or recognition of the community, within the logic of neoliberalization. Race reductionism enables a sleight-of-hand in which benefits to individuals can appear to be victories for the generic racial population or community. The more deeply embedded a groupist notion of fairness or justice becomes as common sense, the more easily that sleight-of-hand works under labels like “community empowerment,” “voice,” “opportunity,” or “representation” to propel and legitimize accumulation by dispossession.9 This takes us back to Sinclair’s dictum, which underlies the material truth of antiracist politics and other expressions of identitarianism that are hostile to politics based on class solidarities. Yet even the crudest self-interest depends on ideological mystification for legitimacy. And race/racism—the former term is inconceivable without the latter—has always worked in exactly that way; only now, in the aftermath of the victories of the 1960s, it can work to the benefit as well as the detriment of nonwhites. The cornerstone of race ideology, which is not now and never has been incompatible with capitalism, is presumption of ontological-level differences among human populations apportioned into racial groups. Just as nineteenth and early twentieth century white supremacists insisted that fundamental differences preempt political alliances based on common material conditions, antiracists posit whites’ transhistorical—and thus primordial—commitment to racial supremacy toward the same end. That’s the more insidious basis of the impulse to argue for the primacy of race in contemporary politics via allusion to the past. Like all forms of race-reductionism it masks a class-skewed agenda. That underlying reality helps make sense both of why antiracists seem unconcerned that their elevation of challenging disparities to the paramount, if not exclusive, goal of egalitarian politics is entirely consistent with neoliberalism’s regime of intensifying economic inequality and why their de facto alliance with corporate and Wall Street Democrats against the conventional left has been automatic and untroubling. So I’ll conclude as I’d initially intended to begin this rumination, with several postulates about black American political history to counter the idealist mystifications that posit a primordial white racism or a transhistorical, reified White Supremacy capable of acting in the world on the conviction that, as Nihkil Singh and Joshua Clover most recently characterized it in a Verso blogpost, “black lives matter less.” Slavery was fundamentally a labor relation, not an extreme system of race relations. To paraphrase Barbara and Karen Fields, its objective was to produce cotton, sugar, tobacco, and rice, not white supremacy. Its appeal to the planter class was that it secured a labor force that had no rights or recourse, not that it was a permanent sadistic camp. Historian Kenneth Stampp quotes a slaveowner’s succinct explanation: “For what purpose does the master hold the servant? Is it not that by his labor, he, the master, may accumulate wealth?”10 An irony of the view that defines slavery as institutionalized brutality is its implication that slavery without extremes of brutalization might not be objectionable. The segregationist regime was an historically specific social order based on disfranchisement of the vast majority of blacks and a substantial percentage of whites, imposed by southern elites after defeat of the interracial Populist political insurgency in the late nineteenth century. It was defined by an extensive, legally codified system of racial subordination. That order was not fully consolidated before World War I, and its institutional foundations were crushed by the late 1960s. That is, it was a regime that prevailed for roughly sixty years, depending on location. There is no singular, transhistorical “Black Liberation Struggle” or “Black Freedom Movement,” and there never has been. Black Americans have engaged in many different forms of political expression in many different domains, around many different issues, both those considered racial and not. They have engaged in race-solidaristic formations and in close concert with others, in class-based and multiclass alliances. As Cedric Johnson has argued forcefully, contemporary scholarly discussion reads “black politics”—the ethnic pluralist group politics articulated mainly since the 1960s—back anachronistically onto the varying and pragmatically grounded political expressions in which black Americans have engaged since Emancipation, which he describes as “black American political life.” Political differentiation has been as common among black Americans as among all others. Moreover, issues bearing specifically on race or racial disparities have never exhausted, or exclusively defined, black Americans’ expressed political concerns. As a corollary of 3, the issues driving the postwar southern mass mobilization against segregation and the emergent black interest-group urban politics in the North and West, and the big city South, were distinct. Lumping them together under a blanket construct like the “long civil rights movement” does not help us comprehend the discrete features of either or, more important, the distinct trajectories each set in motion. Black Power was not a mass, radical insurgent movement. It was a militant expression of ethnic pluralism. Radicals of various sorts—including ideological race nationalists—occupied its fringes, but the driving and commanding forces of Black Power politics were always the assertive elements within the new black political and professional-managerial class that emerged from opportunity structures opened by the victories of the Civil Rights movement, the dynamics of urban demographic transition and incorporation into governing regimes, and War on Poverty, Model Cities, and foundation-funded programs. Nominally radical groups, such as the Black Panther Party (BPP), the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and others with less cachet among the left, were not serious alternatives, certainly not the romantic “roads tragically not taken” of post-New Left fantasies. General Baker, longtime United Auto Workers activist and co-founder of both the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, was emphatically clear that those tendencies were entirely specific to Detroit and the centrality of the union in local Democratic politics. The BPP was founded in 1966, and by the end of the decade was already in disarray, especially outside Oakland, as a result of police repression, to be sure, but also of their political incoherence. Neither Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James, nor Stuart Hall can tell us anything strategically useful about the black American political situation. Appeals to their putative wisdom stem from academic leftists’ romantic attachments and commitments to race-reductionist politics. Malcolm was dead before nearly all the big events understood to define “The Sixties” had occurred. Fanon died several years before Malcolm, and in any case his focus was always elsewhere; he gave only the most general, perfunctory attention to the United States. James’s time in the United States, as I have said, was on the political equivalent of a tourist visa. He was not enmeshed in black American politics and understood its internal and external dynamics in only an abstract, formalist way. The same pertains to Stuart Hall. Attachments to the likes of Malcolm, Fanon, James, and Hall are more totemic than intellectually or politically productive. There is a more pernicious aspect of embrace of those figures’ supposed cultural authority. Each is read as propounding trans-contextual insights about “race.” And such insights are necessarily race-reductionist.

#### **Capitalism’s drive to accumulate compels environmental catastrophe and nuclear warfare --- we should mobilize our intellectual energies accordingly**

**Eagleton 11** [Terry, Distinguished Professor of English Literature at Lancaster University, *Why Marx Was Right*, 2011, Yale University: New Haven, CT, p. 224-6]

The two great threats to human survival that now confront us are military and environmental. They are likely to converge more and more in the future, as struggles over scarce resources escalate into armed conflict. Over the years, communists have been among the most ardent advocates of peace, and the reason for this is ably summarized by Ellen Meiksins Wood. ‘‘It seems to me axiomatic,’’ she writes, ‘‘that the expansionary, competitive and exploitative logic of capitalist accumulation in the context of the nation-state system must, in the longer or shorter term, be destabilizing, and that capitalism . . . is and will for the foreseeable future remain the greatest threat to world peace.’’≤Σ If the peace movement is to grasp the root causes of global aggression, it cannot afford to ignore the nature of the beast that breeds it. And this means that it cannot afford to ignore the insights of Marxism. The same goes for environmentalism. Wood argues that capitalism cannot avoid ecological devastation, given the antisocial nature of its drive to accumulate. The system may come to tolerate racial and gender equality, but it cannot by its nature achieve world peace or respect the material world. Capitalism, Wood comments, ‘‘may be able to accommodate some degree of ecological care, especially when the technology of environmental protection is itself profitably marketable. But the essential irrationality of the drive for capital accumulation, which subordinates everything to the requirements of the self-expansion of capital and so-called growth, is unavoidably hostile to ecological balance.’’ The old communist slogan ‘‘Socialism or barbarism’’ always seemed to some a touch too apocalyptic. As history lurches towards the prospect of nuclear warfare and environmental catastrophe, it is hard to see how it is less than the sober truth. If we do not act now, it seems that capitalism will be the death of us.

#### The alternative is to orient political and social struggle toward the communist horizon – this redirection is crucial to redefine the political futures psychoanalytically imagineable– anything less is mere apologism for continued leftist failure

**Dean 12** [Jodi, Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, *The Communist Horizon*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2012, p. 1-12]

The term "horizon" marks a division. Understood spatially, the horizon is the line dividing the visible, separating earth from sky. Understood temporally, the horizon converges with loss in a metaphor for privation and depletion. The "lost horizon" suggests abandoned projects, prior hopes that have now passed away. Astrophysics offers a thrilling, even uncanny, horizon: the "event horizon" surrounding a black hole. The event horizon is the boundary beyond which events cannot escape. Although "event horizon" denotes the curvature in space/time effected by a singularity, it's not much different from the spatial horizon. Both evoke a fundamental division that we experience as impossible to reach, and that we can neither escape nor cross. I use "horizon" not to recall a forgotten future but to designate a dimension of experience that we can never lose, even if, lost in a fog or focused on our feet, we fail to see it. The horizon is Real in the sense of impossible-we can never reach it-and in the sense of actual (Jacques Lacan's notion of the Real includes both these senses). The horizon shapes our setting. We can lose our bearings, but the horizon is a necessary dimension of our actuality. Whether the effect of a singularity or the meeting of earth and sky, the horizon is the fundamental division establishing where we are. With respect to politics, the horizon that conditions our expe1ience is communism. I get the term "communist horizon" from Bruno Bosteels. In The Actuality of Communism, Bosteels engages with the work of Alvaro Garcia Linera. Garcia Linera ran as Evo Morales's vice presidential ru1ming mate in the Bolivian Movement for Socialism-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (MAS-IPSP). He is the author of multiple pieces on Marxism, politics, and sociology, at least one of which was written while he served time in prison for promoting an armed uprising (before becoming vice president of Bolivia, he fought in the Tupac Kataii Guerrilla Army). Bosteels quotes Garcia Linera's response to an interviewer's questions about his party's plans following their electoral victim)': "The general horizon of the era is communist."1 Garcia Linera doesn't explain the term. Rather, as Bosteels points out, Garcia Linera invokes the communist horizon "as if it were the most natural thing in the world," as if it were so obvious as to need neither explanation nor justification. He assumes the communist horizon as an ineducible feature of the political setting: "We enter the movement with our expecting and desiring eyes set upon the communist horizon." For Garcia Linera, communism conditions the actuality of politics. Some on the Left dismiss the communist horizon as a lost horizon. For example, in a postmodern pluralist approach that appeals to many on the Left, the economists writing as J. K . Gibson-Graham reject communism, offering "post-capitalism" in its stead. They argue that descriptions of capitalism as a global system miss the rich diversity of practices, relations, and desires constituting yet exceeding the economy and so advocate "reading the economy for difference rather than dominance" (as if dominance neither presupposes nor relies on difference).2 In their view, reading for difference opens up new possibilities for politics as it reveals previously unacknowledged loci of creative action within everyday economic activities. Gibson-Graham do not present Marxism as a failed ideology or communism as the fossilized remainder of an historical expe1iment gone horribly wrong. On the contrary, they draw inspiration from Marx’s appreciation of the social character of labor. They engage Jean-Luc Nancy's emphasis on communism as an idea that is the "index of a task of thought still and increasingly open." They embrace the reclamation of the commons. And they are concerned with neoliberalism's naturalization of the economy as a force exceeding the capacity of people to steer or transform it. Yet at the same time, Gibson-Graham push away from communism to launch their vision of postcapitalism. Communism is that against which they construct their alterative conception of the economy. It's a constitutive force, present as a shaping of the view they advocate. Even as Nancy's evocation of communism serves as a horizon for their thinking, they explicitly jettison the term "communism," which they position as the object of "widespread aversion" and which they associate with the "dangers of posing a positivity, a nonnative representation." Rejecting the positive notion of "communism," they opt for a te1m that suggests an empty relationally to the capitalist system they ostensibly deny, "post-capitalism." For Gibson-Graham, the term "capitalist" is not a term of critique or opprobrium; it's not part of a manifesto. The term is a cause of the political problems facing the contemporary Left. They argue that the discursive dominance of capitalism embeds the Left in paranoia, melancholia, and moralism. Gibson-Graham's view is a specific instance of a general assumption shared by leftists who embrace a generic post-capitalism but eschew a more militant anticapitalism. Instead of actively opposing capitalism, this tendency redirects anticapitalist energies into efforts to open up discussions and find ethical spaces for decision-and this in a world where one bond trader can bring down a bank in a matter of minutes. I take the opposite position. The dominance of capitalism, the capitalist system, is material. Rather than entrapping us in paranoid fantasy, an analysis that treats capitalism as a global system of appropriation, exploitation, and circulation that enriches the few as it dispossesses the many and that has to expend an enormous amount of energy in doing so can anger, incite, and galvanize. Historically, in theory and in practice, critical analysis of capitalist exploitation has been a powerful weapon in collective struggle. It persists as such today, in global acknowledgment of the excesses of neoliberal capitalism. As recently became clear in worldwide rioting, protest, and revolution, linking multiple sites of exploitation to narrow channels of privilege can replace melancholic fatalism with new assertions of will, desire, and collective strength. The problem of the Left hasn't been our adherence to a Marxist critique of capitalism. It's that we have lost sight of the communist horizon, a glimpse of which new political movements are starting to reveal. Sometimes capitalists, conservatives, and liberal democrats use a rhetoric that treats communism as a lost horizon. But usually they keep communism firmly within their sight. They see communism as a threat, twenty years after its ostensible demise. To them, communism is so threatening that they premise political discussion on the repression of the communist alternative. In response to left critiques of democracy for its failure to protect the interests of poor and workingclass people, conservatives and liberals alike scold that "everybody knows" and "history shows" that communism doesn't work. Communism might be a nice ideal, they concede, but it always leads to violent, authoritarian excesses of power. They shift the discussion to communism, trying to establish the limits of reasonable debate. Their critique of communism establishes the political space and condition of democracy. Before the conversation even gets going, liberals, democrats, capitalists, and conservatives unite to block communism from consideration. It's off the table. Those who suspect that the inclusion of liberals and democrats in a set with capitalists and conservatives is illegitimate are probably democrats themselves. To determine whether they belong in the set of those who fear communism, they should consider whether they think any evocation of communism should come with qualifications, apologies, and condemnations of past excesses. If the answer is "yes," then we have a clear indication that liberal democrats, and probably radical democrats as well, still consider communism a threat that must be suppressed-and so they belong in a set with capitalists and conservatives. All are anxious about the forces that communist desire risks unleashing. There are good reasons for liberals, democrats, capitalists, and conservatives to be anxious. Over the last decade a return to communism has re-energized the Left. Communism is again becoming a discourse and vocabulary for the expression of universal, egalitarian, and revolutionary ideals. In March 2009, the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities hosted a conference entitled "On the Idea of Communism." Initially planned for about 200 people, the conference ultimately attracted over 1 ,200, requiring a spillover room to accommodate those who couldn't fit in the primary auditorium. Since then, multiple conferences-in Paris, Berlin, and New York-and publications have followed, with contributions from such leading scholars as Alain Badiou, Etienne Balibar, Bruno Bosteels, Susan Buck-Morss, Costas Douzinas, Peter Hallward, Michael Hardt, Antonio Neg1i, Jacques Ranciere, Alberto Toscano, and Slavoj Zizek. The conferences and publications consolidate discussions that have been going on for decades. For over thirty years, Antonio Negri has sought to build a new approach to communism out of a Marxism reworked via Spinoza and the Italian political experiments of the 1970s. The Empire trilogy that Negri coauthored with Michael Hardt offers an affirmative, non-dialectical reconceptualization of labor, power, and the State, a new theory of communism from below. Alain Badiou has been occupied with communism for over forty years, from his philosophical and political engagement with Maoism, to his emphasis on the "communist invariants"-egalitarian justice, disciplinary tenor, political volunteerism, and trust in the people-to his recent appeal to the communist Idea. Communism is not a new interest for Slavoj Zizek either. In early 2001 he put together a conference and subsequent volume rethinking Lenin. Where Negri and Badiou reject the Party and the State, Zizek retains a certain fidelity to Lenin. "The key 'Leninist' lesson today," he writes, is that "politics without the organizational form of the Party is politics without politics."4 In short, a vital area of radical philosophy considers communism a contemporary name for emancipation)', egalitarian politics and form part of the communist legacy. These ongoing theoretical discussions overlap with the changing political sequences marked by 1968 and 1989. They also overlap with the spread of neoliberal capitalist domination, a domination accompanied by extremes in economic inequality, ethnic hatred, and police violence, as well as by widespread militancy, insurgency, occupation, and revolution. The current emphasis on communism thus exceeds the coincidence of academic conferences calling specifically for communism's return with the new millennium's debt crises, austerity measures, increased unemployment, and overall sacrifice of the achievements of the modern welfare state to the private interests of financial institutions deemed too big to fail. Already in an interview in 2002, p1ior to his election to the Bolivian presidency, Evo Morales had announced that "the neoliberal system was a failure, and now it's the poor people's turn."·' Communism is reemerging as a magnet of political energy because it is and has been the alterative to capitalism. The communist horizon is not lost. It is Real. In this book, I explore some of the ways the communist horizon manifests itself to us today. As Bosteels argues, to invoke the communist horizon is to produce "a complete shift in perspective or a radical ideological turnabout, as a result of which capitalism no longer appears as the only game in town and we no longer have to be ashamed to set our expecting and desiring eyes here and now on a different organization of social relationships."6 With communism as our horizon, the field of possibilities for revolutionary theory and practice starts to change shape. Barriers to action fall away. New potentials and challenges come to the fore. Anything is possible. Instead of a politics thought primarily in terms of resistance, playful and momentary aesthetic disruptions, the immediate specificity of local projects, and struggles for hegemony within a capitalist parliamentary setting, the communist horizon impresses upon us the necessity to abolish capitalism and to create global practices and institutions of egalitarian cooperation. The shift in perspective the communist horizon produces turns us away from the democratic milieu that has been the form of the loss of communism as a name for left aspiration and toward the reconfiguration of the components of political struggle-in other words, away from general inclusion, momentary calls for broad awareness, and lifestyle changes, and toward militant opposition, tight organizational forms (party, council, working group, cell), and the sovereignty of the people over the economy through which we produce and reproduce ourselves.

### 1nc communist horizon [long]

#### The aff’s [micropolitical/structural/identarian/aesthetic] focus forecloses effective anti-capitalist politics – rejecting individualist fantasies is crucial to a collective future

**Dean 12** [Jodi, Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, *The Communist Horizon*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2012, p. 12-19]

Some might object to my use of the second-person plural "we" and "us"-what do you mean "we"? This objection is symptomatic of the fragmentation that has pervaded the Left in Europe, the U K, and North America. Reducing invocations of "we" and "us" to sociological statements requiting a concrete, delineable, empirical referent, it erases the division necessary for politics as if interest and will were only and automatically attributes of a fixed social position. We-skepticism displaces the performative component of the second-person plural as it treats collectivity with suspicion and privileges a fantasy of individual singularity and autonomy. I write "we" hoping to enhance a partisan sense of collectivity. My break with conventions of w1iting that reinforce individualism by admonishing attempts to think and speak as part of a larger collective subject is deliberate. The boundaries to what can be thought as politics in certain segments of the post-structuralist and anarchist Left only benefit capital. Some activists and theorists think that micropolitical activities, whether practices of self-cultivation or individual consumer choices, are more important loci of action than large-scale organized movement-an assumption which adds to the difficulty of building new types of organizations because it makes thinking in terms of collectivity rarer, harder, and seemingly less "fresh." Similarly, some activists and theorists treat aesthetic objects and creative works as displaying a political potentiality missing from classes, parties, and unions. This aesthetic focus disconnects politics from the organized struggle of working people, making politics into what spectators see. Artistic products, whether actual commodities or commodified experiences, thereby buttress capital as they circulate political affects while displacing political struggles from the streets to the galleries. Spectators can pay (or donate) to feel radical without having to get their hands dirty. The dominant class retains its position and the contradiction between this class and the rest of us doesn't make itself felt as such. The celebration of momentary actions and singular happenings-the playful disruption, the temporarily controversial film or novel-works the same way. Some on the anarchist and post-structuralist Left treat these flickers as the only proper instances of a contemporary left politics. A pointless action involving the momentary expenditure of enormous effort-the artistic equivalent of the 5k and 10k runs to fight cancer, that is to say, to increase awareness of cancer without actually doing much else-the singular happening disconnects task from goal. Any "sense" it makes, any meaning or relevance it has, is up to the spectator (perhaps with a bit of guidance from curators and theorists). Occupation contrasts sharply with the singular happening. Even as specific occupations emerge from below rather than through a coordinated strategy, their common form-including its images, slogans, terms, and practices-links them together in a mass struggle. The power of the return of communism stands or falls on its capacity to inspire large-scale organized collective struggle toward a goal. For over thirty years, the Left has eschewed such a goal, accepting instead liberal notions that goals are strictly individual lifestyle choices or social-democratic claims that history already solved basic problems of distribution with the compromise of regulated markets and welfare states – a solution the Right rejected and capitalism destroyed. The Left failed to defend a vision of a better world, an egalitarian world of common production by and for the collective people. Instead, it accommodated capital, succumbing to the lures of individualism, consumerism, competition, and privilege, and proceeding as if there really were no alternative to states that rule in the interests of markets. Marx expressed the basic principle of the alternative over a hundred years ago: from each according to ability, to each according to need. This principle contains the urgency of the struggle for its own realization. We don't have to continue to live in the wake of left failure, stuck in the repetitions of crises and spectacle. In light of the planetary climate disaster and the ever-intensifying global class war as states redistribute wealth to the rich in the name of austerity, the absence of a common goal is the absence of a future (other than the ones imagined in post-apocalyptic scenarios like Mad Max). The premise of communism is that collective determination of collective conditions is possible, if we want it. To help incite this desire, to add to its reawakening force and presence, I treat "communism" as a tag for six features of our current setting: 1. A specific image of the Soviet Union and its collapse; 2 . A present, increasingly powerful force; 3 . The sovereignty of the people; 4. The common and the commons; 5. The egalitarian and universalist desire that cuts through the circuits and practices in which we are trapped; 6. The party. The first two features can be loosely associated with the politics that configures itself via a history linked to the end of the Soviet Union as a state, as refracted through the dominance of the US as a state. What matters here is less the historical narrative than the expression of communism as the force of an absence. My discussion of these first two features highlights how the absence of communism shapes our contemporary setting. In the sequence narrative as the triumph of capitalism and liberal democracy, the communist horizon makes itself felt as a "signifying stress." This is Eric L. Santner's term for a way that reality expresses its nonidentity with itself. As Santner explains, the "social formation in which we find ourselves immersed" is "fissured by lack" and "permeated by inconsistency and incompleteness." The lack calls out to us. Inconsistency and incompleteness make themselves felt. "What is registered," Santner explains, "are not so much forgotten deeds but forgotten failures to act. "7 The frenetic activity of contemporary communicative capitalism deflects us away from these gaps. New entertainments, unshakeable burdens, and growing debt displace our attention toward the immediate and the coming-up-next as they attempt to drown out the forceful effects of the unrealized-the unrealized potentials of unions and collective struggle, the unrealized claims for equality distorted by a culture that celebrates the excesses of the very rich, the unrealized achievements of collective solidarity in redressing poverty and redistributing risks and rewards. The first two chapters thus treat the gaps, fissures, and lack Santner theorizes as signifying stresses in terms of a missing communism that makes itself felt in the setting configured by its alleged failure and defeat.

#### The alternative is to orient political and social struggle toward the communist horizon – this redirection is crucial to redefine the political futures psychoanalytically imagineable– anything less is mere apologism for continued leftist failure

**Dean 12** [Jodi, Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, *The Communist Horizon*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2012, p. 1-12]

The term "horizon" marks a division. Understood spatially, the horizon is the line dividing the visible, separating earth from sky. Understood temporally, the horizon converges with loss in a metaphor for privation and depletion. The "lost horizon" suggests abandoned projects, prior hopes that have now passed away. Astrophysics offers a thrilling, even uncanny, horizon: the "event horizon" surrounding a black hole. The event horizon is the boundary beyond which events cannot escape. Although "event horizon" denotes the curvature in space/time effected by a singularity, it's not much different from the spatial horizon. Both evoke a fundamental division that we experience as impossible to reach, and that we can neither escape nor cross. I use "horizon" not to recall a forgotten future but to designate a dimension of experience that we can never lose, even if, lost in a fog or focused on our feet, we fail to see it. The horizon is Real in the sense of impossible-we can never reach it-and in the sense of actual (Jacques Lacan's notion of the Real includes both these senses). The horizon shapes our setting. We can lose our bearings, but the horizon is a necessary dimension of our actuality. Whether the effect of a singularity or the meeting of earth and sky, the horizon is the fundamental division establishing where we are. With respect to politics, the horizon that conditions our expe1ience is communism. I get the term "communist horizon" from Bruno Bosteels. In The Actuality of Communism, Bosteels engages with the work of Alvaro Garcia Linera. Garcia Linera ran as Evo Morales's vice presidential ru1ming mate in the Bolivian Movement for Socialism-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (MAS-IPSP). He is the author of multiple pieces on Marxism, politics, and sociology, at least one of which was written while he served time in prison for promoting an armed uprising (before becoming vice president of Bolivia, he fought in the Tupac Kataii Guerrilla Army). Bosteels quotes Garcia Linera's response to an interviewer's questions about his party's plans following their electoral victim)': "The general horizon of the era is communist."1 Garcia Linera doesn't explain the term. Rather, as Bosteels points out, Garcia Linera invokes the communist horizon "as if it were the most natural thing in the world," as if it were so obvious as to need neither explanation nor justification. He assumes the communist horizon as an ineducible feature of the political setting: "We enter the movement with our expecting and desiring eyes set upon the communist horizon." For Garcia Linera, communism conditions the actuality of politics. Some on the Left dismiss the communist horizon as a lost horizon. For example, in a postmodern pluralist approach that appeals to many on the Left, the economists writing as J. K . Gibson-Graham reject communism, offering "post-capitalism" in its stead. They argue that descriptions of capitalism as a global system miss the rich diversity of practices, relations, and desires constituting yet exceeding the economy and so advocate "reading the economy for difference rather than dominance" (as if dominance neither presupposes nor relies on difference).2 In their view, reading for difference opens up new possibilities for politics as it reveals previously unacknowledged loci of creative action within everyday economic activities. Gibson-Graham do not present Marxism as a failed ideology or communism as the fossilized remainder of an historical expe1iment gone horribly wrong. On the contrary, they draw inspiration from Marx’s appreciation of the social character of labor. They engage Jean-Luc Nancy's emphasis on communism as an idea that is the "index of a task of thought still and increasingly open." They embrace the reclamation of the commons. And they are concerned with neoliberalism's naturalization of the economy as a force exceeding the capacity of people to steer or transform it. Yet at the same time, Gibson-Graham push away from communism to launch their vision of postcapitalism. Communism is that against which they construct their alterative conception of the economy. It's a constitutive force, present as a shaping of the view they advocate. Even as Nancy's evocation of communism serves as a horizon for their thinking, they explicitly jettison the term "communism," which they position as the object of "widespread aversion" and which they associate with the "dangers of posing a positivity, a nonnative representation." Rejecting the positive notion of "communism," they opt for a te1m that suggests an empty relationally to the capitalist system they ostensibly deny, "post-capitalism." For Gibson-Graham, the term "capitalist" is not a term of critique or opprobrium; it's not part of a manifesto. The term is a cause of the political problems facing the contemporary Left. They argue that the discursive dominance of capitalism embeds the Left in paranoia, melancholia, and moralism. Gibson-Graham's view is a specific instance of a general assumption shared by leftists who embrace a generic post-capitalism but eschew a more militant anticapitalism. Instead of actively opposing capitalism, this tendency redirects anticapitalist energies into efforts to open up discussions and find ethical spaces for decision-and this in a world where one bond trader can bring down a bank in a matter of minutes. I take the opposite position. The dominance of capitalism, the capitalist system, is material. Rather than entrapping us in paranoid fantasy, an analysis that treats capitalism as a global system of appropriation, exploitation, and circulation that enriches the few as it dispossesses the many and that has to expend an enormous amount of energy in doing so can anger, incite, and galvanize. Historically, in theory and in practice, critical analysis of capitalist exploitation has been a powerful weapon in collective struggle. It persists as such today, in global acknowledgment of the excesses of neoliberal capitalism. As recently became clear in worldwide rioting, protest, and revolution, linking multiple sites of exploitation to narrow channels of privilege can replace melancholic fatalism with new assertions of will, desire, and collective strength. The problem of the Left hasn't been our adherence to a Marxist critique of capitalism. It's that we have lost sight of the communist horizon, a glimpse of which new political movements are starting to reveal. Sometimes capitalists, conservatives, and liberal democrats use a rhetoric that treats communism as a lost horizon. But usually they keep communism firmly within their sight. They see communism as a threat, twenty years after its ostensible demise. To them, communism is so threatening that they premise political discussion on the repression of the communist alternative. In response to left critiques of democracy for its failure to protect the interests of poor and workingclass people, conservatives and liberals alike scold that "everybody knows" and "history shows" that communism doesn't work. Communism might be a nice ideal, they concede, but it always leads to violent, authoritarian excesses of power. They shift the discussion to communism, trying to establish the limits of reasonable debate. Their critique of communism establishes the political space and condition of democracy. Before the conversation even gets going, liberals, democrats, capitalists, and conservatives unite to block communism from consideration. It's off the table. Those who suspect that the inclusion of liberals and democrats in a set with capitalists and conservatives is illegitimate are probably democrats themselves. To determine whether they belong in the set of those who fear communism, they should consider whether they think any evocation of communism should come with qualifications, apologies, and condemnations of past excesses. If the answer is "yes," then we have a clear indication that liberal democrats, and probably radical democrats as well, still consider communism a threat that must be suppressed-and so they belong in a set with capitalists and conservatives. All are anxious about the forces that communist desire risks unleashing. There are good reasons for liberals, democrats, capitalists, and conservatives to be anxious. Over the last decade a return to communism has re-energized the Left. Communism is again becoming a discourse and vocabulary for the expression of universal, egalitarian, and revolutionary ideals. In March 2009, the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities hosted a conference entitled "On the Idea of Communism." Initially planned for about 200 people, the conference ultimately attracted over 1 ,200, requiring a spillover room to accommodate those who couldn't fit in the primary auditorium. Since then, multiple conferences-in Paris, Berlin, and New York-and publications have followed, with contributions from such leading scholars as Alain Badiou, Etienne Balibar, Bruno Bosteels, Susan Buck-Morss, Costas Douzinas, Peter Hallward, Michael Hardt, Antonio Neg1i, Jacques Ranciere, Alberto Toscano, and Slavoj Zizek. The conferences and publications consolidate discussions that have been going on for decades. For over thirty years, Antonio Negri has sought to build a new approach to communism out of a Marxism reworked via Spinoza and the Italian political experiments of the 1970s. The Empire trilogy that Negri coauthored with Michael Hardt offers an affirmative, non-dialectical reconceptualization of labor, power, and the State, a new theory of communism from below. Alain Badiou has been occupied with communism for over forty years, from his philosophical and political engagement with Maoism, to his emphasis on the "communist invariants"-egalitarian justice, disciplinary tenor, political volunteerism, and trust in the people-to his recent appeal to the communist Idea. Communism is not a new interest for Slavoj Zizek either. In early 2001 he put together a conference and subsequent volume rethinking Lenin. Where Negri and Badiou reject the Party and the State, Zizek retains a certain fidelity to Lenin. "The key 'Leninist' lesson today," he writes, is that "politics without the organizational form of the Party is politics without politics."4 In short, a vital area of radical philosophy considers communism a contemporary name for emancipation)', egalitarian politics and form part of the communist legacy. These ongoing theoretical discussions overlap with the changing political sequences marked by 1968 and 1989. They also overlap with the spread of neoliberal capitalist domination, a domination accompanied by extremes in economic inequality, ethnic hatred, and police violence, as well as by widespread militancy, insurgency, occupation, and revolution. The current emphasis on communism thus exceeds the coincidence of academic conferences calling specifically for communism's return with the new millennium's debt crises, austerity measures, increased unemployment, and overall sacrifice of the achievements of the modern welfare state to the private interests of financial institutions deemed too big to fail. Already in an interview in 2002, p1ior to his election to the Bolivian presidency, Evo Morales had announced that "the neoliberal system was a failure, and now it's the poor people's turn."·' Communism is reemerging as a magnet of political energy because it is and has been the alterative to capitalism. The communist horizon is not lost. It is Real. In this book, I explore some of the ways the communist horizon manifests itself to us today. As Bosteels argues, to invoke the communist horizon is to produce "a complete shift in perspective or a radical ideological turnabout, as a result of which capitalism no longer appears as the only game in town and we no longer have to be ashamed to set our expecting and desiring eyes here and now on a different organization of social relationships."6 With communism as our horizon, the field of possibilities for revolutionary theory and practice starts to change shape. Barriers to action fall away. New potentials and challenges come to the fore. Anything is possible. Instead of a politics thought primarily in terms of resistance, playful and momentary aesthetic disruptions, the immediate specificity of local projects, and struggles for hegemony within a capitalist parliamentary setting, the communist horizon impresses upon us the necessity to abolish capitalism and to create global practices and institutions of egalitarian cooperation. The shift in perspective the communist horizon produces turns us away from the democratic milieu that has been the form of the loss of communism as a name for left aspiration and toward the reconfiguration of the components of political struggle-in other words, away from general inclusion, momentary calls for broad awareness, and lifestyle changes, and toward militant opposition, tight organizational forms (party, council, working group, cell), and the sovereignty of the people over the economy through which we produce and reproduce ourselves.

#### Our ethico-political obligation is to assume responsibility for our actions. Capitalism renders its victims anonymous and ensures that the aff never comes to terms with the billions of degraded life-chances globally

**Žižek and Daly 4** [Slavoj, Prof. of European Graduate School, Intl. Director of the Birkbeck Inst. for Humanities, U. of London, and Senior Researcher @ Inst. of Sociology, U. of Ljubljiana, and Glyn, Professor Intl. Studies @ Northampton U., “Risking the Impossible”]

It is in the light of this more subtle perspective on the real that zizek has also revised his approach to the question of ideology. In the sublime object of ideology, zizek developed his famous inversion of the classical 'false consciousness' thesis. Thus ideology does not conceal or distort an underlying reality (human nature, social interests etc.) But rather reality itself cannot be reproduced without ideological mystification (zizek, 1989: 28). What ideology offers is the symbolic construction of reality – the ultimate fantasy – as a way to escape the traumatic effects of the real. Reality is always a 'virtual' take on the real; virtualization that can never fully overcome the real or achieve homeostasis. In the language of laclau and mouffe, this means that society as an integrated unity is universally impossible precisely because of the constitutive excess of the real qua the unmasterable negativity upon which every positivization finally depends. And it is here that ideology performs its supreme conjuring trick. What ideology aims at is a fantasmatic re-staging of the encounter with the real in such a way that the impossibility of society is translated into the theft of society by some historical other. In nazi ideology, for example, it is the contingent figure of the jew who is made directly responsible for the theft/sabotage of social harmony – thereby concealing the traumatic fact that social harmony never existed and that it is an inherent impossibility (1989: 125-7; 1993: 203-4). By imputing the status of the real to a particular other, the dream of holistic fulfilment – through the elimination, expulsion or suppression of the other – is thereby sustained. More recently, however, Zizek has developed a new twist to this perspective. Ideology not only constructs a certain image of fulfillment (Plato's City of Reason, the Aryan Community, multiculturalist harmony etc..), it also endeavours to regulate a certain distance from it. [4](http://www.lacan.com/zizek-daly.htm#4) On the one hand we have the ideological fantasy of being reconciled with the Thing (of total fulfilment), but, on the other, with the built-in proviso that we do not come too close to it. The (Lacanian) reason for this is clear: if you come too close to the Thing then it either shatters/evaporates (like the frescoes in Fellini's Roma) or it provokes unbearable anxiety and psychical disintegration. Crucial here is the status of the category of the impossible For Zizek impossibility is not the kind of neutral category that we tend to find in Laclau and Mouffe (as in their impossibility-of-Society thesis) where it tends to connote a basic constitutive frontier of antagonism. Like the immanent markers of the Real, impossibility gets caught up in ideology and is configured in such a way that it both structures reality and determines the coordinates of what is actually possible. As Zizek argues in this book, beyond the prima facie ideological operation of translating impossibility into an external obstacle there is a further deeper stage to the operation: that is, the "very elevation of something into impossibility as a means of postponing or avoiding encountering it". Ideology is the impossible dream not simply in terms of overcoming impossibility but in terms of sustaining that impossibility in an acceptable way. That is to say, the idea of overcoming is sustained as a deferred moment of reconciliation without having to go through the pain of overcoming as such. The central issue is one of proximity; of maintaining a critical distance by keeping the Thing in focus (like the image on a screen) but without coming so close that it begins to distort and decompose. A typical example would be that of someone who fantasizes about an ideal object (a sexual partner, promotion, retirement etc.) and when they actually encounter the object, they are confronted with the Real of their fantasy; the object loses its ideality, The (ideological) trick, therefore, is to keep the object at a certain distance in order to sustain the satisfaction derived from the fantasy "if only I had x I could fulfil my dream". Ideology regulates this fantasmatic distance in order to, as it were, avoid the Real in the impossible: i.e. the traumatic aspects involved in any real (impossible) change. This allows for a more nuanced reading of ideologies. Let us take the case of an international crisis: the so-called "liberation of Kuwait" during the 1990s Gulf conflict. Here the ideological discourse tended to operate along the following tines: "we must achieve the liberation of Kuwait ... while recognizing that any true liberation (i.e. abolishing Kuwait's feudal dynasty and setting up democratic structures) is currently impossible." And do we not have something similar with the so-called New World Order? Any real (or indeed Real) attempt to establish such an order would inevitably require traumatic far-reaching changes: global democracy based on universal rights, popular participation, the eradication of poverty and social exclusion (etc.) as part of a genuine "reflexive modernization". However, what we actually have is the routine invocation of the New World Order in term of an indefinite ideal that functions precisely as a way of preventing any real movement towards it. In the Kantian terms of the sublime, any convergence with what might be called the Bush-Blair "axis of Good" would become an unbearable evil. So we have the same type of ideological supplement at work: "we are moving towards a New World Order that will not tolerate the Saddam Husseins of this world... while recognizing that a true New World Order (one that would be intolerant of all the autocrats, royal families and the corporate dictatorships of global capitalism) is currently/always impossible . . ." In this way, impossibility loses its innocence and, far from comprising a simple repressed dimension, is rather something that can be seen to function as an implicit-obscene ideological supplement in today's realpolitik. There is a further potential danger. This concerns especially orthodox trends in politically correct multiculturalism and their distortion of a certain type of alliance politics that seeks to establish chains of equivalence between a widening set of differential struggles around gender, culture, lifestyles and so on. While there is nothing wrong in principle with establishing such forms of solidarity, the problem arises where this type of politics begins to assume, in a commonsense way, a basic levelling of the political terrain where all groups are taken to suffer equally ("we are all victims of the state/global capitalism/repressive forces..."). In other words, there is a danger that equivalential politics becomes so distorted that it becomes a way of disguising the position of those who are truly abject: those who suffer endemic poverty, destitution and repressive violence in our world system. In this way, the abject can become doubly victimized: first by a global capitalist order that actively excludes them; and, second, by an aseptic politically correct "inclusivism" that renders them invisible inside its postmodern forest; its tyranny of differences. For Zizek it is imperative that we cut through this Gordian knot of postmodern protocol and recognize that our ethico-political responsibility is to confront the constitutive violence of today's global capitalism and its obscene naturalization/anonymization of the millions who are subjugated by it throughout the world. Against the standardized positions of postmodern culture - with all its pieties concerning "multiculturalist" [6](http://www.lacan.com/zizek-daly.htm#6) etiquette - Zizek is arguing for a politics that might be called "radically incorrect" in the sense that it breaks with these types of positions [7](http://www.lacan.com/zizek-daly.htm#7) and focuses instead on the very organizing principles of today's social reality: the principles of global liberal capitalism. This requires some care and subtlety. There is a further potential danger. 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That is to say, the prohibitive anxieties surrounding the taboo of economism can function as a way of not engaging with economic reality and as a way of implicitly accepting the latter as a basic horizon of existence. In an ironic Freudian- Lacanian twist, the few of economism can end up reinforcing a de facto economic necessity in respect of contemporary capitalism (i.e. the initial prohibition conjures up the very thing it fears). This is not to endorse any kind of retrograde return to economism. Zizek's point is rather that in rejecting economism we should not lose sight of the systemic power of capital in shaping the fives and destinies of humanity and our very sense of the possible. In particular we should not overlook Marx's central insight that in order to create a universal global system the forces of capitalism seek to conceal the politico-discursive violence of its construction through a kind of gentrification of that system. What is persistently denied by neo-liberals; such as Rorty (1989) and Fukuyama (1992) is that the gentrification of global liberal capitalism is one whose "universalism" fundamentally reproduces and depends upon a disavowed violence that excludes vast sectors of the world's population. In this way, neo-liberal ideology attempts to naturalize capitalism by presenting its outcomes of winning and losing as if they were simply a matter of chance and sound judgement in a neutral marketplace. Capitalism does indeed create a space for a certain diversity, at least for the central capitalist regions, but it is neither neutral nor ideal and its price in terms of social exclusion is exorbitant. That is to say, the human cost in terms of inherent global poverty and degraded "life-chances" cannot be calculated within the existing economic rationale and, in consequence, social exclusion remains mystified and nameless (viz. the patronizing reference to the "developing world"). And Zizek's point is that this mystification is magnified through capitalism's profound capacity to ingest its own excesses and negativity: to redirect (or misdirect) social antagonisms and to absorb them within a culture of differential affirmation. Instead of Bolshevism, the tendency today is towards a kind of political boutiquism that is readily sustained by postmodern forms of consumerism and lifestyle. Against this Zizek argues for a new universalism whose primary ethical directive is to confront the fact that our forms of social existence are founded on exclusion on a global scale. While it is perfectly true that universalism can never become Universal (it will always require a hegemonic-particular embodiment in order to have any meaning), what is novel about Zizek's universalism is that it would not attempt to conceal this fact or to reduce the status of the abject Other to that of a "glitch" in an otherwise sound matrix. Risking the impossible The response of the left to global capitalism cannot be one of retreat into the nation-state or into organicist forms of "community" and popular identities that currently abound in Europe and elsewhere. For Zizek it is, rather, a question of working with the very excesses that, in a Lacanian sense, are in capitalism more than capitalism. It is a question, therefore, of transcending the provincial "universalism" of capitalism. To illustrate the point, Zizek draws attention to the category of "intellectual property" and the increasingly absurd attempts to establish restrictive dominion over technological advances - genetic codes, DNA structures, digital communications, pharmaceutical breakthroughs, computer programs and so on - that either affect us all and/or to which there is a sense of common human entitlement Indeed, the modern conjuncture of capitalism is more and more characterized by a prohibitive culture: the widespread repression of those forms of research and development that have real emancipatory potential beyond exclusive profiteering; the restriction of information that has direct consequences for the future of humanity; the fundamental denial that social equality could be sustained by the abundance generated by capitalism. Capitalism typically endeavors to constrain the very dimensions of the universal that are enabled by it and simultaneously to resist all those developments that disclose its specificity-artificiality as merely one possible mode of being. The left, therefore, must seek to subvert these ungovernable excesses in the direction of a political (and politicizing) universalism; or what Balibar would call égaliberté. This means that the left should demand more globalization not less. Where neo-liberals speak the language of freedom - either in terms of individual liberty or the free movement of goods and capital - the left should use this language to combat today's racist obsessions with "economic refugees", "immigrants" and so on, and insist that freedoms are meaningless without the social resources to participate in those freedoms. Where there is talk of universal rights, the left must affirm a responsibility to the universal; one that emphasizes real human solidarity and does not lose sight of the abject within differential discourses. Reversing the well-known environmentalists' slogan, we might say that the left has to involve itself in thinking locally and acting globally. That is to say, it should attend to the specificity of today's political identities within the context of their global (capitalist) conditions of possibility precisely in order to challenge those conditions. Yet here I would venture that, despite clearly stated differences (Butler et al., 2000), the political perspective of Zizek is not necessarily opposed to that of Laclau and Mouffe and that a combined approach is fully possible. While Zizek is right to stress the susceptibility of today's "alternative" forms of hegemonic engagement to deradicalization within a postmodern-p.c. imaginary - a kind of hegemonization of the very terrain (the politico-cultural conditions of possibility) that produces and predisposes the contemporary logics of hegemony - it is equally true to say that the type of political challenge that Zizek has in mind is one that can only advance through the type of hegemonic subversion that Laclau and Mouffe have consistently stressed in their work. The very possibility of a political universalism is one that depends on a certain hegemonic breaking out of the existing conventions/grammar of hegemonic engagement. It is along these lines that Zizek affirms the need for a more radical intervention in the political imagination. The modem (Machiavellian) view of politics is usually presented in terms of a basic tension between (potentially) unlimited demands/appetites and limited resources; a view which is implicit in the predominant "risk society" perspective where the central (almost Habermasian) concern is with more and better scientific information. The political truth of today's world, however, is rather the opposite of this view. That is to say, the demands of the official left (especially the various incarnations of the Third Way left) tend to articulate extremely modest demands in the face of a virtually unlimited capitalism that is more than capable of providing every person on this planet with a civilized standard of living. For Zizek, a confrontation with the obscenities of abundance capitalism also requires a transformation of the ethico-political imagination. It is no longer a question of developing ethical guidelines within the existing political framework (the various institutional and corporate "ethical committees") but of developing a politicization of ethics; an ethics of the Real. [8](http://www.lacan.com/zizek-daly.htm#8) The starting point here is an insistence on the unconditional autonomy of the subject; of accepting that as human beings we are ultimately responsible for our actions and being-in-the-world up to and including the construction of the capitalist system itself Far from simple norm-making or refining/reinforcing existing social protocol, an ethics of the Real tends to emerge through norm-breaking and in finding new directions that, by definition, involve traumatic changes: i.e. the Real in genuine ethical challenge. An ethics of the Real does not simply defer to the impossible (or infinite Otherness) as an unsurpassable -horizon that already marks every act as a failure, incomplete and so on. Rather, such an ethics is one that fully accepts contingency but which is nonetheless prepared to risk the impossible in the sense of breaking out of standardized positions. We might say that it is an ethics which is not only politically motivated but which also draws its strength from the political itself. For Zizek an ethics of the Real (or Real ethics) means that we cannot rely on any form of symbolic Other that would endorse our (in)decisions and (in)actions: for example, the 'neutral' financial data of the stockmarkets; the expert knowledge of Beck's 'new modernity' scientists; the eco­nomic and military councils of the New World Order; the various (formal and informal) tribunals of political correct­ness; or any of the mysterious laws of God, nature or the market. What Zizek affirms is a radical culture of ethical iden­tification for the left in which the alternative forms of mili­tancy must first of all be militant with themselves. That is to say, they must be militant in the fundamental ethical sense of not relying on any external/higher authority and in the development of a political imagination that, like Zizek's own thought, exhorts us to risk the impossible.

#### Political agency is psychoanalytically structured by drive – orienting our political horizons away from communism makes failure satisfying and forecloses the political itself

**Dean 12** [Jodi, Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, *The Communist Horizon*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2012, p. 65-67]

For the Left, democracy is the form the loss of communism takes. Rather than fighting for a collective ideal, engaging in a struggle on behalf of the rest of us, the Left repetitively invokes democracy, calling for what is already there. These invocations of democracy take on a pattern that Lacan describes via the psychoanalytic notion of drive. Like desire, drive refers to a way that the subject arranges her enjoyment (jouissance). With respect to desire, enjoyment is what the subject can never reach, what the subject wants but never gets – oh, that's not it. Drive differs in that enjoyment comes from missing one's goal; it's what the subject gets, even if she doesn't want it.22 Enjoyment is that little extra charge which keeps the subject keeping on. The subject's repeated yet ever failing efforts to reach her goal become satisfying on their own. Left appeals to democracy take on the structure of the drive insofar as they circle around and around. We perpetually miss our goal and get satisfaction through this very missing. Or we don't even have an actual goal, and we take the absence of a goal to be a strength. We talk, complain, and protest. We make groups on Facebook. We sign petitions and forward them to everyone in our contact list. Activity becomes passivity, our stuckness in a circuit, which is then mourned as the absence of ideas or even the loss of the political itself and then routed yet again through a plea for democracy, although it doesn't take a genius to know that the real problem is capitalism. What leftists call the loss of the political is the fog they wander through because they've lost sight of the communist horizon. Some contemporary theorists commend drive's sublimation, its substitution of partial objects and the bits of enjoyment accompanying repetitions of a process for the impossible object of desire. Multiple voices in networked and digital media circuits, for example, celebrate communicative capitalism for its provision of opportunities for small victories and momentary pleasures. Millions die in war and poverty, but at least we have the internet. Others admire drive's creative destruction, the way its dissolution of the old is the opening to the new. Admittedly, repeating the same act over and over can shift from order to chaos-it's one thing to scratch an itch a couple of times; it's something else entirely to claw through to the bone. The reiterations that fail to respond to changes in their setting themselves change the setting. But the embrace of drive as destruction, like the view of drive as sublimation, treats a feature of our setting as an alternative without drawing the necessary separation: what makes it a feature of a different formation, a different politics, or even a critique? In the contemporary networks of communicative capitalism, drive is a feedback circuit that captures our best energies. Invigorating communism as a political alternative requires amplifying the collective desire that can cut through these affective networks.

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#### Their basic frame for politics reconfirms the failures of the Left, turning debate into a Vampires’ Castle where the propagation of guilt and cycles of pseudo-activity overcome meaningful theorizing and political change – this destroys resistance to capitalism.

Fisher 13 (Mark Fisher, commissioning editor at Zer0 Books, programme Leader of the MA in Aural and Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London, lecturer at the University of East London, “Exiting the Vampire Castle,” The North Star, November 22, 2013)

Inside the Vampires’ Castle The first configuration is what I came to call the Vampires’ Castle. The Vampires’ Castle specialises in propagating guilt. It is driven by a priest’s desire to excommunicate and condemn, an academic-pedant’s desire to be the first to be seen to spot a mistake, and a hipster’s desire to be one of the in-crowd. The danger in attacking the Vampires’ Castle is that it can look as if – and it will do everything it can to reinforce this thought – that one is also attacking the struggles against racism, sexism, heterosexism. But, far from being the only legitimate expression of such struggles, the Vampires’ Castle is best understood as a bourgeois-liberal perversion and appropriation of the energy of these movements. The Vampires’ Castle was born the moment when the struggle not to be defined by identitarian categories became the quest to have ‘identities’ recognised by a bourgeois big Other. The privilege I certainly enjoy as a white male consists in part in my not being aware of my ethnicity and my gender, and it is a sobering and revelatory experience to occasionally be made aware of these blind-spots. But, rather than seeking a world in which everyone achieves freedom from identitarian classification, the Vampires’ Castle seeks to corral people back into identi-camps, where they are forever defined in the terms set by dominant power, crippled by self-consciousness and isolated by a logic of solipsism which insists that we cannot understand one another unless we belong to the same identity group. I’ve noticed a fascinating magical inversion projection-disavowal mechanism whereby the sheer mention of class is now automatically treated as if that means one is trying to downgrade the importance of race and gender. In fact, the exact opposite is the case, as the Vampires’ Castle uses an ultimately liberal understanding of race and gender to obfuscate class. In all of the absurd and traumatic twitterstorms about privilege earlier this year it was noticeable that the discussion of class privilege was entirely absent. The task, as ever, remains the articulation of class, gender and race – but the founding move of the Vampires’ Castle is the dis-articulation of class from other categories. The problem that the Vampires’ Castle was set up to solve is this: how do you hold immense wealth and power while also appearing as a victim, marginal and oppositional? The solution was already there – in the Christian Church. So the VC has recourse to all the infernal strategies, dark pathologies and psychological torture instruments Christianity invented, and which Nietzsche described in The Genealogy of Morals. This priesthood of bad conscience, this nest of pious guilt-mongers, is exactly what Nietzsche predicted when he said that something worse than Christianity was already on the way. Now, here it is … The Vampires’ Castle feeds on the energy and anxieties and vulnerabilities of young students, but most of all it lives by converting the suffering of particular groups – the more ‘marginal’ the better – into academic capital. The most lauded figures in the Vampires’ Castle are those who have spotted a new market in suffering – those who can find a group more oppressed and subjugated than any previously exploited will find themselves promoted through the ranks very quickly. The first law of the Vampires’ Castle is: individualise and privatise everything. While in theory it claims to be in favour of structural critique, in practice it never focuses on anything except individual behaviour. Some of these working class types are not terribly well brought up, and can be very rude at times. Remember: condemning individuals is always more important than paying attention to impersonal structures. The actual ruling class propagates ideologies of individualism, while tending to act as a class. (Many of what we call ‘conspiracies’ are the ruling class showing class solidarity.) The VC, as dupe-servants of the ruling class, does the opposite: it pays lip service to ‘solidarity’ and ‘collectivity’, while always acting as if the individualist categories imposed by power really hold. Because they are petit-bourgeois to the core, the members of the Vampires’ Castle are intensely competitive, but this is repressed in the passive aggressive manner typical of the bourgeoisie. What holds them together is not solidarity, but mutual fear – the fear that they will be the next one to be outed, exposed, condemned. The second law of the Vampires’ Castle is: make thought and action appear very, very difficult. There must be no lightness, and certainly no humour. Humour isn’t serious, by definition, right? Thought is hard work, for people with posh voices and furrowed brows. Where there is confidence, introduce scepticism. Say: don’t be hasty, we have to think more deeply about this. Remember: having convictions is oppressive, and might lead to gulags. The third law of the Vampires’ Castle is: propagate as much guilt as you can. The more guilt the better. People must feel bad: it is a sign that they understand the gravity of things. It’s OK to be class-privileged if you feel guilty about privilege and make others in a subordinate class position to you feel guilty too. You do some good works for the poor, too, right? The fourth law of the Vampires’ Castle is: essentialize. While fluidity of identity, pluarity and multiplicity are always claimed on behalf of the VC members – partly to cover up their own invariably wealthy, privileged or bourgeois-assimilationist background – the enemy is always to be essentialized. Since the desires animating the VC are in large part priests’ desires to excommunicate and condemn, there has to be a strong distinction between Good and Evil, with the latter essentialized. Notice the tactics. X has made a remark/ has behaved in a particular way – these remarks/ this behaviour might be construed as transphobic/ sexist etc. So far, OK. But it’s the next move which is the kicker. X then becomes defined as a transphobe/ sexist etc. Their whole identity becomes defined by one ill-judged remark or behavioural slip. Once the VC has mustered its witch-hunt, the victim (often from a working class background, and not schooled in the passive aggressive etiquette of the bourgeoisie) can reliably be goaded into losing their temper, further securing their position as pariah/ latest to be consumed in feeding frenzy. The fifth law of the Vampires’ Castle: think like a liberal (because you are one). The VC’s work of constantly stoking up reactive outrage consists of endlessly pointing out the screamingly obvious: capital behaves like capital (it’s not very nice!), repressive state apparatuses are repressive. We must protest! Neo-anarchy in the UK The second libidinal formation is neo-anarchism. By neo-anarchists I definitely do not mean anarchists or syndicalists involved in actual workplace organisation, such as the Solidarity Federation. I mean, rather, those who identify as anarchists but whose involvement in politics extends little beyond student protests and occupations, and commenting on Twitter. Like the denizens of the Vampires’ Castle, neo-anarchists usually come from a petit-bourgeois background, if not from somewhere even more class-privileged. They are also overwhelmingly young: in their twenties or at most their early thirties, and what informs the neo-anarchist position is a narrow historical horizon. Neo-anarchists have experienced nothing but capitalist realism. By the time the neo-anarchists had come to political consciousness – and many of them have come to political consciousness remarkably recently, given the level of bullish swagger they sometimes display – the Labour Party had become a Blairite shell, implementing neo-liberalism with a small dose of social justice on the side. But the problem with neo-anarchism is that it unthinkingly reflects this historical moment rather than offering any escape from it. It forgets, or perhaps is genuinely unaware of, the Labour Party’s role in nationalising major industries and utilities or founding the National Health Service. Neo-anarchists will assert that ‘parliamentary politics never changed anything’, or the ‘Labour Party was always useless’ while attending protests about the NHS, or retweeting complaints about the dismantling of what remains of the welfare state. There’s a strange implicit rule here: it’s OK to protest against what parliament has done, but it’s not alright to enter into parliament or the mass media to attempt to engineer change from there. Mainstream media is to be disdained, but BBC Question Time is to be watched and moaned about on Twitter. Purism shades into fatalism; better not to be in any way tainted by the corruption of the mainstream, better to uselessly ‘resist’ than to risk getting your hands dirty. It’s not surprising, then, that so many neo-anarchists come across as depressed. This depression is no doubt reinforced by the anxieties of postgraduate life, since, like the Vampires’ Castle, neo-anarchism has its natural home in universities, and is usually propagated by those studying for postgraduate qualifications, or those who have recently graduated from such study. What is to be done? Why have these two configurations come to the fore? The first reason is that they have been allowed to prosper by capital because they serve its interests. Capital subdued the organised working class by decomposing class consciousness, viciously subjugating trade unions while seducing ‘hard working families’ into identifying with their own narrowly defined interests instead of the interests of the wider class; but why would capital be concerned about a ‘left’ that replaces class politics with a moralising individualism, and that, far from building solidarity, spreads fear and insecurity? The second reason is what Jodi Dean has called communicative capitalism. It might have been possible to ignore the Vampires’ Castle and the neo-anarchists if it weren’t for capitalist cyberspace. The VC’s pious moralising has been a feature of a certain ‘left’ for many years – but, if one wasn’t a member of this particular church, its sermons could be avoided. Social media means that this is no longer the case, and there is little protection from the psychic pathologies propagated by these discourses. So what can we do now? First of all, it is imperative to reject identitarianism, and to recognise that there are no identities, only desires, interests and identifications. Part of the importance of the British Cultural Studies project – as revealed so powerfully and so movingly in John Akomfrah’s installation The Unfinished Conversation (currently in Tate Britain) and his film The Stuart Hall Project – was to have resisted identitarian essentialism. Instead of freezing people into chains of already-existing equivalences, the point was to treat any articulation as provisional and plastic. New articulations can always be created. No-one is essentially anything. Sadly, the right act on this insight more effectively than the left does. The bourgeois-identitarian left knows how to propagate guilt and conduct a witch hunt, but it doesn’t know how to make converts. But that, after all, is not the point. The aim is not to popularise a leftist position, or to win people over to it, but to remain in a position of elite superiority, but now with class superiority redoubled by moral superiority too. ‘How dare you talk – it’s we who speak for those who suffer!’ But the rejection of identitarianism can only be achieved by the re-assertion of class. A left that does not have class at its core can only be a liberal pressure group. Class consciousness is always double: it involves a simultaneous knowledge of the way in which class frames and shapes all experience, and a knowledge of the particular position that we occupy in the class structure. It must be remembered that the aim of our struggle is not recognition by the bourgeoisie, nor even the destruction of the bourgeoisie itself. It is the class structure – a structure that wounds everyone, even those who materially profit from it – that must be destroyed. The interests of the working class are the interests of all; the interests of the bourgeoisie are the interests of capital, which are the interests of no-one. Our struggle must be towards the construction of a new and surprising world, not the preservation of identities shaped and distorted by capital. If this seems like a forbidding and daunting task, it is. But we can start to engage in many prefigurative activities right now. Actually, such activities would go beyond pre-figuration – they could start a virtuous cycle, a self-fulfilling prophecy in which bourgeois modes of subjectivity are dismantled and a new universality starts to build itself. We need to learn, or re-learn, how to build comradeship and solidarity instead of doing capital’s work for it by condemning and abusing each other. This doesn’t mean, of course, that we must always agree – on the contrary, we must create conditions where disagreement can take place without fear of exclusion and excommunication. We need to think very strategically about how to use social media – always remembering that, despite the egalitarianism claimed for social media by capital’s libidinal engineers, that this is currently an enemy territory, dedicated to the reproduction of capital. But this doesn’t mean that we can’t occupy the terrain and start to use it for the purposes of producing class consciousness. We must break out of the ‘debate’ that communicative capitalism in which capital is endlessly cajoling us to participate in, and remember that we are involved in a class struggle. The goal is not to ‘be’ an activist, but to aid the working class to activate – and transform – itself. Outside the Vampires’ Castle, anything is possible.

#### They don’t create a space of resistance – they instead carve out a pseudo-radical space in an activity that remains funded by white elites and sustained through labor exploitation. Capitalism thrives on exactly this sort of politics – the simulation of agency allows people to pretend there’s an outside to the system. It’s that rush of agency that allows us to simulate the reclamation of the subject.

Bluhdorn ‘7 – (May 2007, Ingolfur, PhD, Reader in Politics/Political Sociology, University of Bath, “Self-description, Self-deception, Simulation: A Systems-theoretical Perspective on Contemporary Discourses of Radical Change,” Social Movement Studies, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1–20, May 2007, google scholar)

Yet the established patterns of self-construction, which thus have to be defended and further developed at any price, have fundamental problems attached to them: ﬁrstly, the attempt to constitute, on the basis of product choices and acts of consumption, a Self and identity that are distinct from and autonomous vis-a`-vis the market is a contradiction in terms. Secondly, late-modern society’s established patterns of consumption are known to be socially exclusive and environmentally destructive. Despite all hopes for ecological modernization and revolutionary improvements in resource efﬁciency (e.g. Weizsa¨cker et al., 1998; Hawkenet al., 1999; Lomborg, 2001), physical environmental limits imply that the lifestyles and established patterns of consumption cherished by advanced modern societies cannot even be extended to all residents of the richest countries, let alone to the populations of the developing world. For the sake of the (re)construction of an ever elusive Self, in their struggle against self-referentiality and in pursuit of the regeneration of difference, late-modern societies are thus locked into the imperative of maintaining and further developing the principle of exclusion (Blu¨hdorn, 2002, 2003). At any price they have to, and indeed do, defend a lifestyle that requires **ever increasing social inequality, environmental degradation, predatory resource wars, and the tight policing of potential internal and external enemies**.14 For this effort, military and surveillance technology provide ever more sophisticated and efﬁcient means. Nevertheless, the principle of exclusion is ultimately still unsustainable, not only because of spiralling ‘security’ expenses but also because it directly contradicts the modernist notion of the free and autonomous individual that late-modern society desperately aims to sustain. For this reason, late-modern society is confronted with the task of having to sustain both the late-modern principle of exclusion as well as its opposite, i.e. the modernist principle of inclusion. Very importantly, the conﬂict between the principles of exclusion and inclusion is not simply one between different individuals, political actors or sections of society. Instead, it is a politically irresolvable conﬂict that resides right within the late-modern individual, the late-modern economy and late-modern politics. And if, as Touraine notes, late-modern society no longer believes in nor even desires political transcendence, the particular challenge is that the two principles can also no longer be attributed to different dimensions of time, i.e. the former to the present, and the latter to some future society. Instead, late-modern society needs to represent and reproduce itself and its opposite at the same time. If considered within this framework of this analysis, the function of Luhmann’s system of protest communication, or in the terms of this article, the signiﬁcance of late-modern societies’ discourses of radical change becomes immediately evident. At a stage when the possibility and desirability of transcending the principle of exclusion has been pulled into radical doubt but when, at the same time, the principle of inclusion is vitally important, **these discourses simulate the validity of the latter as a social ideal**. In other words, latemodern society reconciles the tension between the cherished but exclusive status quo – for which there is no alternative – and the non-existent inclusive alternative – on whose existence it depends – **by means of simulation**. The analysis of Luhmann’s work has demonstrated how the societal self-descriptions produced by the system of protest communication, or late-modern society’s discourses of radical change, fulﬁl this function exactly. They are an indispensable function system not so much because they help to resolve late-modern society’s problems of mal-coordination, but **because by performing the possibility of the alternative they help to cope with the fundamental problem of self-referentiality**. In this sense, late-modern society’s discourses of sustainability, democratic renewal, social inclusion or global justice, to name but a few, suggest that advanced modern society is working towards an environmentally and socially inclusive alternative – genuinely modern – society, but they do not deny the fact that the big utopia and project of late-modern society is the reproduction and further enhancement of the status quo, i.e. the sustainability of the principle of exclusion. Protest movements as networks of physical actors and actions complement the purely communicative discourses of radical change in that they bring their narrative and societal selfdescription to life. Whilst the declarations of institutionalized mainstream politics cannot escape the generalized suspicion that they are purely rhetorical, social movements provide an **arena for** the physical expression and experience of the **authenticity and reality of the alternative**, or at least of the reality of its possibility and the authenticity of the commitment to its realization. For late-modern individuals who seek to find their elusive identity in ever new acts of consumption, protest movements offer an opportunity to experience themselves as autonomous, as subjects, as actors, as distinct from and opposed to the all-embracing market. Social movements and the more or less institutionalized discourses of radical change thus transmute from germ cells of the alternative society into reserves of alterity, or **theme-parks for simulated alterity** (Blu¨hdorn, 2005a). This interpretation reflects Luhmann’s suggestion that contemporary discourses of radical change are not so much about the actual implementation of radical social change as about the ‘symbolism of the alternative’. And it nowappears that the societal self-descriptions they generate fulfil a vital function not in so far as they increase the reflexivity of late-modern society but in so far as they are arenas for the experience of simulated subjectivity, duality and modernity. They provide an opportunity to reconcile the cherished but exclusive status quo with the equally cherished but unsustainable belief in the inclusive alternative. Protest movements and **discourses of radical change are the implantation of the alternative into the system itself**, or the simulated reproduction of alterity fromthe system’s own resources. As the real alternatives to the system are utterly unattractive, disappearing fast, and indeed resisted and annihilated at any price, this internal simulation of alterity is becoming late-modern society’s only remaining way of coping with the threat of self-referentiality.

#### Vote negative to embrace the academic position of comrade against capitalist planetary devastation – that requires a politics of solidarity and mass struggle that the affirmative theorizing precludes

Dean interviewed by Alvarez 19 -- Maximillian Alvarez is an associate editor at The Chronicle Review. Jodi Dean, a professor of political science at Hobart and William Smith. ("The Comradely Professor," Chronicle of Higher Education, <https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/20191011-ComradelyProf> 10-11-2019)// gcd

For Jodi Dean, a professor of political science at Hobart and William Smith, the word “comrade” is by no means a simple descriptor, nor is it some dusty relic of the bygone days of actually-existing state socialism. It is a perennial call to action, a challenge to accept one’s responsibility toward others who are “on the same side of a political struggle.” [In her new book, Comrade: An Essay on Political Belonging](https://www.versobooks.com/books/3060-comrade) (Verso), Dean argues that we are living in an era where the battle lines of a world-historical struggle — a struggle against planetary destruction, forever war, rising fascism, and [a global return to feudalism](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGq3hdWEe10) — have already been drawn. And neutrality is not an option. Everyone must answer the questions: Which side are you on? And what are you going to do about it? This, according to Dean, is why it’s imperative to examine the figure of the comrade, and to eschew concepts of identity and political organization that leave no room for collective struggle. To be and be called a comrade is to know where you stand and whom you stand with. It is to recognize that we all need to be clear about what we’re fighting for — and what we’re fighting against. As a scholar and a political organizer herself, Dean takes this responsibility seriously. She spoke with The Chronicle Review about the relationship between political and scholarly work, what it means to be a communist professor today, and what academics could be — as researchers, teachers, colleagues, and even public servants — if they took comradeliness as their primary directive. Was there something about our political moment, or the arc of your own scholarship, that made you feel that a political theory of “comrade” needed to be worked out? Oh god, yes. It comes out of contemporary politics, out of a concern with the ways that liberal assumptions of individuality undercut left concerns with collectivity. In the vague, inchoate contemporary left of social media, university campuses, NGOs, and socially engaged art, appeals to individual identity, endeavors to protect individual identity, and vigilance against suspected threats to individual identity displace efforts to build collectivity. My goal with Comrade is reminding leftists of another figure of politics, one that was prominent in the 20th century as a figure for all united in emancipatory egalitarian struggle against racism, sexism, capitalism, and imperialism. "My political and scholarly work are deeply interconnected. They inform each other. Each is better because of the other.” So I have a detailed critique of the figure of the ally and the [politics of allyship](http://www.guidetoallyship.com/). It’s strange, isn’t it, that a name associated with sovereign nation states pulling together to protect their own sovereignty, secure their own borders, has become so ubiquitous in sectors that understand themselves as on the left? But this effort to secure borders is the clue to the limits of allyship: Individuals are imagined as like little sovereign states, defending their territory and only joining together under the most cautious and self-interested terms. Those taken to share an identity are presumed to share a politics, as if the identity were obvious and the politics didn’t need to be built. Should academics see themselves as comrades? It’s hard. And it’s hard because it indexes a real antagonism in the academy between the university as a workplace and academia as a collection of scholarly practices and intellectual ideals. The relation between comrades is political; comrades are those on the same side of a political struggle. In the socialist and communist tradition, this struggle has been understood as a struggle between the oppressed and the oppressors, proletariat and bourgeoisie, tenant and landlord, oppressed nations and imperialist powers, etc. Were academics to see ourselves as comrades, we would need to see ourselves on the same political side against, say, austerity-oriented, tax-cutting state governments and neoliberal, financialized, corporate-minded boards of trustees. And this might not always prioritize teaching and research — both of which involve enormous amounts of unpaid labor. Adjuncts and faculty in nontenurable lines carry by far the bulk of this burden. But many in even nominally secure positions are experiencing intensifying precarity, and yet made to think that fighting for better conditions is wrong or suspect because it hurts the students or delays valuable research. From another angle, we can say that universities are already sites of intense politicization, whether one thinks of, say, the role of [Chicago school economists](https://slate.com/business/2016/01/in-chicago-boys-the-story-of-chilean-economists-who-studied-in-america-and-then-remade-their-country.html) in undermining social democracy and ushering in an era of intensifying inequality or in terms of the various sorts of “studies” (gender studies, ethnic studies, Africana studies, indigenous studies, etc.) fighting to redress the biases of the centuries of scholarly production that buttress forms of discrimination, oppression, exploitation, apartheid, and genocide. But this intense politicization doesn’t point to researchers and teachers in general as comrades. It points to the way that researchers and teachers may find comrades or build comradely relations in the struggles in which they participate. When people think “comrade,” their minds are probably conjuring some Cold-War image of ushanka-wearing Soviets. So, what does the term “comrade” mean, and what does it mean to consider yourself a comrade to others? Etymologically, comrade derives from camera, the Latin word for room, chamber, and vault. The generic function of a vault is producing a space and holding it open. This lets us home in on the meaning of comrade: Sharing a room, sharing a space generates a closeness, an intensity of feeling and expectation of solidarity that differentiates those on one side from those on the other. Politically, comradeship is a relation of supported cover, that is, the expectation of solidarity that those on the same side have of each other. Comrade, then, is a mode of address, figure of political belonging, and carrier of expectations for action. When we call ourselves comrades, we are saying that we are on the same side, united around a common political purpose. Many within and outside academe call you a comrade. Do you feel like there’s a clear distinction between your political and scholarly work? Maybe we could say that my political and scholarly work are deeply interconnected. They inform each other. Each is better because of the other. I am a better political theorist than I was before I was engaged seriously in organized political struggle because I now think more about audience and addressee, about the collectivities that might engage or respond to my ideas, about the forms of political action and belonging that my ideas presuppose. Who are they for? Why? “To be a communist professor today means to try to find and forward revolutionary optimism in a setting of climate catastrophe.” The comradely scholar is committed, fierce, and resolutely partisan. That means that she is more likely to be hated than loved in the academy. Her commitments are political, not disciplinary or professional commitments, which of course does not mean that she is undisciplined or unprofessional. Think of Angela Davis. Ronald Reagan, as governor of California, tried to prevent her from being able to teach in the state’s university system because she was a Communist. Is there a difference between a “public scholar” and a “comradely scholar”? Public scholars are rewarded by the same U.S. academic system that demonizes communists as traitors, cogs, and automatons, that blocks and dismisses them from academic jobs … comradely scholars, not so much. In the grand scheme of things, we’re not that far removed from the days when people were silenced, hunted, and purged en masse from academe for being communists (or for just being accused of communist sympathies). What does it mean to be a communist professor today? Over the past few years a number of brilliant scholars have been hounded out of the academy because of their political convictions, their commitments to struggles for Palestinian rights and against white supremacy. At the same time, cowardly administrations repeat right-wing talking points about free speech. It’s indicative of this capitalist, upside-down world that tells us that corporations are people but people are disposable, that we live in a knowledge society but facts, learning, and education are simultaneously devalued and commodified, that success brings freedom when in fact it brings debt and entrapment in the service of the capital accumulation of the very rich. To be a communist professor today means to try to find and forward revolutionary optimism in a setting of climate catastrophe. The source of this optimism is comradeship.

### 2nc perm

#### We can’t do both

**Naschek 18** [Melissa Naschek is a co-chair of the Philadelphia chapter of Democratic Socialists of America, “The Identity Mistake,” Jacobin, August 2018, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/08/mistaken-identity-asaid-haider-review-identity-politics>]

We Can’t “Do Both” Today, with the popularity of Bernie Sanders and a resurgence in trade union activity, circumstances are finally re-emerging for a political program capable of fostering mass working-class solidarity. Instead, Haider would have us turn to the model that has failed the working class for years: rhetorically accepting identity-based particularism at the implicit expense of class-based universalism. Of course, Haider does not overtly suggest that this is an either/or. Instead, he insists that we must do both — working-class politics and identity politics. But “doing both” is easier said than done. Identity politics and class politics understand capitalist power structures in distinct ways and therefore lead to distinct political strategies. More importantly, however, “doing both” misreads the balance of power in America today: institutionally on the Left, we have nothing but a fraction of the already miniscule labor movement to back our platform and our analysis. But liberalism has a major political party, the media, academia, and the entire world of nonprofits, which today controls about as much wealth as the Church did before the French Revolution. And it’s in the “do both” strategy that these powerful enemies of the Left (and allies of capital) worm their way into our coalition and play up identity to reshape working-class demands until they’re neutralized. Haider fails to recognize the profound asymmetry between the power of institutions of the working-class and the advocates of universal class-based reforms, and those of the liberal establishment and their own embrace of identity-based particularism. Concretely, this asymmetry does not lead to the best of identity politics and the best of universal demands in some sort of synthesis. Instead, the lopsided advocacy for particularist demands serves only to further marginalize the universalist demands. An anticapitalist politics capable of fighting against such forces must appeal to the whole working class to build a mass movement. Masses of people become interested in politics when organizations offer a real possibility to change their lives for the better. The only way to forge a movement capable of achieving that is by fighting for shared working-class political and economic interests. This remains the only plausible path to harnessing the only power offered to workers in society: their position as an exploited majority. The good news is that the needs for affordable medical care, a livable planet, quality education, and respect and security in the workplace satisfy such a mandate. It is two of Mistaken Identity’s supposed interlocutors, Barbara J. Fields and Karen Fields, who note that downplaying class demands “is a devastating, intolerable mistake. It leads people to say that race is fundamental — not economics, not class — and if you bring class in then you’re trying to deny the reality of human existence and identity. That is the big mystification achieved by racecraft.” While Haider rightly identifies the ineptitude of identity politics, he does not craft a political strategy that could serve as the basis for a socialist politics. Ultimately, Mistaken Identity is a manifesto of the Zombie New Left, claiming to overcome identity politics but leading us down the same dead end.

#### They don’t get one. Perm doesn’t mean “vote aff ‘cause you didn’t impact turn every 1AC claim” – it’s shorthand for a test of opportunity cost between political actions, and this round already discarded that model. It’s reciprocal to the strategic advantage given to affs that leverage offense from something other than the plan text. Their is metaphorical and aspirational --- any decent 2A could semantically morph their 2-paragraph solvency advocate into agreeing with nearly any specific, detailed, or well-worked advocacy of any sort. Quality debate on difficult questions about how to approach a violent world requires a meaningful role for the negative --- otherwise we’re just tilting at windmills and training to become sophists. But, even if we lose the perm, kick the alt and vote for a residual link since it doesn’t prove their advantages outweigh our links.

#### No sandbagging. If there’s another theory of competition that justifies something like a perm, the 1AR is too late to establish it—we can only base research on our limited knowledge of the 1AC, so holding them to it is key to prevent aff condo and opportunistic reframing.

#### Even if they get perms, you should assess any link we win to a 1ac argument as severance, which is a reason to reject the ground on the fairness grounds above, and also on substantive grounds: allowing the aff to morph by becoming the alt is actively hostility to debate – their ability to forego position-taking is a common post-political ploy that serves as a proxy for substantive engagement and makes both the aff and perm counter-productive

**Tedesco and Brennan 12** [Francescomaria, research fellow in political philosophy at the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa, and Timothy, professor of English at the University of Minnesota, “The Theory That Lives On—A Counterintuitive History: An Interview with Timothy Brennan,” *Minnesota Review*, Number 78, 2012]

Unlike that of some earlier critics of academic theory, my position, first off, is entirely from within. Theory is what I professionally teach and write about, and I came of age in precisely the years when it rose to prominence in the university. I am not against theory, only the monopolization of the term by a narrow lineage within it that drew on ideas from the interwar German philosophical Right which were later picked up and modified by posthumanist intellectuals in France after World War II before being imported into the United States and Britain in the 1970s. My view is not that theory should abandon its demanding lexicon and obscure phrasings to "get down" with larger audiences, or that it should make itself colloquial by returning to the models of the public intellectual. For the problem with the theory that predominates today in the humanities is not that it is obscure but that it is formulaic and conventional. The problem with theory is not that it is too theoretical rather than praxis oriented but that it is not theoretical enough. Its philosophical bases operate without reference to intellectual history—the understanding of not only what a writer is saying but what tradition they are adopting by saying it—in short, the preconditions of knowing and speaking understood in terms of conceptual [End Page 66] leads, the ramifications of context, and intellectual debts. This would lead to a certain dialectical understanding of the complexity of theory. For example, one learns much more about what the revisions of Hegel mean in a book of intellectual history like political theorist Shadia Drury's study of Alexandre Kojève, for example, than in the far more philosophically adept work of Judith Butler on the French receptions of Hegel. The former is for that reason, I would argue, a more profound work—and certainly a more enabling one. Tedesco Okay, you declare that theory's had an impact publicly and that the impact has been negative. Like what? Brennan A lot of humanities theory in practice is characterized by hostility to debate. The theorist mixes a phatic mode of address with a tendency to reconfigure incompatible ideas in a new amalgam that they then present as a new ideological "pluralism." The whole mode of thought is one of deliberate circularity—that is, the rhetorical gesture that suggests that philosophical depth is achieved when one acknowledges that what they are in the act of saying is really not being said and that any attempt at establishing a position must always be undercut by the mode of utterance that announces it, the impossibility of achieving an end. The habit these days is not to say that you oppose a position but that you want to "put pressure" on it, that you are not disagreeing with your interlocutor but "thinking with" them, and so on. This does not mean, of course, that harsh rejections and emphatic hostilities are not taking place, only that they are reserved for subrosa commentary or corridor talk. It has, at any rate, become a conceit, a sign of one's sophistication, to forgo the taking of a position. In the very act of giving a reading, one is likely now to suspend interpretation on the grounds that it would foreclose alternative possibilities. One speaks of dialectics today, for example, as a perpetually unresolved process, an open-ended, essentially self-canceling gesture, although this is not at all what dialectics means in Hegel. One would actually have to work through Hegel to know that, but few do. These are post-political stances, which is one of the more salient ways in which theory folds itself into a current public debate (without having to debate and pretending it is beyond the taking of positions) and why it is given space in the public. I am saying that the post-political outlook is within the theory that sees itself as left and that dissidence in that milieu takes its current shape from reactionary ideas [End Page 67] derived from the European interwar era: above all, the antihumanist (and posthuman) concoctions of various sorts in the work of the inter-war turn to ontology and immanence in Georges Bataille, Kojève, and others and then, after World War II, by Hyppolite and others, who are the immediate predecessors of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Jacques Derrida. The invention of the posthuman in all its variations (death of the author, history without a subject, the de-transcendentalizing of "Man," and so on) was devised in the 1930s by the bohemian and antinomian right wing of Europe, precisely to make the credible gains in the name of the human (dignity, equality, universal rights) by the organized Left of those years appear nugatory. This kind of post-politics operates according to a different logic from that of the ideologues of today's globalization and takes its leads from the "revolutionary" rhetoric of figures like Ernst Troeltsch, Moeller van der Bruck, Martin Heidegger, and postwar figures like Maurice Blanchot. Post-politics of this sort does not pose itself as a transcendence of politics but as its realization on a higher plane; it does not embrace the idea of getting beyond politics or abjuring it but the opposite—insisting on its all-encompassing and productive character, which is to say effacing the distinction between doing politics and breathing. Theory, of course, is not itself right wing; it is rather liberal. Nevertheless, it hates the Left with an intensity that only liberals can have, and so it gives us a conception of politics as an untranscendable void in which action is canceled out as symptom and in which ethics steps in to play the role of a proxy for politics. Perhaps predictably, such an autotelic understanding of theory has produced a crisis in theory and has led to an incapacity to describe, let alone analyze, current political realities or to suggest forms of resolution, which by and large is left to less philosophically inclined commentators like Naomi Klein, Serge Halimi, or Thomas Frank. I take this to be an imperial problem—that is, the product of a metropolitan outlook of citizen-spectators living under the obligatory distractions of the entertainment state, which is more and more characterized by a culture of compulsory television watching. It is the problem, we might say, of the global spread of a metropolitan idea of "democracy" and (among the insurrectionaries of theory) "resistance." This resistance is at war with itself and works against itself, because so much of what is posed as a solution to the problem is really the problem amplified. [End Page 68]

#### Results in worse political training---deciding between competing methodologies is necessary to ensure that the affirmative is forced to rigorously defend their strategy as optimal and can’t permute away superior mechanisms for fighting oppression---when we’re actually resolving social problems, political energy is limited and hence needs to be channeled---they should be forced to defend the 1ac itself as a political strategy

**Young 6** [Iris Marion, was Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, “Responsibility and Global Justice”]

Some moral theorists argue that responsibility names a form of obli- gationdistinctfromduty.JoelFeinberg,forexample,distinguishesbetween an ethic that focuses on obligation or duty and an ethic that focuses on responsibility. On the one hand, a duty specifies a rule of action or delin- eates the substance of what actions count as performing the duty. A responsibility, on the other hand, while no less obligatory, is more open with regard to what counts as carrying it out.49 A person with responsibilities is obliged to attend to outcomes that the responsibilities call for, and to orient her actions in ways demonstrably intended to contribute to bringing about those outcomes. Because a person may face many moral demands on her actions, and because changes in circumstances are often unpredictable, just how a person goes about discharging her responsibilities is a matter subject to considerable discretion.5° Given that a combination of responsibilities may be overly demanding, and given that agents have discretion in how they choose to discharge their responsibilities, it is reasonable to say that it is up to each agent to decide what she can and should do under the circumstances, and how she should order her moral priorities. Others have the right to question and criticize our decisions and actions, however, especially when we depend on one another to perform effective collective action. Part of what it means to be responsible on the social connection model is to be accountable to others with whom one shares responsibility—accountable for what one has decided to do and for which structural injustices one has chosen to address. When an agent is able to give an account of what she has done, and why, in terms of shared responsibilities for structural injustice, then others usually ought to accept her decision and the way she sets priorities for her actions.

These considerations begin to provide an answer to the question I stated above, namel how should one reason about the best way to use one’s limited time and resources to respond to structural injustices? In a world with many and deep structural injustices, most of us, in principle, share more responsibility than we can reasonably be expected to discharge.5’ Thus, we must make choices about where our action can be most useful or which injustices we regard as most urgent. While a social connection model of responsibility will not give us a list of maxims or imperatives, it should offer some parameters for reasoning to guide our decisions and actions. These parameters, in turn, address the other ques tion I raised earlier—the question about kinds and degrees of responsi bility. Different agents plausibly have different kinds of responsibilities in relation to particular issues of justice, and some arguably have a greater degree of responsibility than others.

### 2nc turns case

#### Group the solvency / role of the ballot debate

#### If we win a single link, it means that the aff is psychoanalytically trapped in a cycle of failure – leftist academics who focus inward on studies and projects that don’t direct themselves towards communist revolution know internally that they’ve sold out the proletariat, because they’ll benefit continuously from academic rewards without pushing those back towards the hopes of political change – they then displace their guilt with the same type of incessant micropolitical activity over and over again. Dean, Burghum, and Alvarez explain this through the psychoanalytic phenomenon of drive – the reason so many self-described radicals waste their time in hapless protests, in academic life, or in places like debate is that they ENJOY failing, and come to enjoy the PROCESSES of politics without structuring their enjoyment around the GOAL

#### This psychoanalytic phenomenon couldn’t describe the aff better – their depictions of impacts utterly detached from any theoretical apparatus capable of challenging them aren’t meant to change things, but simply marketed and sold to the judge, sustaining an endless loop of debate and ballot, whereby the process replaces any goal – they do this because it’s ENJOYABLE, because debate is fun – but that just means capitalism has won

**Dean 13** [Jodi, Professor of Political Science at Hobart and Smith Colleges, “Communist Desire,” ch. *The Ends of History: Questioning the Stakes of Historical Reason,* edited by Amy Swiffen, Joshua Nichols, Routledge, May 2, 2013]

Is Brown right? Having diagnosed left immobility and self-loathing as melancholic, does she correctly identify what was lost and what is retained, what is displaced and what is disavowed? And does her account of melancholia as a structure of desire exhaust the potential of her move to Freud or might additional elements of his analysis also prove helpful for coming to grips with the left and the force of loss? Benjamin’s own account of left-wing melancholy suggests a loss of a different sort than Brown’s—the betrayal of revolutionary ideals, of the proletariat. He criticizes Kästner and other new objectivists not only for clinging to a form marked by the depiction of the brutalities of everyday life but for commodifying this form, for packaging up the traces of spiritual goods as so much commercial content to be marketed and sold to the bourgeoisie. As Benjamin argues in “The Author as Producer,” however revolutionary the political tendency associated with the “new objectivity” may appear, “it actually functions in a counterrevolutionary manner as long as the writer experiences his solidarity with the proletariat ideologically and not as a producer” (3). Attached to an ideological experience of solidarity, the left melancholic disavows his practice, the practical effect of his journalistic activities. What Brown construes as a real loss of socialist ideals for which the left compensates via an obstinate and narcissistic attachment, Benjamin presents as compromise and betrayal, a compromise and betrayal that ideological identification with the proletariat attempts to displace. Brown suggests a left defeat and left behind in the wake of historical changes. Benjamin compels us to consider a left that gave in, sold out. Freud’s gesture to the melancholic’s loss of self-respect points in a similar direction. To be sure, he isn’t explicit here. His discussion evades, somewhat, the reason for the loss of self-respect (to which I said I would return). Nonetheless, the example he takes from the clinic hints at why the subject loses self-respect. Describing a woman who “loudly pities her husband for being tied to such an incapable wife,” Freud observes that she is really accusing her husband of incapacity. Her self-reproaches, some of which are genuine, “are allowed to obtrude themselves, since they help to mask the others and make recognition of the true state of affairs impossible.” Moreover, these reproaches “derive from the pros and cons of the conflict of love that has led to the loss of love” (247). Might it not be the case, then, that the woman is quite rightly recognizing her own incapacity in finding a capable husband, one capable of sustaining her desire? Might she not be punishing herself for compromising, for making due, for allowing the pros and cons of the conflict of love to constrain her desire as she acquiesces to a reality of acceptance and moderation to which there seems to be no alternative? If the answer to these questions is yes, then the woman’s loss of self-respect is an indication of the guilt she feels at having ceded her desire. To use the terms given to us by Lacan, “the only thing one can be guilty of is giving ground relative to one’s desire.” The woman’s identification with her husband is a compromise, the way she sublimates her desire so as to make him the object of it. The ferocity of her super-ego and the unrelenting punishment to which it subjects her indicates that she has given up on the impossibility of desire, desire’s own constitutive dissatisfaction, to accommodate herself to everyday life. Freud notes the delight super-ego takes in torment as well as the fact that the subject enjoys it: If the love for the object—a love which cannot be given up though the object itself is given up—takes refuge in narcissistic identification, then the hate comes into operation on this substitutive object, abusing it, debasing it, making it suffer and deriving sadistic satisfaction from its suffering. The self-tormenting in melancholia, which is without doubt enjoyable, signifies, just like the corresponding phenomenon in obsessional neurosis, a satisfaction of trends of sadism and hate which relate to an object, and which have been turned round upon the subject's own self . . . (250). His analysis here uses the terminology of the drives set out in “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes.” In that essay, Freud says that the drives, lamentably translated as instincts in the Strachey edition of his papers, undergo the following vicissitudes: reversal into their opposite, turning round upon the subject’s own self, repression, and sublimation. As Lacan makes clear, what is crucial in the Freudian account of the drives is the way drive provides the subject with another way to enjoy. The enjoyment, jouissance, that desire can’t attain, drive can’t avoid. Unable to satisfy or maintain desire, the subject enjoys in another way, the way of the drive. If desire is always a desire to desire, a desire that can never be filled, a desire for a jouissance or enjoyment that can never be attained, drive functions as a way to enjoy through failure. In drive, one doesn’t have to reach the goal to enjoy. The activities one undertakes to achieve a goal become satisfying own their own. Because they provide a little kick of enjoyment, they come themselves to take the place of the goal. Attaching to the process, enjoyment captures the subject. Further, as Slavoj Zizek argues, the shift from desire to drive effects a change in the status of the object. Whereas the object of desire is originally lost, “which emerges as lost,” in drive loss itself is an object. In other words, drive isn’t a quest for a lost object; it’s the enactment of loss or the force loss exerts on the field of desire. So drives don’t circulate around a space that was once occupied by an ideal, impossible object. Rather, drive is the sublimation of desire as it turns back in on itself, this turning thereby producing the loop of drive and providing its own special charge. An emphasis on the drive dimension of melancholia, on Freud’s attention to the way sadism in melancholia is “turned round upon the subject’s own self,” leads to an interpretation of the general contours shaping the left that differs from Brown’s. Instead of a left attached to an unacknowledged orthodoxy, we have one that has given way on the desire for communism, betrayed its historical commitment to the proletariat, and sublimated revolutionary energies into restorationist practices that strengthen the hold of the capitalism. This left has replaced commitments to the emancipatory, egalitarian struggles of working people against capitalism, commitments that were never fully orthodox, but always ruptured, conflicted, and contested, with incessant activity (not unlike the mania Freud also associates with melancholia) and so now satisfies itself with criticism and interpretation, small projects and local actions, particular issues and legislative victories, art, technology, procedures, and process. It sublimates revolutionary desire to democratic drive, to the repetitious practices offered up as democracy (whether representative, deliberative, or radical), having already conceded to the inevitably of capitalism, “noticeably abandoning any striking power against the big bourgeoisie,” to return to Benjamin’s language. For such a left enjoyment comes from its withdrawal from power and responsibility, its sublimation of goals and responsibilities into the branching, fragmented practices of micro-politics, self-care, and issue awareness. Perpetually slighted, harmed, and undone, this left remains stuck in repetition, unable to break out of the circuits of drive in which it is caught, unable because it enjoys.

#### That means it’s try or die for orienting our politics towards the Communist horizon – even if their politics would be good in the abstract, they’ll never be actualized because of their entrapment within the repetitive cycle of drive – Communist desire is the ONLY psychoanalytic structure capable of breaking through drive’s endless cycling, through tapping into a common will that provides COLLETIVE desire, such that our politics can be communally redirected towards an egalitarian ends

## anti-blackness

### 1nc link – structural claims

#### The AFF’s structural claims and refusal of institutional politics results in a politics of cynicism that makes any kind of material change impossible

Burgum 15 (Samuel, PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of Warwick and has been conducting research with Occupy London since 2012, “The branding of the left: between spectacle and passivity in an era of cynicism,” *Journal for Cultural Research*, Volume 19, Issue 3)

Rather than the Situationist spectacle, then, I argue that the reason those on the left are rendered post-politically impotent to bring about change is not because we are deceived, but because we enact apathy despite ourselves. In other words, the relationship between the resistive subject and ideology is not one of false consciousness, but one of cynicism: we are not misdirected by shallow spectacles, but instead somehow distracted by our cynical belief that we are being “distracted”. In this section, I begin by outlining the concept of cynicism as it has been theorised by Peter Sloterdijk and Slavoj Žižek. This then leads us to an analysis of the cynical position adopted by Brand’s critics, which I argue actually demonstrates more political problems on the part of the left than those suggested by Brand himself. For Sloterdijk, cynicism is an attitude that emerges right at the centre of the enlightenment project, where, in contrast to a modernist illumination of truth, “a twilight arises, a deep ambivalence” (1987, p. 22). Rather than the promised heightened consciousness of science that would allow us to see the hidden essential truths behind appearances, the very conception of truth as unconcealedness (aletheia)3 instead creates a widespread mistrust and suspicion of every appearance. Subsequently, “a new form of realism bursts forth, a form that is driven by the fear of becoming deceived or overpowered … everything that appears to us could be a deceptive manoeuvre of an overpowering evil enemy” (Sloterdijk, 1987, p. 330). The surface becomes suspect and the subject therefore retreats from all appearances: judging them to be spectacles that are seeking to oppress through falsity. The result is cynicism. Subsequently, this leads Sloterdijk to his well-known paradoxical definition of cynicism as “enlightened false consciousness” which he describes as a “modernized, unhappy consciousness on which enlightenment has laboured both successfully and in vain … it has learned its lessons in enlightenment, but it has not, probably was not able to, put them into practice” (1987, p. 5). In other words, in the search for a higher consciousness behind appearances, the subject is paradoxically “duped” by their very suspicion of being duped. Furthermore, because the subject thinks they “know” that appearances are just a mask, they disbelieve the truth when it does appear. Like the story of the Emperor’s New Clothes, they fancy themselves to know what is right in front of their eyes (that the emperor is nude and vulnerable) yet they choose “not to know” and don’t act upon it (they still act as if the emperor is all-powerful). As such, cynical reason is no longer naïve, but is a paradox of enlightened false consciousness: one knows the falsehood very well, one is well aware of a particular hidden interest hidden behind the ideological universality, but still one does not renounce it. (Žižek, 1989, p. 23) The audience to the parade of power can see that the emperor is not divine – just a fragile human body like the rest of us – yet they cynically choose not to know and objectively retain his aura. They congratulate themselves on “knowing” that Brand is a trivial spectacle, yet they choose to remain apathetic towards his calls for action. As such, the dismissive reaction to Brand reveals a regressive interpassive tendency of the left to subjectively treat ourselves as “enlightened” to authentic politics and yet objectively render ourselves passive. In a kind of defence mechanism, the left believes that it can avoid becoming the dupe of the latest fashion or advertising trend by treating everything as a matter of fashion and advertising, reassuring ourselves as we flip through television channels or browse through the shopping mall that at least we know what’s really going on. (Stanley, 2007, p. 399) The critics disbelieve Brand, distrusting his motives and seeing him as inauthentic, yet they continue to “believe” objectively in their own marginalisation. As such, the cynical left believe they are dismissing shallow spectacle in the direction of a stronger authentic radicalism, yet what their “doing believes” is the maintenance of their apathetic position. More precisely, it maintains the attitudes of left melancholy and anti-populism. The problem of “left melancholy” points towards the forever-delayed search for authenticity on the part of a cynical left that is in mourning. Coined by Walter Benjamin (1998), the concept points towards “the revolutionary who is, finally, attached more to a particular political analysis or ideal – even to the failure of that ideal – than to seizing possibilities for radical change in the present” (Brown, 1999, p. 19). Suffering from a history of defeat and embarrassment, the left persist in a narcissistic identification with failure, fetishising the “good old days” and remaining faithful to lost causes. As Benjamin himself points out, the cynical kernel of this attitude is clear, as “melancholy betrays the world for the sake of knowledge … but in its tenacious self-absorption it embraces dead objects in its consumption in order to redeem them” (1998, p. 157). In other words, the sentiment is a deliberate self-sabotage that takes place even before politics proper has a chance to begin or “the paradox of an intention to mourn that precedes and anticipates the loss of the object” (Žižek, 2001, p. 146). This then leads us to the second problem of leftist cynicism: anti-populism. As a result of melancholia, the left has developed the bad habit of prejudging all instances of popular radical expression (such as Brand’s) as necessarily flawed. However, to return to Dean again, she points out that this aversion to being popular and successful is a defining feature of a contemporary left, who prefer to adopt an “authentic” underdog position in advance than take risks towards political power. As she argues, “we” on the left see “ourselves” as “always morally correct but never politically responsible” (Dean, 2009, p. 6) prepositioned as righteous victims and proud political losers from the outset. What this cynicism towards instances of popular radicalism ultimately means, therefore, is that any concern for authenticity is ultimately a regressive one, a defence mechanism for a left that “as long as it sees itself as defeated victims, can refrain from having to admit is short on ideas” (Dean, 2009, p. 5). Such an attitude means never risking potential failure and residing in the safety of marginal righteousness. It is the contention here, therefore, that both melancholia and anti-populism can be seen in the cynical reaction to Brand’s radicalism. Somewhat ironically, Brand (2013) even recognised these problems himself when he wrote in his *New Statesman* piece that the right seeks converts while the left seeks traitors … this moral superiority that is peculiar to the left is a great impediment towards momentum … for an ideology that is defined by inclusiveness, socialism has become in practice quite exclusive. Automatically, then, the left denounce Brand and self-proclaimed “radical left-wing thinkers and organisers” bitterly complain how he is getting so much attention for the arguments they have been making for years (for example, Park & Nastasia, 2013). The left maintain distance and label Brand trivial, yet such a distance only renders these critiques even more marginal and prevents them from becoming popular, effective or counter-hegemonic. As Žižek has pointed out, the political issue of cynicism is “not that people ‘do not know what they want’ but rather that cynical resignation prevents them from acting upon it, with the result that a weird gap opens up between what people think and how they act”, adding that “today’s post-political silent majority is not stupid, but it is cynical and resigned” (2011, p. 390). In terms of Brand, this blanket cynical melancholy is typical of the left’s distrust of anything popular, rendering them “like the last men” whose “immediate reaction to idealism is mocking cynicism” (Winlow & Hall, 2012, p. 13). Proponents of a radical alternative immediately adopt caution with the effect of forever delaying change, holding out for that real and authentic (unbranded) struggle and therefore denying it indefinitely.

### 1nc link – survival strategy

#### Assuming the act of survival in and of itself is political obfuscates the way that individualizing function of communicative capitalism renders political victories resilient - It conflates second-order differentiations in theory with structural transformation—only forwarding and debating concrete visions of political change can mobilize a collective movement

Alvarez, 17—dual-PhD candidate and graduate student instructor in the departments of History and Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan (Maximillian, “Circulate Now, Mobilize Later,” <https://thebaffler.com/latest/circulate-now-mobilize-later>)

Here’s my first claim: for too long, we’ve collectively and individually allowed leftism to become a loose cluster of critical positions orbiting around a general sense of intellectual and consumeristic self-satisfaction as opposed to pressure-cooking it down to a core of concerted political actions and commitments. The market for leftist ideas and criticism is something akin to a concentrated mist: refreshing in the moment, but ungraspable, and perhaps hazardous over the longer term. Second claim: this has largely been the result of fundamental changes to the ways we write, share, act, and think that have occurred under the system called “communicative capitalism”—a system that encourages us to communicate more even as the rapid proliferation of new platforms and outlets sucks away the potential for our communications to have any sort of political impact. Third claim: while the writing and publishing left may be “succeeding” by the standards set by communicative capitalism, we’re actively feeding the mechanisms by which communicative capitalism makes us obsolete.

The left has always relied on “organs” for basic functions of its many political bodies (here we’ll stick to print and typed media, but this also includes radio, video, illustrations, art, etc.). There’s a beautiful and dusty history to publications like New Masses, The Militant, The Daily Worker, and The Partisan Review in the days of the “Old Left, succeeded by the New Left Review (itself the product of a 1960 merger between The New Reasoner and Universities and Left Review), politics, Dissent, Socialisme ou Barbarie, The Socialist Register, Monthly Review, The National Guardian, In These Times, Mother Jones, etc., to say nothing of anarchist zines and liberal pillars like The Nation and The New Republic.

Take a cursory glance at some of the older issues of these and many more publications, and note our recent intellectual lineage. Some of the writing is incredible, some of it sucks, but one thing stands out immediately. These media outlets, representing different ideological factions and causes, never let you forget how impressively goal-oriented they are. Their communicative goals include, but aren’t limited to: introducing a working left agenda to moldable “publics”; cultivating ways of viewing the world consistent with core leftist principles; providing a public forum for key arguments and strategies to be debated; organizing targeted readerships (specific geographic, class, employment-based, etc. demographics) and mobilizing resistance movements with urgent objectives (strikes, unionization, congresses, positions to take on elections and wars, “the revolution,” etc).

Please resist the urge to write this question off as the ignorant burbling of an idealistic wag: What are the goals of the typing and publishing left today? If we are, independently or collectively, organs of a political body, what is our function? Even as a minor participant in written leftism, I have the same knee-jerk responses to this question that most would have. Our function is to critique: to expose the unseen workings of unjust power, to enlighten and “sway public opinion.” Our organs take in the world’s faults and explain them through a mode of political criticism that, for all its variations, is informed by more-or-less shared notions of anti-capitalist resistance. We in the left publishing world largely agree that the capitalist political economy is far-reaching, evil, and violent, and that forms of injustice (like discrimination, persecution, exploitation, etc.) are perpetuated by broad social-historical forces whose traces are present in many institutions and traditions today. This core critique feels pretty consistent with the work done by radical publications of the past.

But this hard work, the work of critique, doesn’t really qualify us as organs. Even if they were entirely unrealistic, the critiques from organs in bygone eras were oriented toward targeted groups achieving tangible goals. Today, by contrast, it’s seemingly a given that critique is an end in itself. The implied, intangible goal of “raising public awareness” is enough, and we generally assume all the conventional measures of media success—popularity, traffic, virality, circulation boosts—are a useful stand-in metric for attaining that goal. And with an abundantly supplied market for left critique, achieving this goal inherently depends on strategies of product differentiation—or, to borrow an ever-apt phrase from the Freudian lexicon, the narcissism of small differences.

The leading venues for political criticism all seek to differentiate themselves through rhetorical style, layout aesthetic, and, to some extent, theoretical affiliations. And they have every market incentive to push these second-order distinctions over the advancement of any clear and overarching visions of what the world should be and how to go about changing it. And as producers and consumers in this marketplace of political criticism, we’re encouraged not to tie ourselves down to one look, but to explore and cherry-pick arguments from all over in a way that expresses the depth and variation of our leftism while confirming that leftism itself has become just that—a marketplace.

The function of an organ is defined by the body it serves. Without a body, it’s just greasy tissue. So, perhaps the better question is: what body (or bodies) are we serving? Is there a body at all, or has that question become, in an all-too literal sense, immaterial to us? Behind the thousands of faceless “likes” and “favorites” and shares and subscriptions, is there a thunderous thing with teeth and fists? Is there, at this moment, for instance, a discernible body of and for socialism that we, as organs, are helping to sustain? I suspect not. Almost all twenty-first-century evidence suggests, instead, that the bodies we like to think we’re commanding are disjointed, dispersed, and shapeless. In fact, they’re not bodies at all, just a thousand points of light trying to outshine each other in cold, dead space.

Which means we are not organs. At best, we’re organs in vitro, suspended on our own, connected to nothing, taking in raw material through one rubbery ventricle and passing through another some smart, different-looking sludge that falls on the floor, splotch.

Two things: (1) Marxist theorist Jodi Dean has provided some of the most illuminating studies of how “communicative capitalism”—the marriage between neoliberalism and our jungle of mass and social media—has created multiple traps from which the “academic and typing left” can’t seem to escape; (2) you should be reading Jodi Dean. For the sake of space, we’ll just proceed assuming a shared beginner’s understanding of neoliberalism as, in David Harvey’s words, a “counterrevolutionary project” cooked up and “carried out by the corporate capitalist class . . . [who] felt intensely threatened both politically and economically towards the end of the 1960s into the 1970s . . . [and who] desperately wanted to launch a political project that would curb the power of labor.” Across the globe, this project has taken many discrete forms, infiltrating bodies politic and, like a virus, restructuring their DNA to destroy the tissue of Keynesian liberal democracy and communism alike. It has likewise reconfigured the playing field in the writing world, bigly.

One of the central goals of the neoliberal project was to replace collective ways of living with thoroughly individualized ones. Collective social and political formations (labor unions, mass movements, etc.) were dethroned by the righteousness of solitary pursuits (reclaiming the “right to work,” becoming your own boss in a gig economy, fighting discrimination as a personal matter, etc.). Collective ways of taking the world in (reading major newspapers, going to the movies, mass marketing, or otherwise “tuning in” with the rest of the nation at designated times) gave way to a utopia of personal accommodation (binge watch whatever and whenever you want, personalize all commodities, follow whichever blogs or magazines fit your tastes, control your content as you move through space walled off by tiny earphones).

In this new, deeply individualistic media surround, once power has been successfully transferred from collective doing and being to a burning desire for hyper-customized choice, once that has become the gold standard of living well, then we’re forever playing on neoliberalism’s turf. Neoliberalism has successfully engineered our desire for an ideal of freedom molded from pre-existing models of consumer choice (“have it your way”), self-care (“because you’re worth it”), and personal uniqueness (“be together, not the same”), and it will always be able to provide more avenues for fulfilling that desire. This absolutely applies to the world of writing and ideas, which appear to us in an endless, Matrix-style candy store from which we can choose whatever we need to suit whatever we want to be at any given time.

As Dean points out, this process is increasingly embedded in our hard- and software. Mass production of digital revolution technologies (computers, the internet, digital and smart phones, etc.) have provided the perfect media environment for neoliberalism to materialize these changes to humanity in the form of communicative capitalism. And it’s not hard to see how such changes have profoundly altered the market for leftist thinking and political criticism. As a marriage between new technologies and the neoliberal project, communicative capitalism gets us to buy into, become dependent on, and even celebrate the things that are wiping our political resistance off the map.

Communicative capitalism opens up more opportunities for the left to communicate, to publish, to reach and “connect” with people, while also ensuring that such activities actually strengthen the very beast we love to think about overthrowing. This isn’t just because our surfing, clicking, and communicating are providing digital marketers and data harvesters with new revenue streams and profit centers. The real tectonic shift here is the creation of a digital universe, a realm where people can play out the fantasy of democracy while growing evermore detached from the “real world” of neoliberal politics. Leftist political criticism in the twenty-first century, like everything else that circulates through our datastreams, is fundamentally caught up in, and restructured by, the physics of that universe.

The first law of physics in the universe of communicative capitalism is the fetishization of Capital-D Democracy, which it uses as a marketing tool. “New media” invite us to participate (log in, communicate, click, share, post, buy, etc.) under the banner of democratized access (everyone can join) to democratized information (everything is searchable) and the realization of a truly democratic public sphere (everyone has a voice). This flexible bit of brand sloganeering promotes a liberal humanist ideal of the democratic digital universe as a place where pluralism reigns, where we all have different spaces to express ourselves and connect with people and content that suit our different identities and interests. Moreover, it assures us that we’re actually carrying out our democratic duties of communicating, speaking out, deliberating, and sharing (more so than ever before) while also ensuring that our politics are limited to just that: the circulation of content. “In this mediated dimension,” Dean writes, “politicians, governments, and activists struggle for visibility, currency, and, in the now quaint term from the dot-com years, mindshare. On the other hand . . . institutional politics, the day-to-day activities of bureaucracies, lawmakers, judges, and the apparatuses of the police and national security state . . . seem to run independently of the politics that circulates as content.”

Now, this isn’t to say that all digital politics is useless and that all leftist criticism that does the bulk of its circulation online is purely cerebral “slacktivism.” Digital technologies have indeed made some significant political action possible. And, of course, things have gotten particularly interesting with Trump, who actually does seem to be greatly affected by what goes on in the anything-goes world of the internet. But that doesn’t mean that the left can pretend it isn’t, like everyone else, still caught in this perverse and debilitating system.

We are facing a media market and a political arena in which communication aggressively comes hither as an end in itself, alongside a purely instrumental model of “democracy” as the circulation of content with no need to promote action. We are trying to write our way out of a networked system that has already captured our writing as another commodity for people to choose from, as consumers, in order to suit their individual, not collective, tastes in leftist critique. This isn’t to say that failure is a foregone conclusion, though; it is, however, to say that, in order to begin conceptualizing how we might actually win in the marketplace of ideas, we need to take full and honest measure of how the game board tilts.

While the age of Trump is bringing more eyeballs to our articles and more subscribers to sustain our efforts, that has little to no impact on the much larger problems confronting leftist criticism and politics under communicative capitalism. In fact, such provisional victories in the digital mediasphere might actually be bad if they lull us into the false sense that things are going smoothly and that our ideas and arguments are becoming gradually more ubiquitous. When contrasted with historic levels of inequality, perpetual war, climate instability, the Trumpian takeover of American government, etc., the very notion that greater circulation corresponds to leftist success proves that the digital universe is every bit as disconnected from everything else as Dean claims.

“Traffic,” “circulation,” and “uniques” are the expressed goals of any publication in the digital age. These are the metrics keeping most publications alive. But we are suicidally [tragically] misguided to think that these things correspond to any graspable success for the left itself or its internal “battle of ideas.” To make this sobering point more sobering, we can use these same metrics to note that the top leftist publications are still getting traffic-whipped by morons like Tomi Lahren or even Rush Limbaugh.

Even worse, for venues of leftist political criticism, there’s a general sense that we can gain traffic now, build up a base, and mobilize later. But, again, one has to wonder if increasing our circulation corresponds to building a base that can actually be mobilized when “the time is right.” My reluctant but unambiguous verdict here is that no, we are not. Otherwise, what the hell have we been waiting for? Maybe we’ve already registered awareness of this at some gut level already, and we realize at bottom that “getting more traffic” is just an excuse we can use to always defer action we know won’t come—a can we’re able to perpetually kick down a dusty, desert road to never.

For the new generation, socialism is rising as a forceful feeling, yes, but it’s still incredibly nebulous. So nebulous, in fact, that many of us millennials still wanted to see if it could attach itself to, and become concrete through, the resistant body of a thoroughly neoliberal Democratic Party. It can’t. And it must now be called forth into other viable forms that can be followed and supported, or else it will join the other wandering souls of bodiless leftist ideas that give us all plenty to write about and little to hope for.

Just acknowledging these obstacles for leftist political criticism won’t make them go away. To fight for a leftist future while combating the traps of communicative capitalism, we need to do more, and some of it won’t be pleasant. It goes without saying that leftist criticism can’t just point to or encourage action; it needs to be steeped in it from the beginning. In the same vein, publications can’t just be venues for critical reflection on political action—they must be vital organs whose functions include mobilization, strategizing, and on-the-ground collaboration with the grassroots.

Leftist critics need to get out of their head right now (yesterday, in fact) the idea that more and different critique is an end in itself. There will always be opportunities to make newer and better critiques in the media market of communicative capitalism, but this doesn’t address the basic problem that there is now, by most measures, a glut of good criticism out there already. Did any of it secure a victory for Sanders over Clinton? Did it stop Trump? Did any of it stall the prison-industrial complex or stop ICE raids under Obama and now Trump?

Lack of critique is not our problem—more and better will not alone be enough to strike back against these grim forces. And the more that we each individually entertain our egoistic desire to be distanced intellectual leaders of a movement through our criticisms, the less we’ll be able to see things as they really are, and to call them by their true names. For all the talk of growing resistance, there’s no serious connection between leftist critique and some consistent movement—yet. And, as of this moment, we critics are carrying on like thousands of Don Quixotes, all charging in different directions with no one behind us. (And, yes, I’m as guilty of operating under such delusions as the next person—that’s the point.)

Once we’ve set aside the seductions of memeing, we must understand and take seriously that we are embarked on something far more momentous. We’re now plunged into the thick of a battle royale for the soul (and body) of the left. How do we contribute to summoning the actually-existing political bodies for which we can be vital organs? How do we begin to coax forth something solid, consistent, from the hazy and dispersed leftist non-body? How do we throw down forms of political criticism that actively refuse to be casually absorbed by permanently scattered individuals in an intellectual market of leftism that, under communicative capitalism, most resembles a thrift store where different brands can be mixed and matched to each consumer’s liking?

For starters, we need more goal-oriented journalistic campaigns, campaigns that repeatedly fuse critical positions and political demands with clear and present visions for mobilization. Campaigns that collaborate with and harness existing mobilization efforts. As with political journalism of the past, which heavily featured local labor leaders, political actors, and imminent concerns, our campaigns should more collectively strive to summon forth an urgency in readers whose reading activity embroils them in a drastic political landscape that is unfolding right now (not just in abstract arguments or visions of a distant past or future). To capture the critical now-ness of our daily reading, for example, our campaigns should continue to make the work and positions of activists like Aly Wane, Lucas Benitez, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor as much, if not more, of a recurring focus than Debord, Rorty, and Gramsci.

At historical moments of extreme tension, like our own, such campaigns helped bring forth, starting with relatively small student protests in ’68 Paris, the mobilization of a general strike demanding worker and student rights, antiwar measures, and the potential resignation of a national leader. Such campaigns, which would eventually help relay and articulate demands for policy changes and community action, grew out of, and learned from, local grassroots efforts by black civil rights activists organizing the boycotts, sit-ins, “freedom rides,” etc. Regardless of how things changed drastically after WWII, such campaigns helped foment an American labor movement with considerable communist influence.

Perhaps another byproduct of a revived on-the-ground focus for leftist political journalism will be the need for individual outlets to concretize actual schools of thought and strategy that can be differentiated from each other. Perhaps, in other words, people must be encouraged to take sides. This is not because our leftist infighting and jockeying for position is somehow more important than the larger battles we are collectively facing. Rather, we may very well recognize that the stakes are so high now that this is an unavoidable move, one of the few things we can actually do to draw ourselves and our readers out of the communicative capitalist haze, to summon ourselves into working, organized leftist bodies. It may be one of the only ways left to suit up and take leftist politics out of the neoliberal marketplace of circulating content and put it back onto the battlefield, where it belongs.

### 1nc link – identity

#### Ideologies of ascriptive difference serve to stabilize labor relations in the class hierarchy—Marxism is key to demystify the role of identity within broader class conflict—voting aff only makes neolib more efficient

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A Marxist perspective can be most helpful for understanding race and racism insofar as it perceives capitalism dialectically, as a social totality that includes modes of production, relations of production, and the pragmatically evolving ensemble of institutions and ideologies that lubricate and propel its reproduction. From this perspective, Marxism’s most important contribution to making sense of race and racism in the United States may be demystification. A historical materialist perspective should stress that “race”—which includes “racism,” as one is unthinkable without the other—is a historically specific ideology that emerged, took shape, and has evolved as a constitutive element within a definite set of social relations anchored to a particular system of production.

Race is a taxonomy of ascriptive difference, that is, an ideology that constructs populations as groups and sorts them into hierarchies of capacity, civic worth, and desert based on “natural” or essential characteristics attributed to them. Ideologies of ascriptive difference help to stabilize a social order by legitimizing its hierarchies of wealth, power, and privilege, including its social division of labor, as the natural order of things.1 Ascriptive ideologies are just-so stories with the potential to become self-fulfilling prophecies. They emerge from self-interested common sense as folk knowledge: they are “known” to be true unreflectively because they seem to comport with the evidence of quotidian experience. They are likely to become generally assumed as self-evident truth, and imposed as such by law and custom, when they converge with and reinforce the interests of powerful strata in the society.

Race and gender are the most familiar ascriptive hierarchies in the contemporary United States. Ironically, that is so in part because egalitarian forces have been successful in the last half-century in challenging them and their legal and material foundations. Inequalities based directly on claims of race and gender difference are now negatively sanctioned as discrimination by law and prevailing cultural norms. Of course, patterns of inequality persist in which disadvantage is distributed asymmetrically along racial and gender lines, but practically no one—even among apologists for those patterned inequalities— openly admits to espousing racism or sexism.

It is telling in this regard that Glenn Beck stretches to appropriate Martin Luther King, Jr., and denounces Barack Obama as racist, and that Elisabeth Hasselbeck and Ann Coulter accuse Democrats of sexism. Indeed, just as race has been and continues to be unthinkable without racism, today it is also unthinkable without antiracism.

Crucially, the significance of race and gender, and their content as ideologies of essential difference have changed markedly over time in relation to changing political and economic conditions. Regarding race in particular, classificatory schemes have varied substantially, as have the narratives elaborating them. That is, which populations count as races, the criteria determining them, and the stakes attached to counting as one, or as one or another at any given time, have been much more fluid matters than our discussions of the notion would suggest.

And that is as it must be because race, like all ideologies of ascriptive hierarchy, is fundamentally pragmatic. After all, these belief systems emerge as legitimations of concrete patterns of social relations in particular contexts.

Race emerged historically along with the institution of slavery in the New World. A rich scholarship examines its emergence, perhaps most signally with respect to North America in Edmund Morgan’s American Slavery, American Freedom and Kathleen Brown’s Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs. Both focus on the simultaneous sharpening of distinctions between slavery and indentured servitude, and the institutional establishment of black and white, or African and English, as distinct, mutually exclusive status categories over the course of the seventeenth century in colonial Virginia.2 Race and racism took shape as an ideology and material reality during the following century initially in the context of the contest between free-and slave-labor systems and the related class struggle that eventually produced the modern notion of free labor as the absolute control of a worker over her or his person.3

After defeat of the Confederate insurrection led to slavery’s abolition, race as white supremacy evolved in the South as an element in the struggle over what freedom was to mean and how it would be harmonized with the plantocracy’s desired labor system and the social order required to maintain it. That struggle culminated in the planter-dominated ruling class’s victory, which was consolidated in racialized disfranchisement and imposition of the codified white supremacist regime of racial segregation.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the West Coast fights over importation of Chinese labor and Japanese immigration also condensed around racialist ideologies. Railroad operators and other importers of Chinese labor imagined that Chinese workers’ distinctive racial characteristics made them more tractable and capable of living on less than white Americans; opponents argued that those very racial characteristics would degrade American labor and that Chinese were racially “unassimilable.” Postbellum southern planters imported Chinese to the Mississippi Delta to compete with black sharecroppers out of the same racialist presumptions of greater tractability, as did later importers of Sicilian labor to the sugarcane and cotton fields.

Large-scale industrial production in the latenineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, of course, depended on mass labor immigration mainly from the eastern and southern fringes of Europe. The innovations of race science—that is, of racialist folk ideology transformed into an academic profession—promised to assist employers’ needs for rational labor force management and were present in the foundation of the fields of industrial relations and industrial psychology. Hugo Münsterberg, a founding luminary of industrial psychology, included “race psychological diagnosis” as an element in assessment of employees’ capabilities, although he stressed that racial or national temperaments are averages and that there is considerable individual variation within groups. He argued that assessment, therefore, should be leavened with consideration of individuals’ characteristics and that the influence of “group psychology” would be significant only if the employment not of a single person, but of a large number, is in question, as it is most probable that the average character will show itself in a sufficient degree as soon as many members of the group are involved.4

As scholarship on race science and its kissing cousin, eugenics, has shown, research that sets out to find evidence of racial difference will find it, whether or not it exists. Thus, race science produced increasingly refined taxonomies of racial groups—up to as many as sixty-three “basic” races. The apparent specificity of race theorists’ just-so stories about differential racial capacities provided rationales for immigration restriction, sterilization, segregation, and other regimes of inequality. It also held out the promise of assisting employers in assigning workers to jobs for which they were racially suited. John Bodnar and his coauthors reproduce a Racial Adaptability Chart used by a Pittsburgh company in the 1920s that maps thirty-six different racial groups’ capacities for twenty-two distinct jobs, eight different atmospheric conditions, jobs requiring speed or precision, and day or night shift work. For example, Letts were supposedly fair with pick and shovel, and concrete and wheelbarrow, bad as hod carriers, cleaners and caretakers, and boilermaker’s helpers; good as coal passers and blacksmiths as well as at jobs requiring speed or precision; and good in cool and dry, smoky or dusty conditions; fair in oily or dirty processes; and good on both day and night shifts.5

Of course, all this was bogus, nothing more than narrow upper-class prejudices parading about as science. It was convincing only if one shared the folk narratives of essential hierarchy that the research assumed from the outset. But the race theories did not have to be true to be effective. They had only to be used as if they were true to produce the material effects that gave the ideology an authenticating verisimilitude. Poles became steel workers in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Buffalo, Chicago, and Gary not for any natural aptitude or affinity but because employers and labor recruiters sorted them into work in steel mills.

Even the New Deal embedded premises of racial and gender hierarchy in its most fundamental policy initiatives. The longer-term implications of the two-tiered system of social benefits thus created persist to the present day. This extensive history illustrates that, as Marxist theorist Harry Chang observed in the 1970s, racial formation has always been an aspect of class formation, as a “social condition of production.” Race has been a constitutive element in a capitalist social dynamic in which “social types (instead of persons) figure as basic units of economic and political management.”6 Chang perceptively analogized race to what Marx described as the fetish character of money. Marx, he noted, described money as “the officiating object (or subject as an object) in the reification of a relation called value” and as a “function-turned-into-an-object.” Race is similarly a function—a relation of hierarchy rooted in the capitalist division of labor—turned into an object.7 “Money seeks gold to objectify itself— gold does not cry out to be money.” Similarly, “the cutting edge of racial determinations of persons is a social ‘imposition’ on nature,” which on its own yields no such categories.8

Research that sets out to find evidence of racial difference will find it, whether or not it exists. Although discussing race specifically, Chang also puts his finger on the central characteristic of ideologies of ascriptive hierarchy in general: In practice, the political economic raison d’etre of racial categories lies in the ironclad social validity that is possible if relations are objectified as the intrinsic quality of “racial features.” Blacks as the absence of the minimum guarantee of bourgeois rights (against enslavement and bondage) presupposes Whites as a guarantee of immunity from such social degradation.9

This formulation applies equally to populations stigmatized as feebleminded, natural-born criminals, “white trash,” poverty cultures, the underclass, crack babies, superpredators, and other narratives of ascriptive hierarchy. Each such narrative is a species of the genus of ideologies that legitimize capitalist social relations by naturalizing them. The characteristic linking the species of this genus of ascriptive ideologies is that they are populations living, if not exactly outside “the minimum guarantee of bourgeois rights,” at least beneath the customary floor of social worth and regard. In practice, the latter devolves toward the former.

Chang’s perspective may help us see more clearly how ascriptive ideologies function. It certainly is no surprise that dominant classes operate among themselves within a common sense that understands their dominance unproblematically, as decreed by the nature of things. At moments when their dominance faces challenges, those narratives may be articulated more assertively and for broader dissemination. This logic, for example, underlay the antebellum shift, in the face of mounting antislavery agitation, from pragmatic defenses of slavery as a necessary evil—a stance that presumed a ruling class speaking among itself alone—to essentialist arguments, putatively transcending class interests, namely, that slavery was a positive good. It also may be seen in the explosion of racialist ideology in its various forms, including eugenics, in justifying imperialist expansionism and consolidating the defeat of populism and working-class insurgency in the years overlapping the turn of the twentieth century. That same dynamic was at work displacing the language of class and political economy by culture and culturology in the postwar liberalism that consolidated the defeat of CIO radicalism. Later, racial essentialism helped reify the struggles against southern segregation, racial discrimination, inequality, and poverty during the 1960s by separating discussions of injustice from capitalism’s logic of reproduction. Poverty was reinvented as a cultural dilemma, and “white racism” singled out as the root of racial inequality.

In this way, Chang’s perspective can be helpful in sorting out several important limitations in discussions of race and class characteristic of today’s left. It can also help to make sense of the striking convergence between the relative success of identitarian understandings of social justice and the steady, intensifying advance of neoliberalism. It suggests a kinship where many on the left assume an enmity. The rise of neoliberalism in particular suggests a serious problem with arguments that represent race and class as dichotomous or alternative frameworks of political critique and action, as well as those arguments that posit the dichotomy while attempting to reconcile its elements with formalistic gestures, for example, the common “race and class” construction.

This sort of historical materialist perspective throws into relief a fundamental limitation of the “whiteness” notion that has been fashionable within the academic left for roughly two decades: it reifies whiteness as a transhistorical social category. In effect, it treats “whiteness”— and therefore “race”—as existing prior to and above social context.10 Both who qualifies as white and the significance of being white have altered over time. Moreover, whiteness discourse functions as a kind of moralistic exposé rather than a basis for strategic politics; this is clear in that the program signally articulated in its name has been simply to raise a demand to “abolish whiteness,” that is, to call on whites to renounce their racial privilege. In fact, its fixation on demonstrating the depth of whites’ embrace of what was known to an earlier generation’s version of this argument as “white skin privilege” and the inclination to slide into teleological accounts in which groups or individuals “approach” or “pursue” whiteness erases the real historical dynamics and contradictions of American racial history.

The whiteness discourse overlaps other arguments that presume racism to be a sui generis form of injustice. Despite seeming provocative, these arguments do not go beyond the premises of the racial liberalism from which they commonly purport to dissent. They differ only in rhetorical flourish, not content. Formulations that invoke metaphors of disease or original sin reify racism by disconnecting it from the discrete historical circumstances and social structures in which it is embedded, and treating it as an autonomous force. Disconnection from political economy is also a crucial feature of postwar liberalism’s construction of racial inequality as prejudice or intolerance. Racism becomes an independent variable in a moralistic argument that is idealist intellectually and ultimately defeatist politically.

This tendency to see racism as sui generis also generates a resistance to precision in analysis. It is fueled by a tendency to inflate the language of racism to the edge of its reasonable conceptual limits, if not beyond. Ideological commitment to shoehorning into the rubric of racism all manner of inequalities that may appear statistically as racial disparities has yielded two related interpretive pathologies. One is a constantly expanding panoply of neologisms—“ institutional racism,” “systemic racism,” “structural racism,” “color-blind racism,” “post-racial racism,” etc.— intended to graft more complex social dynamics onto a simplistic and frequently psychologically inflected racism/anti-racism political ontology. Indeed, these efforts bring to mind [Thomas S.] Kuhn’s account of attempts to accommodate mounting anomalies to salvage an interpretive paradigm in danger of crumbling under a crisis of authority.11

A second essentialist sleight-of-hand advances claims for the primacy of race/racism as an explanation of inequalities in the present by invoking analogies to regimes of explicitly racial subordination in the past. In these arguments, analogy stands in for evidence and explanation of the contemporary centrality of racism. Michelle Alexander’s widely read and cited book, The New Jim Crow, is only the most prominent expression of this tendency; even she has to acknowledge that the analogy fails because the historical circumstances are so radically different.12 Rigorous pursuit of equality of opportunity exclusively within the terms of capitalist class relations has been fully legitimized under the rubric of “diversity.”

From the historical materialist standpoint, the view of racial inequality as a sui generis injustice and dichotomous formulations of the relation of race and class as systems of hierarchy in the United States are not only miscast but also fundamentally counterproductive. It is particularly important at this moment to recognize that the familiar taxonomy of racial difference is but one historically specific instance of a genus of ideologies of ascriptive hierarchy that stabilize capitalist social reproduction. I have argued previously that entirely new race-like taxonomies could come to displace the familiar ones. For instance, the “underclass” could become even more race-like as a distinctive, essentialized population, by our current folk norms, multiracial in composition, albeit most likely including in perceptibly greater frequencies people who would be classified as black and Latino “racially,” though as small enough pluralities to preclude assimilating the group ideologically as a simple proxy for nonwhite inferiors.13

This possibility looms larger now. Struggles for racial and gender equality have largely divested race and gender of their common sense verisimilitude as bases for essential difference. Moreover, versions of racial and gender equality are now also incorporated into the normative and programmatic structure of “left” neoliberalism. Rigorous pursuit of equality of opportunity exclusively within the terms of given patterns of capitalist class relations—which is after all the ideal of racial liberalism—has been fully legitimized within the rubric of “diversity.” That ideal is realized through gaining rough parity in distribution of social goods and bads among designated population categories. As Walter Benn Michaels has argued powerfully, according to that ideal, the society would be just if 1 percent of the population controlled 90 percent of the resources, provided that blacks and other nonwhites, women, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people were represented among the 1 percent in roughly similar proportion as their incidence in the general population.14

Given the triumph of racial liberalism, it is entirely possible that new discourses of ascriptive difference might take shape that fit the folk common sense of our time and its cultural norms and sensibilities. Indeed, the explosive resurgence in recent years of academically legitimated determinist discourses—all of which simply rehearse the standard idealist tropes and circular garbage in/garbage out faux scientific narratives—reinforce that concern. The undergirding premises of intellectual programs like evolutionary psychology, behavioral economics, genes and politics, and neurocriminology are strikingly like straight-line extrapolations from Victorian race science— although for the most part, though not entirely, scholars operating in those areas are scrupulous, or at least fastidious, in not implicating the familiar racial taxonomies in their deterministic sophistries. Some scholars imagine that “epigenetics”—a view that focuses on the interplay of genes and environment in producing organisms and genotypes—avoids determinism by providing causal explanations that are not purely biological. Recent research purporting to find epigenetic explanations for socioeconomic inequality already foreshadows a possible framework for determinist “underclass” narratives that avoid the taints associated with biological justifications of inequality and references to currently recognized racial categories.15 Ironically, some enthusiasts for this epigenetic patter expressly liken it to Lamarckian evolutionary theory, which stressed the heritability of characteristics acquired after birth, as though this were insulation against determinism. As historian of anthropology George Stocking, Jr., and others have shown, Lamarckian race theory was no less determinist than its Darwinian alternative, which posited strictly biological determinism. As Stocking notes, Lamarckians’ dependence on a “vague sociobiological indeterminism” made it all the more difficult to challenge their circular race theories.16 In any event, narrow approaches that reduce ascriptive ideology to reified notions of race/racism are not at all up to the challenge posed by this new determinist turn.

Finally, the adamant commitment to a racefirst perspective on inequalities that show up as statistical disparities has a material foundation. The victories of the civil rights movement carried with them a more benign and unavoidable political imperative. Legal remedies can be sought for injustices understood as discrimination on the basis of race, gender, or other familiar categories of invidious ascription; no such recourse exists for injustices generated through capitalism’s logic of production and reproduction without mediation through one of those ascriptive categories. As I have argued elsewhere, this makes identifying “racism” a technical requirement for pursuing certain grievances, not the basis of an overall strategy for pursuit of racial justice, or, as I believe is a clearer left formulation, racial equality as an essential component of a program of social justice.17 Yet, for those who insist that racial reductionism is more than a pragmatic accommodation to the necessities of pursuing legal or administrative grievances, something more is at play. A historical materialist perspective can be helpful for identifying the glue that binds that commitment to a race-first political discourse and practice.

All politics in capitalist society is class, or at least a class-inflected, politics. That is also true of the political perspective that condenses in programs such as reparations, antiracism, and insistence on the sui generis character of racial injustice. I submit that those tendencies come together around a politics that is “entirely consistent with the neoliberal redefinition of equality and democracy along disparitarian lines.” That politics reflects the social position of those positioned to benefit from the view that the market is, or can be, a just, effective, or even acceptable, system for rewarding talent and virtue and punishing their opposites and that, therefore, removal of “artificial” impediments to functioning like race and gender will make it even more efficient and just.18

This is the politics of actual or would-be race relations administrators, and it is completely embedded within American capitalism and its structures of elite brokerage. It is fundamentally antagonistic to working-class politics, notwithstanding left identitarians’ gestural claims to the contrary.

#### Identity politics is neoliberalism and prevents class analysis – our critique doesn’t obviate differences but explains intersectionality better because of the importance of materiality.

Norton & Reed 15 — Ben Norton an investigative journalist // Adolph Reed a Professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania (“Adolph Reed: Identity Politics Is Neoliberalism,” 29 Jun 2015, <http://bennorton.com/adolph-reed-identity-politics-is-neoliberalism/>, accessed 12 Jul 2016)

Political scientist and race theorist Adolph Reed has long maintained that identity politics is a form of neoliberalism. In a June article, he explains:

(Identity) politics is not an alternative to class politics; it is a class politics, the politics of the left-wing of neoliberalism. It is the expression and active agency of a political order and moral economy in which capitalist market forces are treated as unassailable nature.

An integral element of that moral economy is displacement of the critique of the invidious outcomes produced by capitalist class power onto equally naturalized categories of ascriptive identity that sort us into groups supposedly defined by what we essentially are rather than what we do. As I have argued, following Walter Michaels and others, within that moral economy a society in which 1% of the population controlled 90% of the resources could be just, provided that roughly 12% of the 1% were black, 12% were Latino, 50% were women, and whatever the appropriate proportions were LGBT people.

It would be tough to imagine a normative ideal that expresses more unambiguously the social position of people who consider themselves candidates for inclusion in, or at least significant staff positions in service to, the ruling class.

Reed has been arguing this point for years. In his 2009 essay “The Limits of Anti-Racism,” Reed condemns identity politics for, despite its putative good intentions, disguising objectively right-wing, neoliberal ideology with superficially “progressive” rhetorical window dressing. Reed’s criticisms of “antiracism” can been taken to be criticisms of identity politics more generally (emphasis mine).

Antiracism is a favorite concept on the American left these days. Of course, all good sorts want to be against racism, but what does the word mean exactly?

The contemporary discourse of “antiracism” (and identity politics overall) is focused much more on taxonomy than politics. It emphasizes the name by which we should call some strains of inequality — whether they should be broadly recognized as evidence of “racism” — over specifying the mechanisms that produce them or even the steps that can be taken to combat them. And, no, neither “overcoming racism” nor “rejecting whiteness” qualifies as such a step any more than does waiting for the “revolution” or urging God’s heavenly intervention. If organizing a rally against racism seems at present to be a more substantive political act than attending a prayer vigil for world peace, that’s only because contemporary antiracist activists understand themselves to be employing the same tactics and pursuing the same ends as their predecessors in the period of high insurgency in the struggle against racial segregation.

This view, however, is mistaken. The postwar activism that reached its crescendo in the South as the “civil rights movement” wasn’t a movement against a generic “racism;” it was specifically and explicitly directed toward full citizenship rights for black Americans and against the system of racial segregation that defined a specific regime of explicitly racial subordination in the South. The 1940s March on Washington Movement was also directed against specific targets, like employment discrimination in defense production. Black Power era and post-Black Power era struggles similarly focused on combating specific inequalities and pursuing specific goals like the effective exercise of voting rights and specific programs of redistribution.

Whether or not one considers those goals correct or appropriate, they were clear and strategic in a way that “antiracism” (identity politics) simply is not. Sure, those earlier struggles relied on a discourse of racial justice, but their targets were concrete and strategic. It is only in a period of political demobilization that the historical specificities of those struggles have become smoothed out of sight in a romantic idealism that homogenizes them into timeless abstractions like “the black liberation movement” — an entity that, like Brigadoon, sporadically appears and returns impelled by its own logic.

Ironically, as the basis for a politics, antiracism (identity politics) seems to reflect, several generations downstream, the victory of the postwar psychologists in depoliticizing the critique of racial injustice by shifting its focus from the social structures that generate and reproduce racial inequality to an ultimately individual, and ahistorical, domain of “prejudice” or “intolerance.” (No doubt this shift was partly aided by political imperatives associated with the Cold War and domestic anticommunism.)

I’ve been struck by the level of visceral and vitriolic anti-Marxism I’ve seen from this strain of defenders of antiracism as a politics. It’s not clear to me what drives it because it takes the form of snide dismissals than direct arguments. Moreover, the dismissals typically include empty acknowledgment that “of course we should oppose capitalism,” whatever that might mean. In any event, the tenor of this anti-Marxism is reminiscent of those right-wing discourses, many of which masqueraded as liberal, in which only invoking the word “Marxism” was sufficient to dismiss an opposing argument or position.

This sort of thing only deepens my suspicions about antiracism’s (identity politics’) status within the comfort zone of neoliberalism’s discourses of “reform.” More to the point, I suspect as well that this vitriol toward radicalism is rooted partly in the conviction that a left politics based on class analysis and one focused on racial injustice are Manichean alternatives.

This should not by any means be interpreted as a blanket condemnation of anti-racism, feminism, or other movements for social equality. Rather, it should be construed as a condemnation of a politics that is centered on social constructs like race or gender, rather than on material conditions.

White supremacy, patriarchy, cisheteronormativity, ableism, and more should specifically be seen as what they are: the social relations that are created by a white supremacist, patriarchal, cisheteronormative, ableist system of production — that is to say created by capitalism.

Race and gender must be analyzed in a true intersectional manner, as inextricably linked to the material (i.e., economic) conditions of which they are constituted.

As Reed writes in his 2013 article “Marx, Race, and Neoliberalism,”

A Marxist perspective can be most helpful for understanding race and racism insofar as it perceives capitalism dialectically, as a social totality that includes modes of production, relations of production, and the pragmatically evolving ensemble of institutions and ideologies that lubricate and propel its reproduction. From this perspective, Marxism’s most important contribution to making sense of race and racism in the United States may be demystification. A historical materialist perspective should stress that “race” — which includes “racism,” as one is unthinkable without the other — is a historically specific ideology that emerged, took shape, and has evolved as a constitutive element within a definite set of social relations anchored to a particular system of production.

In other words, we need anti-racist marxism and feminist marxism (and anti-racist feminist marxism), not identity politics.

### 1nc link – afro-pessimism/wilderson

#### Afro-pessimist literature is a product of middle-class neoliberal academia that obfuscates the need for action and is subjected to corporate capture

**Okoth 20,** [Kevin Ochieng Okoth is an independent writer and researcher living in London. He holds an MPhil in Political Theory from the University of Oxford], (1-16-2020, "The Flatness of Blackness: Afro-Pessimism and the Erasure of Anti-Colonial Thought by Kevin Ochieng Okoth", https://salvage.zone/issue-seven/the-flatness-of-blackness-afro-pessimism-and-the-erasure-of-anti-colonial-thought/, accessed 7-15-2020)//Snitty

Afro-pessimism in this original sense has reflected a disastrous approach to, and had disastrous consequences for Africa and its inhabitants. So how can we understand the bizarre use of this historically loaded term (complete with its own history of colonial and imperialist exploitation) by numerous African-American intellectuals and activists? The use of the term ‘Afro-pessimism’ is symptomatic of the historical ignorance of the Afro-pessimist™ (or what Greg Thomas has recently called Afro-pessimism 2.0), whose grasp of African history is about as solid as that of Hegel. In its initial iteration, Afro-pessimism 2.0 (from now on AP™) is a product of middle-class academia; a framework either consciously or subconsciously created to allow relatively well-off academics to view themselves as the most discriminated and oppressed people in the world. Characterised by misinterpretations and clever appropriations of Black radicals like Frantz Fanon and Silvia Wynter, the theories of the AP™ have spilled over into activist circles, contaminating the global political discourse on race. The central premise of the AP™ is that anti-Black violence is the structuring regime of the modern world. Drawing on Orlando Patterson’s concept of ‘social death’, Frank Wilderson, arguably the most prominent and controversial AP™ intellectual, asserts that the Black condition is not characterised by oppression or exploitation, like that of the Marxist proletariat or the (neo)colonial subject, but rather by the distinction between the Human and the Slave. For Wilderson, the Black is a priori a slave and therefore we cannot speak of Blackness without reference to the Slaveness that constitutes it on an ontological level. In his essay ‘Ante-Anti-Blackness: Afterthoughts’, fellow University of California professor Jared Sexton argues that the condition of the Black/Slave is a state of total powerlessness, natal alienation (‘the loss of ties of birth in both ascending and descending generations’) and generalised dishonour. In short, Black existence is an ontological absence of sorts, and the Black/Slave is a living dead (non-entity) in the modern world. In ‘The Black Liberation Army and the Paradox of Political Engagement’, Wilderson offers some further meditations on the concept of ‘social death’, explaining that ‘the point of social death is a condition, void, not of land, but of a capacity to secure relational status through transindividual objects – be those objects elaborated by land, labour or love’. Unlike colonial racisms perpetuated by the rational systems of white supremacy, neo-colonialism or imperialism, or women’s oppression and exploitation driven by patriarchy and capitalism’s need for reproductive labour, anti-Black violence is humanity’s irrational desire for violence against Black people. As Wilderson declares in an interview with C. S. Soong, ‘violence against Black people is a mechanism for the usurpation of subjectivity, of life of being’. What settlers wanted from Indians is land, so they killed Indians ‘in the main’ to get it, whereas what non-Blacks want from Blacks is not land but ‘being’. Anti-Blackness is thus qualitatively different from the regimes of violence that affect the Marxist proletariat; or the non-Black person of colour; or the non-Black woman; or the non-Black woman of colour; or (as Wilderson has famously claimed) Palestinians. Black suffering is incomparable and unique: to speak of any experience of oppression without reference to the ontological disparities between Black/non-Black people is ultimately an act of ‘anti-Blackness’. But what exactly is it about the makeup of modern society that displaces the Black/Slave from the realm of politics and precludes the articulation of concrete political demands? For Wilderson and Sexton, the very foundations of political discourse are inherently anti-Black. Or, to put it in terms of Giorgio Agamben’s political ontology (of which the AP™ are rather fond), the political – i.e. the ontological character of a political situation that separates it from other social actions – or what he calls ‘the Symbolic Order’, is skewed against the Black/Slave. The Symbolic Order is based on the recognition of the ‘other’s’ humanity, which then enables this ‘other’ to challenge the order on the grounds of, for instance, political economy. Since the Black is a priori a Slave, and Blackness and Slaveness are coterminous, the Black/Slave cannot participate in the Symbolic Order as her status is not that of the Human. And because the category of humanity is founded and relies on the existence of the slave, there is no way the Black/Slave can ever gain the recognition required to assert political demands and identities in the realm of the Symbolic Order. It is for this reason that, as Sexton points out in his essay ‘The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism’, we must posit a ‘political ontology dividing the Slave from the world of the Human in a constitutive way’ and take this as our analytical starting point. Wilderson’s and Sexton’s work contributes to a wider debate on the nature of Black studies in the United States, which is frequently tied into discussions on Black performance art, evidenced by the titles of Wilderson’s Red, White and Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms, Kara Keeling’s The Witch’s Flight: The Cinematic, the Black Femme, and the Image of Common Sense or Fred Moten’s essays on Black Operations/Black Optimism in musical performance. Despite various disagreements and differences among these scholars, they are united by the common interest in ‘the afterlife of slavery’ – first described by Saidiya Hartman in her 2006 memoir Lose Your Mother. For Hartman – whose project is not that of AP™ and should not be mistaken for this essay’s target – official abolition in the United States did not engender a decisive break with the racialised violence of slavery; in contemporary society, we can see traces of such violence in the ‘skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment’ of African-Americans. The ‘afterlife of slavery’ she describes constitutes Black studies’ object, and loosely ties a range of scholars together into a coherent discourse. It is worth briefly considering Fred Moten’s work to understand the AP™’s ability to co-opt or usurp other approaches to Black Studies and activism. Moten attempted to counter the AP™ conception of social death by foregrounding Black agency and asserting that it is ontologically prior to the all-encompassing anti-Blackness of the modern world. In the unpublished paper ‘Black Optimism/Black Operation’, Moten attempts to counter the ‘anti-essentialism’ of radical discourses that disavow Black studies’ own object i.e. Blackness. For Moten, this Blackness exists in what he (along with his frequent collaborator Stefano Harney) has famously called ‘the undercommons’ – a space outside of official social structures, where Black people can assert their ‘right to refuse’. But as Annie Olaloku-Teriba points out in her excellent critique ‘Afro-Pessimism and the (Un)Logic of Anti-Blackness’, the AP™ finds a ‘comfortable antagonist’ in Moten, whose Black Ops can be neatly reintegrated into the concept of social death. It is also telling that Sexton, in ‘Ante-Anti-Blackness’, rather successfully merges the AP™ conception of social death with Moten’s Black Ops by arguing that: A living death is as much a death as it is living. Nothing in Afro-pessimism suggests that there is no black (social) life, only that black life is not social life in the universe formed by the codes of state and civil society, of citizen and subject, of nation and culture, of people and place, of history and heritage, of all the things that colonial society has in common with the colonised, of all the things that capital has in common with labour – the modern world system. Sexton shows that Moten’s Black Ops is nothing other than what he instead calls ‘the social life of social death’. There is no either/or distinction between social life and social death: we can think both together by positing that Black life is lived in the underground. Moten even acknowledges, in ‘Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)’, that the AP™ and Black Ops are engaged in the same theoretical project: In the end, though life and optimism are the terms under which I speak, I agree with Sexton – by way of the slightest most immeasurable reversal of emphasis – that Afro-pessimism and black optimism are not but nothing other than one another. I will continue to prefer the black optimism of his work just as, I am sure, he will continue to prefer the Afro-pessimism of mine. For both Afro-pessimists and Black Optimists, the afterlife of slavery is characterised by the social death of the Black/Slave and a heavily distorted version of Fanon’s concept of the ‘fact of blackness’. This assumption, however, precludes the participation of Black Ops in radical politics and confines resistance to spaces of Black performance art. By confining Black resistance to spaces outside of the anti-Black structures of civil society, and by undercutting the possibility for anti-imperialist solidarity between racialised people across the world, the AP™ theories have opened up a space for the corporate capture of Blackness. We need only recall last year’s Nike campaign, prominently featuring the face of former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who has been blackballed by the league for kneeling during the national anthem. Since the incident, he has taken on the role of radical Black activist, complete with Panther-esque leather jackets, an afro and Afrocentric jewellery. While Kaepernick’s struggle against the racist and exploitative NFL owners and executives is, of course, legitimate and necessary, the co-optation of his struggle by a large corporation is certainly a cause for concern. Nike is notorious for its use of sweatshop labour (including both forced and child labour), and its history of exploitative labour practices has been well-documented throughout the years. By detaching the struggles of African-Americans from those of racialised workers in the Global South, Nike can present itself as a progressive vehicle for Black emancipatory politics, while completely sidelining the plight of non-white workers outside of the US. Here we might recall a powerful statement by Fred Hampton to illustrate just how far from revolutionary Black politics we find ourselves: We don’t think you fight fire with fire best; we think you fight fire with water best. We’re going to fight racism not with racism, but we’re going to fight with solidarity. We say we’re not going to fight capitalism with black capitalism, but we’re going to fight it with socialism […] We’re going to fight […] with all of us people getting together and having an international proletarian revolution. Wilderson and Sexton have been captured by corporate interests in much the same way. In their case, however, it is not a large corporation that co-opts Blackness, but rather the neoliberal university. Is it at all surprising that two professors working within the prestigious University of California system promote a theoretical framework that requires no political action from Black writers and activists other than simply being Black? Not only is AP™ a product of the neoliberal university, it also promotes its authors survival and flourishing within the corporate structures of higher education. When asked about his framework for psychological and physical resistance by the hosts of iMiXWHATiLiKE, Wilderson neatly dodges any commitment to radical politics with the excuse that it could cost him his academic job. This is so much a part of what it means to be a professor. I feel like cussing people out all the time. But if I do, I violate University of California’s civility laws, tenure or not I’m out the door, right? And that tempers my speech. So, I think that what I have to offer is not a way out. What I have to offer is an analysis of the problem. And I don’t trust me as much as I trust Black people on the ground. Wilderson is aware that the AP™ rely on their activist supporters and social media following to maintain their privileged position within the university – without the activists and organisers on the ground, the AP™ could not prove the market value of its work to the neoliberal institution. By creating a framework for the analysis of race that lends itself to co-optation by corporate interests, the AP™ has certainly demonstrated that it can convert Blackness into profit. All the while, these theorists delude themselves that they are spearheading a truly radical Black movement. In the introduction to a collection of essays on AP™, the editors (who presumably include Sexton and Wilderson) even have the audacity to claim that they are ‘motivated by a desire to contribute to […] bringing these writings out of the ivory towers of the academy’ and that they wish to ‘remove the materials from this sitting place and see them proliferate among those in the streets and prisons’. True, they have succeeded in disseminating a watered-down version of their musings to activists and organisers; but what they have passed on is nothing short of anti-Black, in the sense that it works against the true liberation of Black people of all classes. Today, such Blackness (and the pseudo-politics that is attached to it) is more useful for academic promotions, Instagram hashtags, and Nike adverts than for any revolutionary or emancipatory politics worthy of the name. The people who truly benefit – or rather profit – from the AP™ brand are the academics and the various university presses and journals who jump at every opportunity to unleash a plethora of AP™ books and articles onto the academic book market. While the AP™ may seem like a niche theoretical discourse, its influence extends far beyond the university: as Olaloku-Teriba argues, the AP™’s theoretical framework provides ‘the structuring logic of various political formations in the era of #BlackLivesMatter’. What is at stake in the debate, therefore, is nothing less than the possibility of a revolutionary Black politics. Maybe African-Americans on the streets or in prison would do well to reach for George Jackson’s Soledad Brother and steer clear of the AP™ and Black Ops.

#### Framing politics around the gratuitous violence of racism blocks recognition of political economy—this entrenches neoliberal ideology and overlooks class antagonism

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In both films the bogus happy endings are possible only because they characterize their respective regimes of racial hierarchy in the superficial terms of interpersonal transactions. In *The Help* segregationism’s evil was small-minded bigotry and lack of sensitivity; it was more like bad manners than oppression. In Tarantino’s vision, slavery’s definitive injustice was its **gratuitous** and sadistic brutalization and sexualized degradation. Malevolent, ludicrously arrogant whites owned slaves most conspicuously to degrade and torture them. Apart from serving a formal dinner in a plantation house—and Tarantino, the Chance the Gardener of American filmmakers (and Best Original Screenplay? Really?) seems to draw his images of plantation life from Birth of a Nation and Gone With the Wind, as well as old Warner Brothers cartoons—and the Mandingo fighters and comfort girls, Tarantino’s slaves do no actual work at all; they’re present only to be brutalized. In fact, the cavalier sadism with which owners and traders treat them belies the fact that slaves were, **first and foremost, capital investments.** It’s not for nothing that New Orleans has a monument to the estimated 20,000-30,000 antebellum Irish immigrants who died constructing the New Basin Canal; slave labor was **too valuable** for such lethal work.

*The Help* trivializes Jim Crow by reducing it to its most superficial features and irrational extremes. The master-servant nexus was, and is, a labor relation. And the problem of labor relations particular to the segregationist regime wasn’t employers’ bigoted lack of respect or failure to hear the voices of the domestic servants, or even benighted refusal to recognize their equal humanity. It was that the labor relation was structured within and sustained by a political and institutional order that severely impinged on, when it didn’t altogether deny, black citizens’ avenues for pursuit of grievances and standing before the law. The crucial lynchpin of that order was neither myopia nor malevolence; it was suppression of black citizens’ capacities for direct participation in civic and political life, with racial disfranchisement and the constant threat of terror intrinsic to substantive denial of equal protection and due process before the law as its principal mechanisms. And the point of the regime wasn’t racial hatred or enforced disregard; its roots lay in the **much more prosaic concern** of dominant elites to maintain their political and economic hegemony by suppressing potential opposition and in the linked ideal of maintaining access to a labor force with no options but to accept employment on whatever terms employers offered. (Those who liked *The Help* or found it moving should watch *The Long Walk Home*, a 1990 film set in Montgomery, Alabama, around the bus boycott. I suspect that’s the film you thought you were watching when you saw The Help.)

*Django Unchained* trivializes slavery by reducing it to its most barbaric and lurid excesses. Slavery also was fundamentally a labor relation. It was a form of forced labor regulated—systematized, enforced and sustained—through a political and institutional order that specified it as a civil relationship granting owners absolute control over the life, liberty, and fortunes of others defined as eligible for enslavement, including most of all control of the conditions of their labor and appropriation of its product. Historian Kenneth M. Stampp quotes a slaveholder’s succinct explanation: “‘For what purpose does the master hold the servant?’ asked an ante-bellum Southerner. ‘Is it not that by his labor, he, the master, may accumulate wealth?’”1

That absolute control permitted horrible, unthinkable brutality, to be sure, **but perpetrating such brutality was neither the point of slavery nor its essential injustice**. The master-slave relationship could, and did, exist without brutality, and certainly without sadism and sexual degradation. In Tarantino’s depiction, however, it is not clear that slavery shorn of its extremes of brutality would be objectionable. It does not diminish the historical injustice and horror of slavery to note that it was **not the product of *sui generis*, transcendent Evil but a terminus on a continuum of bound labor** that was more norm than exception in the Anglo-American world until well into the eighteenth century, if not later. As legal historian Robert Steinfeld points out, it is not so much slavery, but the emergence of the notion of free labor—as the absolute control of a worker over her person—that is the historical anomaly that needs to be explained.2 *Django Unchained* sanitizes the essential injustice of slavery by not problematizing it and by **focusing instead** on the extremes of brutality and degradation it permitted, to the extent of making some of them up, just as does *The Help* regarding Jim Crow.

*The Help* could not imagine a more honest and complex view of segregationist Mississippi partly because it uses the period ultimately as a prop for human interest cliché, and *Django Unchained*’s absurdly ahistorical view of plantation slavery is only backdrop for the merger of spaghetti western and blaxploitation hero movie. Neither film is really about the period in which it is set. Film critic Manohla Dargis, reflecting a decade ago on what she saw as a growing Hollywood penchant for period films, observed that such films are typically “stripped of politics and historical fact…and instead will find meaning in appealing to seemingly timeless ideals and stirring scenes of love, valor and compassion” and that “the Hollywood professionals who embrace accuracy most enthusiastically nowadays are costume designers.”3 That observation applies to both these films, although in *Django* concern with historically accurate representation of material culture applies only to the costumes and props of the 1970s film genres Tarantino wants to recall.

To make sense of how *Django Unchained* has received so much warmer a reception among black and leftoid commentators than did *The Help*, it is useful to recall Margaret Thatcher’s 1981 dictum that “economics are the method: the object is to change the soul.”4 Simply put, she and her element have won. Few observers—among opponents and boosters alike—have noted how deeply and thoroughly both films are embedded in the practical ontology of neoliberalism, the complex of unarticulated assumptions and unexamined first premises that provide its common sense, its lifeworld.

Objection to *The Help* has been largely of the shooting fish in a barrel variety: complaints about the film’s paternalistic treatment of the maids, which generally have boiled down to an objection that the master-servant relation is thematized at all, as well as the standard, predictable litany of anti-racist charges about whites speaking for blacks, the film’s inattentiveness to the fact that at that time in Mississippi black people were busily engaged in liberating themselves, etc. An illustration of this tendency that conveniently refers to several other variants of it is Akiba Solomon, “Why I’m Just Saying No to ‘The Help’ and Its Historical Whitewash” in Color Lines,August 10, 2011, available at:http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/08/why\_im\_just\_saying\_no\_to\_the\_help.html.

Defenses of *Django Unchained* pivot on claims about the social significance of the narrative of a black hero. One node of this argument emphasizes the need to validate a history of autonomous black agency and “resistance” as a politico-existential desideratum. It accommodates a view that stresses the importance of recognition of rebellious or militant individuals and revolts in black American history. Another centers on a notion that exposure to fictional black heroes can inculcate the sense of personal efficacy necessary to overcome the psychological effects of inequality and to facilitate upward mobility and may undermine some whites’ negative stereotypes about black people. In either register assignment of social or political importance to depictions of black heroes rests on presumptions about the nexus of mass cultural representation, social commentary, and racial justice that are more significant politically than the controversy about the film itself. In both versions, this argument casts political and **economic problems in psychological terms**. Injustice appears as a matter of disrespect and denial of due recognition, and the remedies proposed—which are all about images projected and the distribution of jobs associated with their projection—look a lot like self-esteem engineering. Moreover, nothing could indicate more strikingly the extent of neoliberal ideological hegemonythan the idea that the mass culture industry and its representational practices constitute a **meaningful terrain for struggle** to advance egalitarian interests. It is possible to entertain that view seriously only by ignoring the fact that the production and consumption of mass culture is thoroughly embedded in capitalist material and ideological imperatives.

That, incidentally, is why I prefer the usage “mass culture” to describe this industry and its products and processes, although I recognize that it may seem archaic to some readers. The mass culture v. popular culture debate dates at least from the 1950s and has continued with occasional crescendos ever since.5 For two decades or more, instructively in line with the retreat of possibilities for concerted left political action outside the academy, the popular culture side of that debate has been dominant, along with its view that the products of this precinct of mass consumption capitalism are somehow capable of transcending or subverting their material identity as commodities, if not avoiding that identity altogether. Despite the dogged commitment of several generations of American Studies and cultural studies graduate students who want to valorize watching television and immersion in hip-hop or other specialty market niches centered on youth recreation and the most ephemeral fads as both intellectually avant-garde and politically “resistive,” it should be time to admit that that earnest disposition is **intellectually shallow and an ersatz politics**. The idea of “popular” culture posits a spurious autonomy and organicism that actually affirm mass industrial processes by effacing them, especially in the putatively rebel, fringe, or underground market niches that **depend on the fiction of the authentic** to announce the birth of new product cycles.

The power of the hero is a cathartic trope that connects mainly with the sensibility of adolescent boys—of whatever nominal age. Tarantino has allowed as much, responding to black critics’ complaints about the violence and copious use of “nigger” by proclaiming “Even for the film’s biggest detractors, I think their children will grow up and love this movie. I think it could become a rite of passage for young black males.”6 This response stems no doubt from Tarantino’s arrogance and opportunism, and some critics have denounced it as no better than racially presumptuous. But he is hardly alone in defending the film with an assertion that it gives black youth heroes, is generically inspirational or both. Similarly, in a January 9, 2012 interview on the Daily Show, George Lucas adduced this line to promote his even more execrable race-oriented live-action cartoon, *Red Tails*, which, incidentally, trivializes segregation in the military by reducing it to a matter of bad or outmoded attitudes. The ironic effect is significant understatement of both the obstacles the Tuskegee airmen faced and their actual accomplishments by rendering them as backdrop for a blackface, slapped-together remake of *Top Gun*. (Norman Jewison’s 1984 film, *A Soldier’s Story*, adapted from Charles Fuller’s *A Soldier’s Play*, is a much more sensitive and thought-provoking rumination on the complexities of race and racism in the Jim Crow U.S. Army—an army mobilized, as my father, a veteran of the Normandy invasion, never tired of remarking sardonically, to fight the racist Nazis.) Lucas characterized his film as “patriotic, even jingoistic” and was explicit that he wanted to create a film that would feature “real heroes” and would be “inspirational for teenage boys.” Much as *Django Unchained*’s defenders compare it on those terms favorably to *Lincoln*, Lucas hyped *Red Tails* as being a genuine hero story unlike “*Glory*, where you have a lot of white officers running those guys into cannon fodder.”

Of course, the film industry is sharply tilted toward the youth market, as Lucas and Tarantino are acutely aware. But Lucas, unlike Tarantino, was not being defensive in asserting his desire to inspire the young; he offered it more as a boast. As he has said often, he’d wanted for years to make a film about the Tuskegee airmen, and he reports that he always intended telling their story as a feel-good, crossover inspirational tale. Telling it that way also fits in principle (though in this instance not in practice, as *Red Tails* bombed at the box office) with the commercial imperatives of increasingly degraded mass entertainment. Dargis observed that the ahistoricism of the recent period films is influenced by market imperatives in a global film industry. The more a film is tied to historically specific contexts, the more difficult it is to sell elsewhere. That logic selects for special effects-driven products as well as standardized, decontextualized and simplistic—“universal”—story lines, preferably set in fantasy worlds of the filmmakers’ design. As Dargis notes, these films find their meaning in shopworn clichés puffed up as timeless verities, including uplifting and inspirational messages for youth. But something else underlies the stress on inspiration in the black-interest films, which shows up in critical discussion of them as well.

All these films—*The Help, Red Tails, Django Unchained*, even *Lincoln* and *Glory*—make a claim to public attention based partly on their social significance beyond entertainment or art, and they do so because they engage with significant moments in the history of the nexus of race and politics in the United States. There would not be so much discussion and debate and no Golden Globe, NAACP Image, or Academy Award nominations for *The Help*, *Red Tails*, or *Django Unchained* if those films weren’t defined partly by thematizing that nexus of race and politics in some way.

The pretensions to social significance that fit these films into their particular market niche don’t conflict with the mass-market film industry’s imperative of infantilization because those pretensions are only part of the show; they are little more than empty bromides, product differentiation in the patter of “seemingly timeless ideals” which the mass entertainment industry constantly recycles. (Andrew O’Hehir observes as much about *Django Unchained*, which he describes as “a three-hour trailer for a movie that never happens.”7) That comes through in the defense of these films, in the face of evidence of their failings, that, after all, they are “just entertainment.” Their substantive content is ideological; it is their contribution to the naturalization of neoliberalism’s ontology as they propagandize its universalization across spatial, temporal, and social contexts.

Purportedly in the interest of popular education cum entertainment, *Django Unchained* and *The Help*, and *Red Tails* for that matter, read the sensibilities of the present into the past by divesting the latter of its specific historicity. They reinforce the sense of the past as generic old-timey times distinguishable from the present by superficial inadequacies—outmoded fashion, technology, commodities and ideas—since overcome. In *The Help* Hilly’s obsession with her pet project marks segregation’s petty apartheid as irrational in part because of the expense rigorously enforcing it would require; the breadwinning husbands express their frustration with it as financially impractical. Hilly is a mean-spirited, narrow-minded person whose rigid and tone-deaf commitment to segregationist consistency not only reflects her limitations of character but also is economically unsound, a fact that further defines her, and the cartoon version of Jim Crow she represents, as irrational.

The deeper message of these films, insofar as they deny the integrity of the past, is that there is **no thinkable alternative to the ideological order under which we live**. This message is reproduced throughout the mass entertainment industry; it shapes the normative reality even of the fantasy worlds that masquerade as escapism. Even among those who laud the supposedly cathartic effects of Django’s insurgent violence as reflecting a greater truth of abolition than passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, few commentators notice that he and Broomhilda attained their freedom through a market transaction.8 This reflects an ideological hegemony in which students all too commonly wonder why planters would deny slaves or sharecroppers education because education would have made them more productive as workers. And, tellingly, in a glowing rumination in the Daily Kos, Ryan Brooke inadvertently thrusts mass culture’s destruction of historicity into bold relief by declaiming on “the segregated society presented” in *Django Unchained* and babbling on—with the absurdly ill-informed and pontifical self-righteousness that the blogosphere enables—about our need to take “responsibility for preserving racial divides” if we are “to put segregation in the past and fully fulfill Dr. King’s dream.”9 It’s all an indistinguishable mush of bad stuff about racial injustice in the old-timey days. Decoupled from its moorings in a historically specific political economy, slavery becomes at bottom a problem of race relations, and, as historian Michael R. West argues forcefully, “race relations” emerged as and has remained a discourse that substitutes etiquette for equality.10

This is the context in which we should take account of what “inspiring the young” means as a justification for those films. In part, the claim to inspire is a simple platitude, more filler than substance. It is, as I’ve already noted, both an excuse for films that are cartoons made for an infantilized, generic market and an assertion of a claim to a particular niche within that market. More insidiously, though, the ease with which “inspiration of youth” rolls out in this context resonates with three related and disturbing themes: 1) underclass ideology’s narratives—now all Americans’ common sense—that link poverty and inequality most crucially to (racialized) cultural inadequacy and psychological damage; 2) the belief that racial inequality stems from prejudice, bad ideas and ignorance, and 3) the cognate of both: the neoliberal rendering of social justice as equality of opportunity, with an aspiration of creating “competitive individual minority agents who might stand **a better fighting chance in the neoliberal rat race rather than a positive alternative vision of a society that eliminates the need to fight constantly against disruptive market whims** in the first place.”11

This politics seeps through in the chatter about *Django Unchained* in particular. Erin Aubry Kaplan, in the Los Angeles Times article in which Tarantino asserts his appeal to youth, remarks that the “most disturbing detail [about slavery] is the emotional violence and degradation directed at blacks that effectively keeps them at the bottom of the social order, a place they still occupy today.” Writing on the Institute of the Black World blog, one Dr. Kwa David Whitaker, a 1960s-style cultural nationalist, declaims on Django’s testament to the sources of degradation and “unending servitude [that] has rendered [black Americans] almost incapable of making sound evaluations of our current situations or the kind of steps we must take to improve our condition.”12 In its blindness to political economy, this notion of black cultural or psychological damage as either a legacy of slavery or of more indirect recent origin—e.g., urban migration, crack epidemic, matriarchy, babies making babies—comports well with the reduction of slavery and Jim Crow to interpersonal dynamics and bad attitudes. It **substitutes a “politics of recognition”** and a patter of racial uplift for politics and underwrites a conflation of political action and therapy.

With respect to the nexus of race and inequality, this discourse supports victim-blaming programs of personal rehabilitation and self-esteem engineering—inspiration—as easily as it does multiculturalist respect for difference, which, by the way, also feeds back to self-esteem engineering and inspiration as nodes within a larger political economy of race relations**.** Either way, this is a discourse that **displaces a politics** **challenging social structures that reproduce inequality** with concern for the feelings and characteristics of individuals and of categories of population statistics reified as singular groups that are equivalent to individuals. This discourse has made it possible (again, but more sanctimoniously this time) to characterize destruction of low-income housing as an uplift strategy for poor people; curtailment of access to public education as “choice”; being cut adrift from essential social wage protections as “empowerment”; and individual material success as socially important role modeling**.**

Neoliberalism’s triumph is affirmed with unselfconscious clarity in the ostensibly leftist defenses of *Django Unchained* that center on the theme of slaves’ having liberated themselves. Trotskyists, would-be anarchists, and psychobabbling identitarians have their respective sectarian garnishes: Trotskyists see everywhere the bugbear of “bureaucratism” and mystify “self-activity;” anarchists similarly fetishize direct action and voluntarism and oppose large-scale public institutions on principle, and identitarians romanticize essentialist notions of organic, folkish authenticity under constant threat from institutions. However, **all are indistinguishable from the nominally libertarian right in their disdain for government and institutionally based political action, which their common reflex is to disparage as inauthentic or corrupt.**

### 2nc – alt

#### Anything short of explicit communism makes black liberation impossible

Black Workers Congress 82 [“The Black Liberation Struggle, the Black Workers Congress, and Proletarian Revolution,” 1982, http://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-2/bwc-1/section4.htm]

Despite oppression, exploitation and racial discrimination, the out-right murder and imprisonment of our peoples by a handful of racist-imperialist, the Black liberation movement has kept on pushing, like a powerful train headed for freedom. Through hundreds of years of unremitting struggle the Black liberation movement has been steadily maturing despite the class forces that have held the reign of leadership. In recent times the most important and significant trend has been the dramatic awakening of the Black working class in its fight for its own independent organization and ideological and political leadership of the Black struggle. The Black Bourgeoisie (Uncle Toms) has already proven to the masses of Black people that it is incapable of leading the great struggle for Black emancipation, and not only are these “Toms” incapable of leading the struggle, they themselves have proven to be one of its mortal enemies. The main forces of the Black Liberation movement are the Black proletariat Black youth, revolutionary intellectuals and students, and other revolutionary nationalists in the Black community, with the Black proletariat in the lead as the key and most through going revolutionary class. The political task of the Black liberation movement is complete emancipation of Black people through a revolutionary union with the entire U.S. working class, of which it is an important part, to overthrow capitalism and imperialism in the U.S. In a word, Black Liberation today means freedom for Black people through proletarian revolution. Which road should the Black liberation struggle travel? Should it take the road of Jesse Jackson and “Black Capitalism”? Should it rely on Mr. Muhammad and Allah’s wheel in the sky to save the Black Masses? Should it take the “pork chop” road of cultural nationalism – Immamu Barakaism? Should it dream with Stokely Carmichael of returning to Africa to “free Ghana”. Should it take the road of electing the black Bourgeoisie to puppet, show-front, positions of mayor, City-councilman, Legislators, and Congressmen? Or should it take the road of “Pan-Africanism”, where the Black masses are asked to play “first aid” for the liberation struggles in Africa? Of all these “roads” which one is correct? Anyone who takes a serious look at the world today cannot help but see that oppressed and exploited peoples are locked in a death-bed struggle against international capitalism. Who can deny that the major enemy of the peoples of Asia, Africa, Latin America, are a gang of international imperialist, head by the two “super-powers” the U.S. and the Soviet Union? Who are the murderers of the miners of South Africa? The peasants and workers of Vietnam? The Attica Brothers? The people of Chile? The Indians at Wounded Knee? Who is responsible for police brutality in Detroit? In Chicago? In Atlanta? Who benefits from the high price of bread and meat? Who benefits from the lowest possible wages? Whether we like it or not our position in the world as an oppressed people does not allow us to follow the bankrupt road of U.S. imperialism which is heading for its doom. In the present international situation, the Black masses must line up with the heroic peoples of the world who have struck blow after blow at imperialism, or we must line up with the imperialists themselves who send their puppets into the Black communities to preach “Black Capitalism”. There is no third path. Only the Black proletariat deserves to lead the Black liberation movement. As far as we are concerned, none of the other classes in the Black community can do it. If none of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois “isms” cited above is capable of lighting the road for the Black liberation struggle, then what is? We say it is Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao Tse Tung. All those who genuinely (in word and deed) take up Marxism-Leninism and Mao’s Thought and put it into practice are communists. Chairman Mao runs it down like this: “Communism is at once a complete system of proletarian ideology and a new social system. It is different from any other ideology and social system, and is the most complete, progressive, revolutionary and rational system in human history”. (New Democracy) REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY OF THE MODERN ERA Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao Tse Tung is the ideology of the working class in the present era. It takes its name from the great teachers of the working class and oppressed-Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse Tung. Without Marxism-Leninism Mao Tse Tung Thought to guide it, the Black liberation movement cannot possibly be victorious. And whom do we think is most hostile to this ideology, proletarian ideology? What class and their lap dogs do the most to try and poison our minds against communism? The very same class that is the cause of our oppression and exploitation–the imperialist ruling class and their agents in the Black Nation. While constantly preaching to us about the “horrors and perils of communism”, the imperialist bourgeoisie and their lackeys in the U.S. have concocted the most insane arguments possible for the rejection of communist ideology. Everyone, knows how the bourgeoisie hates everything which hints of socialism and communism. We are even treated to the spectacle of a person like ’Senator Eastland’ of Mississippi, practically a slaveholder today, talking about how communism is “bad for the people”. What people is this blood-sucker talking about? Certainly not Black people, especially those who work on “his” plantation, or even the masses of white people for that matter. Eastland knows that communism is “bad” for people like himself, ex-slaveholders and modern imperialists, who communists and communism seek to wipe off the face of the earth. No, it is not so difficult to see the motives behind the massive anti-communist hysteria in the U.S. The buffoons who really take the cake are those among us. The Jesse Jacksons, Imamu Barakas, Thomas Mathews, Stokely Carmichaels, and the jive Black politicians and sinister Black capitalists who roam about the Black community. These people feel that Senator Eastland is not enough, he needs an echo. After the many years of bitter experience that Black people have had in this country one would have thought, perhaps, that when ’massa’ says “something is bad for you”, that it is likely to be something good. Malcolm summed it up this way: “There are basically two kinds of Negroes. The first kind of Negro when he sees his master is sick he says good, let him die. If he sees his master’s house burning down he prays for a strong wind. He hates his master because he wants to be free. The other kind of Negro is a fool. He identifies himself with his master. When the ’massa’ wants something, he runs and gets it. When the master gets sick, he says: “’massa’ we sick?” This Negro loves his master because he wants to stay a slave.” So it is today. The Black Nation is and has always been divided into classes, and each class has its own ”ism”, and there are even different groups within the same class with different “isms.” The ruling circles of the U.S. preach that capitalism is the best of all possible worlds. Black bourgeois forces echo and mimic the “big” bourgeoisie under the cover of “assimilationism” “integrationism” and now and then, “back to Africanism.” This same Black bourgeoisie spreads its own form of nationalism, “bourgeois nationalism.” Mr. Muhammad talks about meeting Allah on a street corner in Detroit one cold winter day. Therefore, Islamism is the road to freedom and salvation, even though it hasn’t served the Arabs too well in. the Middle East; in fact it hinders their liberation. And there is the ”Black ’Christian Nationalism” of certain Black preachers who are trying to convince us how “revolutionary” Christianity can be if you only paint Jesus Black! And then there’s Imamu Baraka (Swahili for “high priest”) who loves to enlighten us by calling Marxism-Leninism “a honky thing.” There is the “Pan-Africanism” of the Black bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes who want to fight the U.S. and Portugal in Africa, but who don’t want to fight the rulers of the U.S. and Portugal who live in the United States and who murder Black people right under their noses! And they do this without the blessings of the African revolutionaries who have consistently told them that the best way to help Africa become free and independent is to take up the struggle against U.S. imperialism right inside the U.S.A. Additionally, the Black bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes have the many other “isms” of ’cultural nationalism’, communalism, ’lumpenism’, and etc., etc., etc.. Since there are so many “isms” in the Black community representing the interests of the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, what is wrong with the Black proletariat having Communism for its ideology, since it is the one ideology which doesn’t rely on magic, and the one ideology standing up to the imperialists of the world, and the one ideology which has changed the material conditions for over a billion of the world’s people? Clearly it is the only ideology leading people to their liberation in the modern era. When Imamu Baraka claims that Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought is a “Honky Thing”, what is he really saying? Is he saying that the millions of dead Vietnamese workers and peasants who were guided by this outlook were dying in the interest of a “honky thing?” Is he saying that the great Chinese revolution was led by a “honky thing?” Or maybe he is saying that the great TANZAM Railway Project’ which is being built through Zambia and Tanzania, with the fraternal aid of the Chinese, is a “honky thing” project. The entire international anti-imperialist united front today depends on the international proletariat and its ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao Tse Tung as a guiding light and an unshakable force. For Imamu Baraka and his like to reject Marxism-Leninism means they are rejecting the leading role of the Black proletariat in the Black liberation movement, and in the final analysis, selling out the Black liberation movement altogether. Despite their phrase-mongering, people like Baraka cannot possibly have the interests of the Black Nation at heart. These elements like Baraka himself, accuse us communists of “dividing Black people along class lines,” “keeping us from all uniting as one,” etc. But they are wrong. It is not us communists who “divide Black people along class lines,” but the objective development of society itself. Booker T. Washington preceded the Bolshevik Revolution by fifty years! Whether we like it or not, class divisions exist in the Black community and they will not, be “wished” away by rhetoric, only by the establishment of world communism and a classless society. Black magic just will not do!

### 2nc alt solves – race

#### Class struggle is a better framework to address gratuitous violence, even if it’s not sufficient—we have empirical support for our method and a better explanation for patterns like segregation and police brutality

**Camp and Kelley 13** [Jordan, visiting scholar in the Institute of American Cultures and the Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA, and Robin, PhD in History, Professor of American History at UCLA, “Black Radicalism, Marxism, and Collective Memory: An Interview with Robin D. G. Kelley”, March, *American Quarterly*, 65.1]

Camp What is to be learned from the Alabama Communist Party’s organizing around unemployment, homelessness, evictions, and foreclosures during the period you call “the underground,” 1929–1935? Kelley Some of their lessons are ones they learned in the process by making mistakes. For example, the traditional way of organizing was mass protest. They had some demonstrations—one attracted as many as five thousand people in 1933. But mass protests were not the most effective forms of organizing. The most effective ones were invisible. That is why that chapter is called “an invisible army.” People were being evicted constantly. The Chicago, Detroit, New York, and Los Angeles approach was to confront the police in a kind of street theater to say “we are the Communist Party we are going to put the furniture back in the house after you’ve been evicted. We are going to challenge the police who are putting the furniture out, if we can’t convince the police to let you stay there.” This street theater was not just to put people back in their homes but also to recruit new members. That is why those scenes were so dramatic. In Alabama they couldn’t do that. What they would do is quietly approach the owner of the house being rented and say, “Well look, we really hope that you can let that person come back to the house, because if it is empty I can guarantee you by the next morning the house is going to be firewood. People are so desperate for fuel they will tear down your house piece by piece. I’ll tell you what, why don’t you pay the person a dollar a month to take care of your house rather than throw them out?” That worked. Or when people’s electricity was cut off, the Communist Party would show up with jumper cables and hook it up to public utilities to make sure people had electricity. Camp Can you describe the role of the Communist Party in the mobilizations around the Scottsboro case and the Angelo Herndon case, a black labor organizer whom James Baldwin calls the “George Jackson of the era”?5 Kelley Angelo Herndon actually cut his teeth in Alabama as a Communist. He was one of the first rural organizers. He was a veteran when he was arrested on[End Page 219] this old bogus conspiracy law in Georgia. The Herndon case became a kind of cause célèbre because he was incarcerated on trumped-up charges of conspiracy as a leading black Communist. The Party took what looked like a local incident and made it an international scandal. Everyone knew Angelo Herndon’s name. You could walk around Moscow, Johannesburg, and Peking, and they knew Angelo Herndon because the Communist Party put the word out. Similarly, the Scottsboro case was one in which the Party’s international links made what was essentially a local common case—meaning that many black men have been “legally lynched” for being accused of raping or attempting to rape white women—a scandal. Nine young men, almost all minors, were just riding in a freight car “hoboing” and looking for work. Two white women were also on the train. They were forced to cry rape in some ways by the police. It is very probable that had it not been for the Communist Party, the Scottsboro boys would have been executed or lynched. It is significant that the Alabama Communists basically defined a class war prisoner or political prisoner as any black person arrested under this unjust system. As a result, a number of rape cases and lynchings were made into international cause célèbres. One of the tragedies is that there was another case of a young twelve-year-old woman Murdis Dixon, who was raped and beaten by a white man. The Communist Party stepped in and said, here is another case that we need to step in on and bring to the attention of the world. Unfortunately the Party leadership didn’t take up her case. The Garveyites took up her case and tried to make something out of it, but it was a real failure. Not just a failure, because it also spoke ideologically to one of the problems that the Party had. That is, at the national level at least, the value of black women as a whole was not as great as that of white women or black men. That is one of the lessons that I took from the case. I don’t fault the local Communists per se because they were the ones who investigated and tried to make it a story. They ran the story in the Southern Worker, but nothing else happened after that. Camp What are the stakes involved in understanding the role of white supremacy and anticommunism in crushing radical movements in the region? Kelley First, white supremacy has been fundamental in the structure of capitalist exploitation in the South. It would not have worked without it. Here you had a budding industrial center of Birmingham, Alabama, which was a fairly new city. It was not fifty years old. The industrial core had been established for a generation, perhaps a generation and a half. In order for industrial capitalists to be profitable they needed to lower wages and maintain a more docile[End Page 220] workforce. They did not just use race to reduce wages, they also used company towns that were highly policed to keep workers enclosed and sequestered. These systems of white supremacy and segregation made it almost impossible for white workers to see that uniting with black workers was in their class interest. Camp Were the patterns of segregation different in Birmingham than other regions such as Detroit? Kelley Yes, definitely. It was not modern segregation with slums, massive unemployment, and warehousing people. The segregation was built around industrial parks where you had steel, iron ore, and then mining where black and white workers lived in close proximity. In the city itself there were alleyways with black people living behind white people or in very close vicinity because whites depended on black female domestic labor. Industrial workers were housed all together, maybe separated by a street or a particular building. Yet segregation wasn’t about separation at all. It was about being able to justify a superior position for white workers that was only slightly superior to black workers and also corralling all workers in a way that made them constantly policed. The Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company was a company town. It had local private police agencies that patrolled with shotguns to make sure that people couldn’t escape. It was very similar to the mining compounds in South Africa where people on contract labor were locked in barbed-wire fences and prevented from leaving until their contracts were up. The whole system of economic exploitation was built on a very explosive racial situation. People wanted to organize because conditions were so bad, but the system could not tolerate any organization. The antiunion position in the South was so severe that capitalists wouldn’t even tolerate industrial organizations. Any challenge to the system resulted in violence, both official police violence and extralegal violence. You had police supporters in the form of the Ku Klux Klan, the White Legion, various white supremacist organizations, and then vigilantes who did the dirty work of the police. Camp There was continuity between police and mob violence. Kelley Right. That was actually very common. It kept the police fairly clean by allowing some of the most violent acts, such as people being kidnapped, to occur at night. The police would arrest black workers and say, “We dropped the charges.” Then they would release them in the middle of the night into[End Page 221] the hands of a waiting mob. These are the conditions under which the Party operated. Of course they imagined things were changing after 1935 with the Popular Front when several developments converged. First, the Soviet Union took the position that they needed to build as broad an alliance as possible of intellectuals, activists, and labor against fascism. That meant reducing the sectarianism of the Party. It also meant fighting fascism not just abroad but at home. It coincided with things like the La Follette Committee and the Senate’s investigations of antiradical and antilabor violence; the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and its industrial organizing campaign that was changing the nature of labor itself; the New Deal’s new focus on protecting union rights; and meanwhile more intellectuals became involved with the Party. The difference is that in Alabama most liberals were prosegregationist and extremely anticommunist. In the South—and really throughout the rest of the country—prosegregationist and anticommunist sentiments were two sides of the same coin. Evidence of procommunist sympathies included being for integration and against segregation. If you were antiracist you are automatically a communist. J. Edgar Hoover said that you could tell a Communist because they are the ones that have Negroes coming into their house. Although that is kind of funny because when you think about it, Negroes had Negroes coming into their house that were not Communist. You had to be a white person for this to mean anything. But the fact that the Party could not win a significant white liberal following in Alabama meant that the Popular Front in the South was kind of a disaster. The few liberals who came out got badly beaten. Joseph Gelders, a Jewish radical I write about and whose daughter Marge Gelders and her husband were all radicals, got beaten so badly he almost died. No one expected that. He was a professor and an intellectual. You had antiblack racism, but anti-Semitism also justified beatings of liberals and radicals in the South. Antiradical violence in Alabama actually did not subside after the Popular Front.

#### Our Camp and Kelley ev proves Marxism is a useful framing for collective struggle—in fact, black labor movements have used these tropes to universalize the struggle, even in hostile conditions like early 1900s Alabama

**Camp and Kelley 2013** – \*visiting scholar in the Institute of American Cultures and the Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA; \*\*PhD in History, Gary B. Nash Professor of American History at UCLA (March, Interview of Robin D.G. Kelley by Jordan T. Camp, American Quarterly, 65.1, “Black Radicalism, Marxism, and Collective Memory: An Interview with Robin D. G. Kelley”, Project MUSE)

Robin D. G. Kelley

The timing is really important. The project was conceived in the early 1980s. My interest was in southern Africa, specifically the South African Left. At the same time, the Jesse Jackson campaign and the Rainbow Coalition was taking off, as was the idea of multiracial and multiethnic organizing actually led by people of color. I was involved in campaigns at UCLA and was simultaneously trying to write about an original rainbow coalition. My dissertation began as a comparative study of radicalism in South Africa and the US South. I ended up dropping the South Africa piece because I was denied access to the country. Yet with a South African framing of what became a US story I was forced to think hard about things like intraracial class tensions and conflicts. I had to look at Alabama differently. I couldn’t look at the black working class as a kind of solid whole, nor could I look at the white working class in the same way. Part of what Hammer and Hoe tried to do was look at Alabama society as whole, not just black workers. [End Page 215]

Camp

How have you felt about its reception over the past two decades?

Kelley

It’s been interesting. I am really happy with that book. Looking over it again, I am not sure what I would do differently because I said what I needed to say. The reviews over all have been great, but more importantly the way a number of activists and organizers on the Left have talked about that book has been very heartening. For many readers, the book does three things. First, it demonstrates that substantial, effective organizing can occur under the worst of circumstances; that immense poverty, depression, and violence weren’t successful deterrents to movement building.

Second, that even the most ardent racists are not fixed in their ideology. People can be transformed in the struggle. Racism is definitely a fetter to multiracial organizing, but Hammer and Hoe shows how people built a movement across the color line in the most racist place of all. Anyone watching footage of Bull Connor in Ingram Park in 1963 could not believe that thirty years before that there had been an interracial group of five thousand people in Birmingham standing on the street demanding relief, jobs, and an end to police brutality.

Third, that class politics are alive and well. But any class politics that pretend that race and also gender get in the way of class organizing miss the point altogether. You can actually build white support for antiracism, male support for antisexism, and black support for white working-class justice. People can and do cross the boundaries that historians and scholars impose on people. The levels of empathy that many of the people in Hammer and Hoe showed—the fact that people were willing to be beaten or die for others—is an extremely important lesson. We spend so much time theorizing race, class, and gender and wondering whether or not you can get people of a particular identity to move, but we don’t even ask the question “Can you get Steve to risk his life for Hosea Hudson?” It is not that Steve is supporting Hosea Hudson because he is black and male; Steve is supporting Hosea Hudson because he is part of a movement that says, solidarity is the only answer. Collective struggle is the only answer to solving all of our problems, and your problem is mine.

#### Even though the Alabama Communist Party faded out, their a priori fatalism toward class struggle undercuts consideration of alternatives—this card smokes their alt answers

**Camp and Kelley 2013** – \*visiting scholar in the Institute of American Cultures and the Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA; \*\*PhD in History, Gary B. Nash Professor of American History at UCLA (March, Interview of Robin D.G. Kelley by Jordan T. Camp, American Quarterly, 65.1, “Black Radicalism, Marxism, and Collective Memory: An Interview with Robin D. G. Kelley”, Project MUSE)

Kelley I think the most important lessons are not the ones I recognize or acknowledged, but the lessons activist/readers take from the book upon reflecting on their own experiences and dreams of the world they are trying to build. That said, I do think that the book proves—again—that antiracism and class solidarity are not trade-offs or mutually exclusive but mutually constitutive. The same holds true for all forms of oppression—sexism, homophobia, et cetera. Second, Hammer and Hoe should not be seen as a road map or a source of strategic knowledge to be drawn on for current movements. Indeed, the biggest criticism of the book is that the Communist Party “lost” in Alabama, and therefore it isn’t worth even writing about. I disagree: it matters because (1) these struggles do make a difference on a small level, improving the lives of working-class African Americans on many occasions (keeping them from being evicted, helping them survive by getting more relief and electricity and coal, defending local people in court, et cetera); (2) through a different analysis or theoretical framework, it placed what appeared to be local and isolated struggles against “mean” bosses and landlords into a global context, one that exposed the structural dimensions of capitalism as a system and offered a different path; (3) the movement did, in some ways, lay the groundwork for the next generation of activists who truly transformed the face of the South and the United States as a whole. Finally, this work reveals something about how people think and how struggle changes their ideas about what is possible, why they are poor and oppressed, and what are the alternatives to Jim Crow capitalism. I’ve come to realize that this task might have been the most important of all.

### at: alt/neg is whiteness

#### Castigating us by referring to everything we do and say as “whiteness” is such a vague and amorphous neoliberal tool that reifies both racism and the K

Reed 13 [Adolph, professor of political science @ U Pennsylvania, Marx, Race, and Neoliberalism, New Labor Forum January/February 2013 22: 49-57]

This sort of historical materialist perspective throws into relief a fundamental limitation of the “whiteness” notion that has been fashionable within the academic left for roughly two decades: it reifies whiteness as a transhistorical social category. In effect, it treats “whiteness”—and therefore “race”—as existing prior to and above social context.10 Both who qualifies as white and the significance of being white have altered over time. Moreover, whiteness discourse functions as a kind of moralistic exposé rather than a basis for strategic politics; this is clear in that the program signally articulated in its name has been simply to raise a demand to “abolish whiteness,” that is, to call on whites to renounce their racial privilege. In fact, its fixation on demonstrating the depth of whites’ embrace of what was known to an earlier generation’s version of this argument as “white skin privilege” and the inclination to slide into teleological accounts in which groups or individuals “approach” or “pursue” whiteness erases the real historical dynamics and contradictions of American racial history. The whiteness discourse overlaps other arguments that presume racism to be a sui generis form of injustice. Despite seeming provocative, these arguments do not go beyond the premises of the racial liberalism from which they commonly purport to dissent. They differ only in rhetorical flourish, not content. Formulations that invoke metaphors of disease or original sin reify racism by disconnecting it from the discrete historical circumstances and social structures in which it is embedded, and treating it as an autonomous force. Disconnection from political economy is also a crucial feature of postwar liberalism’s construction of racial inequality as prejudice or intolerance. Racism becomes an independent variable in a moralistic argument that is idealist intellectually and ultimately defeatist politically. This tendency to see racism as sui generis also generates a resistance to precision in analysis. It is fueled by a tendency to inflate the language of racism to the edge of its reasonable conceptual limits, if not beyond. Ideological commitment to shoehorning into the rubric of racism all manner of inequalities that may appear statistically as racial disparities has yielded two related interpretive pathologies. One is a constantly expanding panoply of neologisms—“institutional racism,” “systemic racism,” “structural racism,” “color-blind racism,” “post-racial racism,” etc.—intended to graft more complex social dynamics onto a simplistic and frequently psychologically inflected racism/anti-racism political ontology. Indeed, these efforts bring to mind [Thomas S.] Kuhn’s account of attempts to accommodate mounting anomalies to salvage an interpretive paradigm in danger of crumbling under a crisis of authority.11 A second essentialist sleight-of-hand advances claims for the primacy of race/racism as an explanation of inequalities in the present by invoking analogies to regimes of explicitly racial subordination in the past. In these arguments, analogy stands in for evidence and explanation of the contemporary centrality of racism. Michelle Alexander’s widely read and cited book, The New Jim Crow, is only the most prominent expression of this tendency; even she has to acknowledge that the analogy fails because the historical circumstances are so radically different.12 Rigorous pursuit of equality of opportunity exclusively within the terms of capitalist class relations has been fully legitimized under the rubric of “diversity.”

### at: vote for minorities

#### Voting for them to promote black success is a neoliberal uplift narrative that insidiously reproduces racist ideologies

**Reed 18** [Adolph Reed is a professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, “The Trouble With Uplift,” September 1, 2018, https://thebaffler.com/salvos/the-trouble-with-uplift-reed]

This vision of unyielding black pathology is yet another testament to the harmony of antiracist and neoliberal ideologies—and it, too, harks directly back to the origins of the black leadership caste at the dawn of the last century. Washington and Du Bois, together with Garvey and other prominent racial nationalists, envisioned their core constituency as a politically mute black population in need of tutelage from their ruling-class-backed leaders. Touré F. Reed persuasively argues that the mildly updated version of this vision now serves as an essential cornerstone of the new black professional-managerial class politics. Underclass mythology grounds professional-class claims to race leadership, while providing the normative foundation of uplift programs directed toward enhancing self-esteem rather than the material redistribution of wealth and income. Exhortations to celebrate and demand accolades, career opportunities, and material accumulation for black celebrities and rich people—e.g., box office receipts for black filmmakers or contracts and prestigious appointments for other well-positioned black people—as a racial politics are consistent with the sporadic eruptions of “Buy Black” campaigns since the 1920s and 1930s. Such efforts stood out in stark contrast to more working-class based “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaigns that demanded employment opportunities in establishments serving black neighborhoods. Like “Buy Black” campaigns, which seem to have risen again from the tomb of petit-bourgeois wishful thinking, projections of successes for the rich and famous as generic racial victories depend on a sleight-of-hand that treats benefits for any black person as benefits for all black people. This brings to mind comedian Chris Rock’s quip that he went to his mailbox every day for two weeks after the not guilty verdict in the O.J. Simpson murder trial looking for his “O. J. prize,” only to be disappointed. Pain and Proprietorship At times, this tendency to absorb the plural into the singular can be strikingly crude and transparently self-interested. The torrent of hostility directed at Rachel Dolezal for having represented herself as black rested on groundless—sometimes entirely made up—claims that she had appropriated jobs, awards, and other honorifics intended for blacks. In addition to the annual contretemps over whether blacks win enough of the most prestigious Oscars, recent racial controversies in the art world illustrate how easily the narrowest guild concerns can masquerade as burning matters of racial justice. The Brooklyn Museum’s hiring of a white person as consulting curator of African art sparked objections that the hire perpetuated “pervasive structures of white supremacy in the art field.” The 2017 furor over the Whitney Biennial’s display of Dana Schutz’s “Open Casket”—inspired by the infamous 1955 photograph of Emmett Till’s brutalized body—reduced to a question of ownership of “black suffering,” or more accurately, of the right to represent and materially benefit from the representation of black suffering. The protesters’ objection, as Walter Benn Michaels put it succinctly, was that “black pain belongs to black artists.” It’s worth noting that one of the leading critics of the painting and its display was Hannah Black, who contended that “non-black people must accept that they will never embody and cannot understand” the gesture Till’s mother, Mamie, made in insisting on an open-casket funeral. Black, who not only called for the painting to be removed from display, but also offered an “urgent recommendation” that it be destroyed, is a Briton who lives in Berlin. From a different standard of cultural proprietorship, one might argue that Schutz, as an American, has a stronger claim than Black to interpret the Till story. After all, the segregationist Southern order and the struggle against that order, which gave Till’s fate its broader social and political significance, were historically specific moments of a distinctively American experience. In fact, most claims of cultural ownership and charges of appropriation are bogus. While sometimes they provide an instrumental basis for tortious claims, as in pursuit of restitution for Nazi and other imperialists’ looting of artifacts, more often they posit a dead-end conflation of fixed and impermeable racial identity with cultural expression. As Michaels has argued for more than twenty-five years, the discourse of cultural ownership stems from the pluralist mindset that treats “culture” as a key marker of social groups and thereby inscribes it as racial essentialism. In order to legitimate what Michaels describes as “racial rent-seeking,” a curiously inflexible brand of race-first neoliberalism has taken root in American political discourse, proposing a trickle-down model of racial progress, anchored in the mysticism of organic black community. Against this exoticized backdrop, neoliberal race leaders stage the beguiling fantasy that individual “entrepreneurialism” is the key path to rising above one’s circumstances—i.e., the standard American social myth that obscures the deeper need to combat systemic inequalities. The most tragic, and pathetic, expressions of this faith are the versions of the “gospel of prosperity,” which fuse pop self-realization psychology and a barely recognizable Christianity to exploit desperation and the desire for life with dignity and respect among their black-majority congregations. The false hopes of the prosperity gospel encourage already vulnerable people to fall prey to all sorts of destructive get-rich-quick schemes; they are the “sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions” channeled through a market-idolatrous Protestant psychobabble. Black ministers and other proponents of entrepreneurialist ideology as racial uplift also played a largely unrecognized role in pushing subprime mortgages, and even payday loans, in black communities. The racial trickle-down success myth is partly a vestige of an earlier era, during which individual black attainments could be seen as testaments to the race’s capacities—and a refutation of the white-sanctioned view of black people as generally inferior. Even then, however, this model of black uplift was enmeshed in the race theory of the time—notably the belief that a race’s capacities were indicated by the accomplishments of its “best” individuals—and it was always inflected with the class perspectives of those who saw themselves as such individuals. The class legacies of this foundational moment in modern black politics may well contribute to the firm insistence among today’s “black voices” that slavery and Jim Crow mark the transcendent truth of black Americans’ experience in the United States—and that an irreducible racism is the source of all manifest racial inequality. That diagnosis certainly masks class asymmetries among black Americans’ circumstances as well as in the remedies proposed to improve them. Nevertheless, we continue to indulge the politically wrong-headed, counterproductive, and even reactionary features of the “representative black voice” industry in whatever remains of our contemporary public sphere. And we never reckon with the truly disturbing presumption that any black person who can gain access to the public microphone and performs familiar rituals of “blackness” should be recognized as expressing significant racial truths and deserves our attention. This presumption rests on the unexamined premise that blacks share a common, singular mind that is at once radically unknowable to non-blacks and readily downloaded by any random individual setting up shop as a racial voice. And despite what all of our age’s many heroic narratives of individualist race-first triumph may suggest to the casual viewer, that premise is the essence of racism.

#### That reinforces the symbiotic relation between antiracist politics and Democratic neoliberalism

**Reed 18** [Adolph Reed Jr., professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, “Black Politics After 2016,” Feb 11, 2018, *nonsite* issue #23, <https://nonsite.org/article/black-politics-after-2016>]

Like any ideology that gains traction, race reductionism also has a material foundation. Black ethnic politics consolidated around exponential growth of a stratum of office holders and public functionaries, and it has encouraged and reinforced development of what might be called a political economy of race-relations or diversity management. That includes a burgeoning, multibillion dollar diversity industry that extends to corporations and universities, where pursuit and monitoring of diversity is woven into human resource functions and overseen by in-house diversity professionals and administrators and freelance consultants. Insofar as diversity is valued in personnel policies, the significance of this political economy, and the ideology that emanates from and underwrites it, ranges far beyond those who work in the diversity/race relations economy directly. Diversity as a norm of fairness pervades the professional-managerial strata and ratifies an ideal of social justice that harmonizes seamlessly with market-driven neoliberalism because it combines celebration of difference and aggressive pursuit of equality of opportunity, to the exclusion of economic redistribution. This is the essential truth reflected in the subtitle of Walter Benn Michaels’s book, The Trouble with Diversity, namely that we—at least in the professional-managerial strata—have come to “love identity and ignore inequality.” The political economy of race relations management has grown symbiotically with neoliberalism. The symbiosis may be clearest in the privatization, outsourcing, and overall retraction of social services, as claims to authentic representation of “community” voices and perspectives factor into criteria for awarding contracts and standing in policy processes that are increasingly insulated from democratic oversight and accountability. The norm of representation as embodiment of appropriate categories of identity gives private and nonprofit contractors an easy standard of legitimacy that collapses possible differences on policy issues and directions into vacant liberal proceduralism (having a “seat at the table”) and Victorian racialist mysticism (“reflecting the perspective of the X”). The symbiotic relationship shows up also in the ways that a politics grounded on identity can obfuscate dynamics of economic inequality and dispossession by rendering them in cultural terms. Debate over displacement for upscaling redevelopment is a case in point. In opting for a language of “gentrification,” opponents of displacement, often without intending to do so, cloud a simple, straightforward dynamic—public support of private developers’ pursuit of rent-intensifying redevelopment—with cultural implications that shift critique away from the issue of using public authority to engineer upward redistribution and impose hardship on relatively vulnerable residents. Instead, discussion of gentrification slides into objections about display of privilege, and lack of recognition or respect that, notwithstanding the moral outrage that accompanies them, accept the logic of rent-intensifying redevelopment as given and demand that newcomers acknowledge and honor aboriginal habitus and practices and that the “community” be involved in the processes of upgrading. A similar racial or cultural discourse has unhelpfully shaped opposition to charterization of public education by focusing on the racial dimension of the process. The fundamental problem with Teach For America and such privatizers, after all, is not that the missionaries are mainly white and unfamiliar with native culture or even that many of them are tourists building extracurriculars for their graduate and professional school dossiers. Those are only idiosyncratically distasteful features of a particular line of attack on one front in a broader war on public goods and the idea of social solidarity in line with marketization of all human needs. And that sort of culturalist discourse also opens opportunities for petty, and not so petty, entrepreneurship in the name of respect or recognition of the community, within the logic of neoliberalization. Race reductionism enables a sleight-of-hand in which benefits to individuals can appear to be victories for the generic racial population or community. The more deeply embedded a groupist notion of fairness or justice becomes as common sense, the more easily that sleight-of-hand works under labels like “community empowerment,” “voice,” “opportunity,” or “representation” to propel and legitimize accumulation by dispossession. The symbiotic relation between antiracist politics and Democratic neoliberalism helps to make sense of the vitriol with which so many antiracist activists have reacted to Sanders and the renewed interest in challenging economic inequality. Notwithstanding copious evocations of the heroic period of black insurgent activism, this politics is not directed toward generating the deep and broad solidarities necessary for building an insurgent political movement. It is an insider, elite-driven interest group politics that is concerned less with reducing inequality than with establishing and maintaining what Kenneth Warren describes as “managerial authority over the nation’s Negro problem.” As West observed regarding the race relations framework’s emergence at the dawn of the twentieth century, claims to speak for black concerns in this politics do not depend on demonstration of accountability to any specific constituencies of black people. From Coates and other pundits to the many random Black Lives Matter activists those who expatiate about black Americans’ lack of interest in social-democratic politics claim interpretive authority based on the mysticism of organic racial representation and, most immediately, recognition by corporate media and elites as authentic voices.

## links vs other affs

### link – ableism/disability

#### Capitalist exploitation structures all aspects of ableism and is a better explanation for the exploitation and deployment of the medical model of disability—the alternative is key to challenge the root cause of oppression

**Grossman 4** [Brian, Ph.D. Student, Program in Medical Sociology, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of California, San Francisco, Political economy perspectives on disability and aging: Competing or complementary frameworks?, This paper will be presented as part of the panel on Issues in Disability and Aging at the conference, Social Policy As if People Matter, to be held at Adelphi University in Garden City, NY on November 11-12, 2004, <http://www.adelphi.edu/peoplematter/pdfs/Grossman.pdf>]

Russell (1998, 2001) takes a different approach to the political economy of disability, situating her analysis within the tradition of critical Marxism. She traces the effects of the interactions between the economic structures and the political system as they influence the lives of disabled people through state-supported eugenics, the systematic exclusion of people with disabilities from the labor force, and both the both corporate and charity-based privatization of the public responsibilities of providing services and equipment for people with disabilities. In her book, Beyond Ramps: Disability at the End of the Social Contract, Russell (1998) begins her political economic analysis with a critique of the medical model of disability, that which seeks to cure the impairments of people with disabilities, thereby situating disability as an individual crisis or personal tragedy to be overcome or fixed. She argues that it as a result of this model that political and financial efforts focus on correcting the bodies and minds of individuals rather than on removing barriers to social participation for people with disabilities. Additionally, she indicates that the individualization of disability that accompanies the medical model has historically been employed to differentiate people with disabilities from the general population, to cast them as abnormal, as less than human. Next, Russell (1998) traces the shameful histories of eugenics in the United States, England and Germany from the turn of the 20th century through World War II. She highlights the economic rationalization of forced sterilization programs in the United States and England and the mass extermination of first children, and then adults, with disabilities in Hitler’s Germany. In particular, she describes how people with disabilities were characterized by the Nazi government as drains on the social welfare system (due to their inability to produce in a capitalist economic system while at the same time requiring the state to spend money on their behalf). This economic justification combined with the Social Darwinism of the time, contributed to the creation of a state-supported program of eugenics of people with disabilities that was not only sanctioned by but also enforced by the medical establishment of the time. From the political economy of Nazi era eugenics, Russell (1998) moves to the current debate over euthanasia and “the right to die” for people with disabilities. Citing a study from the New England Journal of Medicine that surveyed physicians in Oregon (the first state to legalize euthanasia), she demonstrates the connections between financial considerations and policies Grossman, 2004 around physician-assisted suicide by recounting that in addition to the 60% of physicians who reported supporting assisted suicide, 80% indicated that economics might influence patient decisions. Moreover, she offers the example of Larry McAfee, a quadriplegic in Georgia who, facing forced institutionalization as a consequence of insufficient state-supported programs that allow for independent living, petitioned the courts for and was granted the right to suicide, as a further example of the political bias toward the extermination of people with disabilities over the provision of services. As a result, Russell (1998) is left asking the haunting questions: “But are patients who face destitution really choosing death? Or are they victims of Social Darwinist euthanasia policy under which the rich can buy all the care they need while the poor must do without?” (40). Continuing her exploration of the political economy of disability, Russell (1998) provides a history of the opposition to the passage of Social Security in the United States, detailing the roles played by the private insurance industry and the American Medical Association. In addition, she highlights the difficulties that eligibility requirement for programs like Medicaid and Social Security which require restricted incomes and/or limited assets present for people with disabilities who want to work. Moreover, she is extremely critical of the emphasis on private sector charities over a public safety net. In particular, she blasts Jerry Lewis and his Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) for their portrayal of people with disabilities as pitiable and in need of cures, as well as the profit-making tactics that govern the distribution of funds raised by the organization. She provides evidence that two-thirds of the money raised by MDA in 1991 was spent on overhead, with only the remaining one-third of funds to be split between direct patient services and research grants.Grossman, 2004 Furthermore, Russell (1998) discusses the effect of the ideology of capitalism in attracting the interest of then President George H.W. Bush to support the Americans with Disabilities Act (what has since been touted as the most sweeping piece of legislation for people with disabilities in the history of the United States) as a low-cost way to reduce the number of people on government assistance under the disguise of civil rights for people with disabilities. In addition, she identifies economics as the primary motivation for the political actions that initiated continuing disability reviews (CDRs) and the multiple changes to federal definitions of disability, both of which were intended to reduce access to state systems of support. In a later article, Russell (2001) continues to elaborate on the relationships between political and economic spheres as evidenced by her redefinition of disabled people as “persons deemed less exploitable or not exploitable by the owning class who control the means of production in a capitalist economy” (87). She identifies the role of (the capitalist) class interests in determining the level of participation in social life afforded to people with disabilities through economically rationalized decisions about both the exclusion and inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor force at different times in America’s history (i.e., sheltered workshops; unwillingness of employers to offer accommodations, despite the ADA). Again, she highlights the interplay between capitalist interests and the medicalization of disability that result in a focus on curing the individual, avoiding the institution of policies that remove barriers to social and economic participation. In “Mainfesto of an Uppity Crip”, the penultimate chapter of Beyond Ramps, Russell (1998) outlines a plan for change, offering more than twenty-five suggestion for anti-capitalist reform that include actions like ensuring greater corporate accountability, instituting campaign finance reform, returning the media to the public, adopting the principles of universal design to public and private spaces, mandating a living wage, and replacing the current mode of “institutional profiteering” (222) through the provision of Personal Assistance Services that support people with disabilities living in the community. She concludes the book by arguing for a renaissance of social solidarity across identity groups against the capitalist class, a movement that would bring differences together and revive public discourse.

#### Their treatment of disability is part of a hegemonic Northern discourse that excludes the perspectives of indigenous peoples and the global South

**Goodley & Lawthorn 13** [Dan and Rebecca, Manchester Metropolitan University, “Hardt and Negri and the Geo-Political Imagination: Empire, Multitude and Critical Disability Studies,” Critical Sociology 39.3]

Critical disability studies must respond to the inequities of globalization and place an analysis of disability at the epicentre of a geo-political imagination. Specifically Global North critical disability studies have failed to engage with the Global South (Grech, 2009, 2011; Meekosha, 2008, 2010, 2011). There are 400 million disabled people in the Global South (66–75% of the world’s disabled people). As Grech notes (2011), guesstimates have emerged, claiming that 82% of disabled people live in the Global South in conditions of poverty and that one-fifth of the world’s poorest people are disabled people. The assumption of a disability and poverty relationship has created the strongest linkages between disability and the broader development agenda. Whilst disabled people do indeed make up the majority world, they remain excluded from global citizenship. As Goodley (2011: 39) notes:

Citing a number of resources (including http://wecando.wordpress.com/about/ and http://www.apids.org), Meekosha (2008) questions the implicit values of Northern hemisphere disability studies including (i) claims to universality (what happens in the ‘Global North’ should happen in the South); (ii) a reading from the Metropole (a methodological projection of ideas from the centre into the periphery); (iii) emphasis on the importance of Northern feudal/capitalist modes of production (with an accompanying ignorance and grand erasure of indigenous/traditional modes of living of the South); (iv) a colonialism of psychic, cultural and geographical life of the South by the North and (v) ignorance of the resistant-subaltern-positions of ‘Global Southerners’.

Grech (2011: 3) makes the powerful case that:

Disability studies … has not served the subject of majority world disability, dominated by white, Western, middle class academics, its debate imbued with ideological, theoretical, cultural and historical assumptions – those pertaining to, and grounded in Western urban post-industrialised societies, notably West European and North American (WENA). Despite Western foundations, disability studies has reached hegemonic status in the disability and majority world debate as the exportation of its ideas (notably the social model of disability) from North to South continues unabated. This seems to be legitimised by numerous factors: the marginalisation/exclusion of disability in the development sector; the monopolisation of most things disability by the Western disability studies; and the assumption that disability theories and writings from the West are transferable across the globe with few or no modifications … Overall, as Stone (1999) contends, this transfer/imposition of epistemologies is more akin to imperialism than to empowerment.

### alt solves – ableism

#### Communism key to solve ableist

**RedEd 11** [May 22 2011, Communism: The real movement to abolish disability, <https://libcom.org/library/communism-real-movement-abolish-disability>]

The following article is a tentative attempt to combine communist theory with the insights of disability activists and theorists in order to promote revolutionary approaches to understanding and overcoming the oppression of disabled people. Communism: The real movement to abolish disability The dominant ideas of the ruling class are the dominant ideas of the age. As revolutionaries we know this and must constantly be alert to the ways in which they influence and limit our own conception of how things are and where they might go. We are alert to the fact that in our popular culture it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism. In the revolutionary milieu we reject -with varying degrees of success- the universality of wage labour, the state, the nuclear family and so on. In the piece I want to focus on an area most revolutionaries never bring into their analysis of political economy: disability. Disability, I will argue, is a feature of present day social relations, that it is specific to capitalism, that it will not go away as long as capitalism persists and finally that communism presents the answer to the problem of disability. In doing so I locate disability firmly in ‘the present state of things’ that Marx argued communists must seek to abolish. What is disability? Disability as it is commonly tacitly understood as the category we use to group together people whose bodies or minds are in some way defective. We have a certain conception of how bodies and minds ought to be, and people who deviate too much from that template we call disabled. Disability is usually thought of in terms of what people are not able to do: seeing, concentrating, walking, communicating and so on. Disabled people cannot do some important thing. Their ability to function is impaired. This conception of disability makes two important assumptions. First, it assumes that there is some ‘natural’ set of characteristics that non-defective people have, deviation from which we can call disability. Second, it assumes that society is, in some universal sense, a place where for a person to be living optimally they must be able to do all the things that the non-disabled reification Template Man (and he is a man) can do and that people who can’t present some sort of problem needing to be, by turns, managed, cared for and ignored. But where do these assumptions come from? Template Man is an elusive figure. He is usually only visible by inspecting his opposite. By seeing that a deaf person can’t hear and that a person with fatigue needs to sleep 11 hours a night, we know that Template Man can hear and sleeps eight hours a night. But quite why Template Man must be able to hear, we can’t say. These two features of Template Man are fairly universal throughout the capitalist world. But others are much more variable. For example in some parts of the world Template Man finds that meeting new people and moving jobs and houses comes easily to him. We know this because by examining pathologies such as social anxiety disorder, which are in part characterised by not being able to do these things, we know that Template Man can do these things. But in other parts of the world no such pathologies are apparent and Template Man neither has nor does not have these characteristics. So where is the key to this strange metaphysical entity defined only through deviations from him? Template Man is, of course, the ideal worker as defined by the needs of capital at any given moment and in any given place. Template man is negatively defined precisely because capital has no interest in nature of individual workers, or workers as individuals. Workers must be able to do certain things for certain periods of time. Everything else about them is irrelevant to the needs of capital. Workers must be able to sell their labour according to the needs of a large enough segment of the employing class that they can fulfil their role as commodities on the labour market. Workers must also be able to ‘reproduce’ (feed, rest, clean, relax, etc.) themselves for the cost of the wages they can command and in the time they are not having to sell their ability to work. Workers also need to take part in the purchasing of commodities capitalism uses to reproduce itself, from housing to entertainment to insurance. Bodies and minds which are not well adjusted to the tasks involved in carrying out these functions are disabled. They are at odds with the demands of capital in that place and time. To illustrate using the final example from the paragraph above, social anxiety stands in the way of the sale of labour power in Britain today since capital demands we be able to move around quickly and easily in order to do so and the content of much work in many industries involved interacting in a ‘friendly’ manner with strangers. There are plenty of communities in the world where almost none of the wage labour involves these things, and in these communities there is also no need for the idea of social anxiety disorder, and this is reflected in medical practice. You can't get a social anxiety disorder diagnosis in most of China, for instance (thought this may not last). To give another example, the explosion in Britain of diagnoses of specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, has gone hand in hand with rising demand for more literate, numerate workers and the increased difficulty workers have reproducing themselves outside of work without these skills. We should also notice another implication of the fact that Template Man is negatively defined. Being able to do things well, or do things most people can’t, has nothing to do with disability. Disability is about what a person cannot do, not about what they can. The implications of this are quite important, as we will see later when we examine the first half of the dictum ‘from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs’. The failure of reformism In the reformist notion of disability the problem of disability is a problem of inclusion. The basic category ‘disabled’ is taken as given (or natural), and the task of the reformer is to win changes in the institutions, buildings, etc. that disabled people want to use so that they can start to approach the level of access to things that non-disabled people have. In the technical jargon of the movement ‘reasonable adjustments’ should be made so that a person’s impairment (a characteristic such as chronic illness, autism, down’s syndrome or whatever) does not stop them accessing things as easily as people who do not have impairments. The extent to which they cannot access these things on an equitable basis is the extent to which they are disabled according to this view. As usual, the revolutionary examining the reformists’ approach has a great deal of sympathy for their goals, but also sees the forces that contradict the aims of the reformists, and which will, at a certain point, overpower them. Our aim is to remove such forces, not fight an interminable battle against them. If, as we have seen, disabled people are people who, as a group, cannot be easily integrated into the logic of capital then there is only so far they can go towards equality before capital starts to push them back. Of course, the reformist approach will win victories. Indeed, they will often appeal to the smooth functioning of capital in order to do so. For example, in the UK a program called ‘access to work’ has helped disabled people get jobs by funding equipment, building alterations and so on which mean that the labour power of particular disabled people is raised in value so it can compete in the labour market with that of non-disabled people. To give a simple illustration of how this works, there is no point in a company hiring a wheel chair user if their building cannot be accessed by them, and there’s no point splashing out on ramps if a similar worker can be hired instead, but if the state pays for the ramps, then the wheelchair user represents good value to the employer in the labour market. The state wins in this deal too, since through access to work it shifts people off of benefits and into work, and the scheme payed for itself through the tax revenue of the disabled people it got into employment alone. However, when there is a glut of unemployed labour and when the state is cutting benefits for disabled people anyway, the logic of the scheme breaks down since non-disabled people are there to do the jobs without the state expending money, and disabled people are ‘costing’ the state less anyway. Given that those are the conditions we are now living in, access to work is being scrapped. We should not, of course, deny the important role of disabled people in winning concessions from the state. The dynamic is not simply one of the state managing disabled people so as to maximise profits for bosses. Disabled people, like the working class in general, struggle and win concessions and in doing so alter the operation of capitalism. But when these concessions start to get in the way of the functioning of capital, it becomes extremely difficult to defend them. In times like this, when the conditions of the entire working class are under attack, it should come as no surprise that those sectors of the working class who are least well integrated in capital should be hit the hardest and this includes disabled people. Finally, it is worth noting that as disabled people win more and more concessions from the state due to their desire to participate in capitalist society on an equal footing, the more dependent they will become on the state, and when, as inevitably will happen, the state rolls back their victories, it will hit them much harder. These contradictions within the disability rights movement must lead us on to look for more radical solutions to the problem. The abolition of disability The abolition of disability has been a goal of many social movements and popular fantasies under capitalism. Examples of this abound. Eugenics had its heyday in Nazi Germany, but significantly predates Nazism and is a tendency that is still with us in attempts to make sure no children with down’s syndrome are born by scanning and aborting foetuses, to ‘managing’ the sexual behaviour of people with profound learning difficulties or mental health conditions, to flat out murder dressed up as ‘mercy killing’. Less despicable, but structurally similar, are the techno-fantasies that imagine that with the right medical science, no one need be disabled in the future. What these approaches have in common is that they do not wish to do away with disability; they wish to do away with disabled people. Since disability is not simply a collection of individuals, but a feature of capitalist social relations, their approaches are doomed to failure regardless of how morally acceptable we do or don’t find them. If disability is a feature particular to capitalism, and if communism abolishes capitalism, it follows then that communism abolishes disability. But how does it do this? It’s always dangerous to sketch out, even in the broadest terms, possible future societies. However, we may risk a few comments explaining why disability cannot exist under communism. Taking communist society characterised to be characterised by self management of production and life in general, and where the slogan ‘from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs’ is applied, it is possible to see how disability can be done away with. It is easy to see how the phrase ‘to each according to their needs’ will abolish an aspect of disability. If we produce for need rather than profit there is no reason why we should not chose to produce buildings, equipment, technologies and so on that are designed on the assumption that physical and psychological variation of all sorts is a normal part of human society and that it is right to take this fully into account when producing thing for people to use. The phrase ‘from each according to their ability’ less obviously deals with disability, but is in fact more fundamental to understanding why communism abolishes it. As we have seen, disability is defined by people’s inability to do certain things that they are supposed, as good worker, to be able to do. Under capitalism workers are interchangeable. We are only allowed to produce (or, for that matter, consume) in ways designed to maximise profit. In a society where production is self managed and for use, it would be inconceivable to prevent people from contributing to society on the grounds of what they were unable to do, when there was a great number of things that they could do. In societies with less abundance than western capitalism, there simply has not been the surplus to allow people to go without contributing, albeit often in horrifically exploitative ways. Capitalism has created both the necessary surplus and the logic of production to stop disabled people in particular, and the working class in general, from contributing fully or often at all. Communism, through the self management of production according to the principle that people contribute in the ways they are most able to, overcomes capitalism’s exclusionary practice and overcomes the logic of alienation upon which capitalist production is built. The full and equal integration of all people into the reproduction of society, regardless of factors such as impairment, is surely the goal of communism and the foundation of a society in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

### 1nc link – baudrillard

#### The aff has failed to take any political position in the 1ac – this is because the political theory undergirding their aff explicitly rejects any political program – symbolic reversibility overdetermines possibilities, rendering any gesture toward the communist horizon impossible

**Zander 14** [Pär-Ola, Associate Professor, Aalborg University, Dep’t of Communication and Psychology, “Baudrillard's Theory of Value: A Baby in the Marxist Bath Water?,” *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society*, Volume 26, Issue 3, 2014]

Even after MoP, Baudrillard is still a radical trying to find a way to disrupt the system of capitalism, although the belief in a revolution of the masses is abandoned. By the time of Symbolic Exchange and Death (SD), he has come to the conclusion that signs govern every action, and that includes political actions, too (Baudrillard 1993). Thus, there is no known possibility for any individual, including Baudrillard, to rebel against the sign system. This is why Baudrillard hesitated to put forward a political program. Also, in his later works, Baudrillard accords with Marx in capitalist society was governed by production during a certain period of time, there were class clashes, and that this forced society to develop. According to Baudrillard, however, society reached “the end of production” and thus the end of the Marxist research program and the Marxist worldview. Yet even if Marx is explicitly rejected in MoP, Baudrillard continues to work with problems that are common to Marxism. The effect of Baudrillard's abandonment of Marxism is that his investigation of a theory of value never gets down to particulars but remains a programmatic sketch. The value theory is located in a position that largely rejects historical materialism but that uses dialectics and Marxian economic concepts. This position can be debated, but it makes Baudrillard's edifice look fresh and contemporary—and possible to use for dialogue with thinkers from similar standpoints (see Karatani 2008; Engeström 2005).7

#### Voting aff makes class revolt impossible

**Smith 90** [Tony, Professor of Philosophy at Iowa State, “The Critique of Marxism in Baudrillard's Later Writings,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1990]

From all that has been said thus far it follows that the project of revolutionary action oriented by the rational understanding of a dialectical social reality must be completely abandoned. Any attempt to escape from the simulations of hyperreality only further entraps us in it. Where does this leave us? Baudrillard seems to propose two answers. One suggestion is that a radical project today does not attempt to struggle against the ceaseless production of hyperreality. Instead, the radical today is like a judo master who accepts the force thrown against her, and who even reinforces that force, thereby throwing it off. Baudrillard’s advice to us is to amplify the hyperreality around us, to give in to its fascination, rather than to attempt to resist it. He terms this hyperconformism: “The strategic resistance is that of...the hyperconformist simulation of the very mechanisms of the system, which is a form of refusal and of non-reception”1 (1983a, 108). This amplification may then lead to the “implosion” of the hyperreality, to a catastrophe whose dimensions cannot be predicted or imagined at this point. A second option seems to involve a more active form of resistance. It involves a “challenge” to the production of hyperreality: “Challenge is the opposite of dialogue: it creates a nondialectic, ineluctable space. It is neither a means nor an end: it opposes its own space to political space. It knows neither middle-range nor long-term; its only terms is the immediacy of a response or of death. Everything linear, including history, has an end; challenge alone is without end since it is indefinitely reversible” (1987, 56). “Challenge” in this sense counts as the purest form of defiance, for “defiance always comes from that which has no meaning, no name, no identity—it is a defiance of meaning, of power, of truth” (1983a, 70). For Baudrillard the greatest moments of working-class rebellion were not the goal-directed attempts to seize state power, but those revolts that fit this notion of challenge. Here, too, what was sought was an “implosion,” not a revolution: “The real history of class struggle...(its) only moments were those when the dominated class fought on the basis of its self-denial ‘as such,’ on the basis of the sole fact that it amounted to nothing.. .When the class itself, or a faction of it, prefers to act as a radical non-class, i.e. to act out its own death right away within the explosive structure of capital, when it chooses to implode suddenly instead of seeking political expansion and class hegemony” (1987, 58). But for Baudrillard even this seems to be a matter of the past. The socialist project of a class-based revolution is ruled out today because in a world of hyperreality there cannot be any real classes to serve as revolutionary agents. From this perspective, the very project of socialism is dissolved: “The social will never have had time to lead to socialism, it will have been short-circuited by the hypersocial, by the hyperreality of the social” (1983a, 85). In a world of undifferentiated individuals “the concept of class will have dissolved... into some parodic, extended double, like ‘the mass of workers’ or simply into a retrospective simulation of the proletariat” (1983a, 86). (278)

### link wall – baudrillard

#### Group the link turns – filter your reading of the words “production” and “consumption,” “symbolic exchange,” and “utility” in all of their cards through this piece of evidence, which is the only one that systematically defines them engages in a comparison with Marx’s reading – Baudrillard’s totalizing criticism of the possibility of change is a baseless rejection that destroys politics

Zavarzadeh 95 [Mas’ud Zavarzadeh, retired professor of English at Syracuse University, Post-Ality: Marxism and Postmodernism, Washington, D.C. : Maisonneuve Press, 1995., Post-Ality: The (Dis)Simulations of Cybercapitalism, pages 13-20]

To recapitulate, the ostensible basis for the shift from production to consumption in post-al theory is that "Because it reduces the need for raw materials, labor and time, space and capital, knowledge becomes the central resource of the advanced economy" (Toffler, Powershift 88). The advanced, symbolic economy, in turn, creates such socio-cultural complexities that no relation of necessity ("de- termination") holds any longer among the highly layered political, cultural and theoretical practices. Each practice in the social formation is (semi-)autonomous and thus not subject to the laws of an "outside," such as the "labor theory of value." In this post-al situation, the individual is the site of the free play of desire: the alea, contingency, and differance annul the laws of motion of labor, and "consumption" becomes the unique expression of subjectivity as an ever moving, indeterminate and shifting frontier. In short, the dogma is that "The Fordist era of mass-production workers and mass consumers confirmed the sense that individual interests could be read off with some confidence from the social blocs formed by production" (Leadbeater 139). In contrast to the Fordist regime in which a "social bloc" (a code for 'class" constructed in the social relations of "production") could determine subjectivity, the post-al scene of the social defies such lavvs of determi- nation of class and production. Consequently, in the post-al society, "the theatre of consumption has become more important. Choice in consumption, lifestyle, sexuality is more important as an assertion of identity. The dynamics of most people's lives is where they can assert their difference from others" (140). The anti-productionist theories (putting aside the pop post-ality of Toffler and Gingrich) have a wide theoretical and political range-from the postmarxist ("New Times") views of Leadbeater, Aronowitz and ludic feminists, and queer theorists to the speculative philosophical writings of Georges Bataille on "general economy." In this essay, however, I will focus on the writings of Baudrillard since I have discussed in great length these other theories especially the work of Georges Bataille and the role of his notion of "general economy" in the consumptionist theories of post-ality (Theory and Its Other). I begin with Baudrillard's violent era- sure of what he calls (in The Mirror of Production) the "spectre of production." "Today," Baudrillard elaborates in his other texts, "we are surrounded by there- emergence of "consumption" to be "a fundamental mutation in the ecology of human species" (Selected Writings 29). Since my focus in this text is on the theo- retical issues rather than historical analysis, I will simply note that Baudrillard's notion that a "consumer society" emerged "today" is a capitalist story and an ahistorical fantasy. The pioneering writings of Neil Kendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb (The Birth o f Consumer Society: The Commercialization o f Eighteenth- Century England) as well as the histories of consumption and consumerism that have been brought out since the publication of their work in 1982, have clearly demonstrated-in spite of their historical and theoretical limits-that consumer society is closely tied to the rise of capitalism and the regime of profit: the hege- mony of exchange value. Baudrillard's "consumption" is a totalizing concept and not identical with the traditional functional consumption of, for example, food for survival. Rather it is a post-al consumption which is an end in itself, an articulation of an "identity" and an "individuality" that he believes is an expression of those deeper human needs such as giving and receiving: not in a causal and exchange circuit but giving without expecting to receive-that is, for its own sake (pleasure), prodigality and destruction. His notion of "destruction" as an original human need is a conceptual condensation of the conservative views of Bataille and Joseph A.Schumpteter's economic writings (Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy) who believed that"creative destruction" and the "social" rather than "economic" forces are central to historical change. For Baudrillard "destruction" means a return to noncommodified and elemental social relations by removing "use" and "value" from an object and thus situating it outside the sphere of causal "exchange." It is a process that in Forget Foucault (41) he calls "disaccumulation." For Baudrillard, these anti-productionist, anti-utilitarian acts that affirm the freedom of humans are repressed in capitalism, which is obsessed with "use," "utility" and "trade" (giving for receiving). The Marxist critique of capitalism, Baudrillard believes, is inadequate because it "mirrors" the capitalist preoccupation with production, which is the embodiment of the control ethos of utility, usefulness and functionalism-those very beliefs that are, according to him, responsible for the domination and repres-markable conspicuousness of consumption and affluence," and he regards the on of human beings. Capitalist domination can be terminated, according to Baudrillard, only by those practices that place human beings beyond the regime of exchange and end the rule of utility. He calls the ensemble of these post-exchange relations, "sym- bolic exchange": exchanges which are anti-productionist and in the very process of exchange negate the circuit of exchange. In formulating his notion of an extra- economic relations, Baudrillard falls back on Mauss's The Gift. In his book, Mauss writes that an awareness of the practice of gift giving in "archaic societies" will resurrect the "elemental" and bring about a radical shift in social life in a way that "once again we shall discover ... the joy of giving in public, the delight in generous artistic expenditure, the pleasure of hospitality in the public or private feast" (57). Mauss's interpretation of "gift" is part of his larger discontent with "economism": a theme developed in all theories of "consumption" and turned into an axis of inter- pretation of post-al society by Bataille whose own anti-economistic lessons are the frame of intelligibility of such post-al theorists as Baudrillard, Derrida, Lyotard and various post-al marxists. For Baudrillard, it is through "symbolic exchange"-the gift that places the subject outside economic relations-and not class struggle that a genuine revolution is set in motion and humanity is set free. The symbolic social relation" he writes in The Mirror of Production is the uninterrupted cycle of giving and receiving, which, in primitive exchange, includes the consumption of the 'surplus' and deliberate anti- production whenever accumulation (the thing not exchanged, taken and not returned, earned and not wasted, produced and not destroyed) risks breaking reciprocity and begins to generate power. It is this symbolic relation that the political economy model (of capital), whose only process is that of laws of value, hence appropriation and indefinite accumulation, can no longer produce. It is its radical negation. What is produced is no longer symbolically exchanged and what is not symbolically exchanged (the commodity) feeds a social relation of power and exploitation" ('143). This noninstrumental "consumption" is a semiotic act; "a system of communication" (Selected Writings 46), a mode of forming and disseminating "mean- ings" above and beyond the functionality of consumption. "A washing machine serves as equipment and plays as an element of comfort, or of prestige, etc. It is the field of play that is specifically the field of consumption" (Selected Writings 44; emphasis added). When one buys a pair of "designer" jeans, one does not simply respond to a "need" (to keep warm, for instance) but acts on the pulsation of "desire": to express oneself and in doing so become involved in a purposeless practice that is essentially an aesthetic act ("play"). For Baudrillard, post-ality is the articulation of this mode of consumption: early capitalism is marked by functional consumption which perpetuates production while post-al capitalism ("consumer society") is a break from this functionalism. Consumption, in post-al capitalism becomes an end in itself, an "excessive play: a sheer "waste"-a carnival, a regime of festivities and prodigalities. Consumption in Baudrillard's theory, then, is not determined by such classical Marxist concepts as "use-value" and "exchange" value but by "sign value." The signs and meanings produced through prodigal expenditure are signs that cannot be easily absorbed back into the established system of codes that now controls all significations. Consumption is both anti- production and anti-regulatory: it is a process of excessive signification that cannot be contained by the dominant mode of signification. "Conspicuous consumption" for Baudrillard is then essentially a resistant semiotic act-an act of intervention in the order of established meanings and rep- resentations legitimated by capitalism. Prodigal "consumption" is, according to him, a' radical negation of capitalism. The act of consumption therefore is not exhausted by its instrumentality and usefulness (it is, in terms of his later writings, a mode of "seduction" a form of opposition to production and procreation); it is the signifier of an irradicable negative (that cannot be assimilated in a Marxist dialecti- cal synthesis) and constitutes the principle of post-al mutation. The form of capital- ism that could be analyzed in Marxist terms of political economy, Baudrillard maintains, has ended and, an entirely new analytics that he calls, the "political economy of the sign" (Mirror 121) is needed to make sense of post-al capitalism. However, Baudrillard's understanding of the Marxist concept of "production" as a "mirror" is not simply a misrecognition but is also ideological in the sense that the logic of its misrecognition is a class logic: it legitimates the (economic) interests of the ruling class. The Marxist theory of "production," contrary to Baudrillard, Habermas, Butler, Cornel West and other critics of the "production paradigm," does not reduce all human activities to "labor"; rather· it is a theory of the emancipation of humans from necessity and the freedom from the capitalist form of labor. Baudrillard's notion of "symbolic exchange" is simply a post-al colonial nostalgia for "primitive" society; a transhistorical utopia for the North Atlantic elite who has freed itself from necessity-at the cost of the labor of the other-and now regards the main question of humanity to be not "production" but destructive "consumption." For this class, life is lived ludically: the playfulness that erases the use-value of the objects of necessity in order to turn them into moments of the aesthetic sublime. Post-al theories, in general, proclaim to "deconstruct" the metaphysics of labor. Consumptionist theories after Baudrillard, however, have used the deconstruction of "production" as their foundation for proving the autonomy of capital from labor and consumption from class/production. One of the main signs of post-al society, according to Stuart Hall, is that "there is a leading role for con- sumption, reflected in such things as greater emphasis on choice and product dif- ferentiation, on marketing, packaging and design, on 'targeting' of consumers by life-style, taste and culture rather than by the Registrar General's categories of so- cial class" ("The Meaning of New Times" 118). One of the un-saids of the displace- ment of production by consumption is the notion that capitalism is a response not to profit but to the "free choice" (desire) of individuals: it is the consumption and desire for difference that drives capital, and, as such, capitalism is not only not antagonistic to human needs but is in fact a direct response to them. "The private control of the sovereign consumer" is portrayed in these reactionary theories as "real, visible and tangible" (Mulgan, "The Power of the Weak" 358). Consumption in post-al theory has become the trope of the indeterminacy of production. In its privileging of "consumption," post-al theory privileges individual "choice" over human "needs": it is, in short, a class theory. Thus, even though the displacement of production is a move made in the name of epistemological neces- sity-to provide a more accurate knowledge of capitalism now-it is, in practice, an ideological alibi for what Hall's statement clearly marks: the removal of "class struggle" from the scene of the social in the interest of increasing the freedom of choice from the upper middle classes within the existing socio-economic structures. These critics announce the end of socialism and with it the outdatedness of the praxis of abolishing private property (that is, congealed alienated labor) in the post- al moment. Instead of abolishing private property, they envision an enlightened radical democracy to supplant socialism las Laclau. Fukuyama, Mouffe, Cornell West, Aronowitz, Butler and others have advised) and make property holders of each citizen. This, needless to say, is the Thatcherist notion of property-owning democracy represented as a radical differential socialism. For theorists of radical democracy, it is only by means of conspicuous and prodigal "owning" (which en· abies consumption to become transfunctional and symbolic) that one can be resituated outside the system of exchange and be set free from the repressive utili- tarianism of capitalism. The "sign" (constructed through conspicuous consump- tion) and not "labor" is the formative force in post-al capitalism, and, therefore, it is the "control of the code" (Mirror 122) and not seizing of the means of produc- tion that is the urgent question for political struggle in the post-al moment. The post-al question, to be clear, is no longer the end of exploitation in the form ofputting an end to the extraction of surplus labor (communism) but a more equi- table distribution ("consumption") among people, regardless of their race, gender, sexualities, nationalities, of the surplus value produced by the exploitation of the proletariat.

#### Group their “not our Baudrillard” arguments – whatever politics they think the aff could result in are mutually exclusive with effective class warfare – Baudrillard’s theory of symbolic exchange says that non-quantifiable signs overdetermine any system of exchange, meaning that the objective analysis and class-based ideology required to orient politics toward the Communist horizon are impossible – we have a litany of other reasons that the core philosophical tenets undergirding their opaque claims preclude the alt:

#### --The fundamental thesis behind their argument rejects production focus

**Smith 90** [Tony, Professor of Philosophy at Iowa State, “The Critique of Marxism in Baudrillard's Later Writings,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1990]

Marx’s analysis focused on contradictions within modes of production. The most basic contradiction is that between the class with a fundamental interest in maintaining the given mode of production and the class with a fundamental interest in attaining a new set of institutions. These classes are defined in terms of their place in the system of production. The former class appropriates the labor of the latter, although ideologies will be generated that attempt to mask this truth. The latter class is both exploited at the point of production and enjoys a precarious and incomplete satisfaction of its needs, although here, too, ideologies will be generated that distort this state of affairs. In the capitalist mode of production capital and wage labor form these two poles. The task of Marxist theory is to undermine the ideologies supporting capital and to orient revolutionary struggles to replace capitalism with socialism. For Baudrillard all of the above is hopelessly out of date. The Marxist account utterly fails to appreciate the specificity of our postmodern condition. Baudrillard’s rejection of Marxism can be summarized under four headings, four ways in which Baudrillard claims to be beyond Marx. (275-6)

#### --Symbolic exchange undermines objective basis of class critique

**Smith 90** [Tony, Professor of Philosophy at Iowa State, “The Critique of Marxism in Baudrillard's Later Writings,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1990]

Marxist discourse essentially involves truth claims that are supposedly grounded by objectively existing referents. In specific, the theory of needs was a crucial component of Marx’s critique of capitalism. “Unmet social needs” provided a naturally existing reference point in terms of which the failures of capitalism could be objectively measured. In this manner the truth of the critique could be grounded. Baudrillard, however, rejects the notion that there is some transcendental referent for the signs that we use, grounding the truth of our assertions. He speaks of the “liquidation of all referentials” (1983b, 4). “Needs,” for example, are not natural or given, and thus cannot ground the truth of Marxist discourse. (276)

#### --Simulation makes critique of ideology impossible

**Smith 90** [Tony, Professor of Philosophy at Iowa State, “The Critique of Marxism in Baudrillard's Later Writings,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1990]

The concept of ideology implies that some reality has been falsely presented. The concept of ideology critique implies that it is possible to present the truth of that reality. If reality has been replaced by hyperreality, and if the notion of truth must be abandoned along with that of reference, then it follows at once that the concepts of ideology and ideology critique cannot be retained. Baudrillard does not shy away from drawing this conclusion. Today “it is no longer a question of the false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real” (1983b, 25). Here, too, Marxism must be rejected, for “it is always a false problem to want to restore the truth beneath the simulacrum” (1983b, 48). (277)

### at: baudrillard k of marx

#### K of “being productive” conflates utility before and after capitalist modernity – they reify the modern meaning of “utility” as an expression of DESIRE which is an independent impact turn to their deployment of affect in this round.

**Goux 01** – (2001, Jean-Joseph, Lawrence Favrot Professor of French and chair of French Studies at Rice University, “Utility: Equivocation and Demoralisation,” Discourse 23.3 (2001) 3-23)

Critiquing utilitarianism, then, cannot mean rising up against an implicit morality that valorises only what is strictly necessary according to an anthropological and naturalist a priori determination of human needs, which would be those considered elementary or vital. This form of utilitarianism (which in the extreme case might lay claim to a certain Aristotelianism or Thomism) is not only nowhere to be found in political economy, but, as I have tried to show, a rigorous and explicit denial of it is at the very origin of the constitution of political economy in its claims to be a science, that is, to be morally disengaged and indifferent. This claim is strictly and systematically allied with utilitarianism and which deserves to be investigated in its own right. To critique utilitarianism could only mean to cast suspicion on the roots, the causes, the contiguous elements and the end results of this emphatic axiological indifference, this radical and inaugural de-moralization which is perhaps not as innocent and disinterested as it would like to claim. It is inscribed in a very powerful structure that is not foreign—I will return to this later—to the hegemonic logic of the general equivalent.

Defined extensively in this way, utility leaves nothing outside itself. It suffers no reserve or alternative. The ring (is it the alliance [End Page 14] of symbolic exchange?) or the piece of lace (metonymy of the superfluous?), the ornament and the monument, the legendary gadget (of consumer society) or the survival rations of popular soup, the insolent luxury of the rich and the medicine needed by the dying man, the stupidly ostentatious detail of a fashion that is as arbitrary as it is ephemeral and the weapon that kills, the relic of filial piety and murderous poison—there is nothing that does not enter into the category of the useful, if only it is at some time or another desired or sought after by a subjectivity ready to place a price on it in order to have it or to keep it. If this inventory has a surrealistic air, in the manner of Lautréamont's unforeseen encounters, or if it seems compatible with an aesthetic of "anything at all," this compatibility is perhaps not by chance. Like the strange poetic quality that suddenly infuses Charles Gide's style when he writes: "[ . . . ] reasonable, stupid or guilty. bread, diamond or opium. it matters not." This sounds like Baudelaire unmasking the features of modernity.

Neither the attempt by Pareto to avoid the terminological equivocation of utility by inventing the learned word "ophelimite" (from the Greek ophelimos)—whose coinage as a neologism would exclude all contamination with ordinary language—nor the attempt by Charles Gide—who suggested the term "desirability," which, he writes, has the advantage "of indicating no prejudice concerning the moral or immoral, the reasonable or unreasonable character of the desire"—came to be accepted. As if the equivocation were not simply a misunderstanding of vocabulary, but was a necessity and an advantage rather than a regrettable source of misinterpretation. Must we not conclude from this persistence that economics draws some profit from this equivocation? That it is in its interest to create the ambiguity even as it dissipates it? For is it not this axiological indifference, at once denied and affirmed, that invents desire as a pure category, as a subjective, variable, ephemeral desire unchained from every natural, cosmic or metaphysical order, an autonomized desire disintricated from that which founds it? Is it not this category of desire, unheard of up to then, that economics brought forth?

For we would be wrong to see in this imperialism of utility thus defined a simple and insignificant tautology. What intervenes here is a radical operation of de-moralization (but one which establishes the ontological sovereignty of "desire"); and it is all the more totalitarian in that it leaves intact none of the external instances that one might oppose to it. The radical notion of utility undoes all the oppositions that the traditional and normative sense of utility allowed one [End Page 15] to posit. It has a deconstructive power in relation to all notions of the type natural/artificial, reasonable/fanciful, rational/irrational, necessary/superfluous, serious/frivolous, symbolic/utilitarian, arbitrary/grounded, noble/ignoble, moral/immoral, legitimate/illegitimate, and even, paradoxically, useful/harmful.

If we fail to recognize this enveloping force, we risk falling short of the true stakes, which it puts into play. Baudrillard's partial and illusory critique 5 of the notions of use-value and utility bypasses the more radical operation that is at issue in the ideology of economic liberalism. What is presented as a ground-shaking discovery (the inherence of exchange-value in use-value, the existence of a "code of utility," etc.) that would supposedly confront the political economy of use-value and utility, is in fact nothing but a consequence of the rupture which political economy itself introduces by means of the radical notion of utility (a consequence made more visible, indeed, by the democratization of "useless" consumption). If value can so obviously appear to escape from a naturalist and finalist metaphysics of "needs," to become, for example, a "sign-value" and to enter into a differential code of utility like fashion (which I am not contesting), this is because it was from the beginning (in an exemplary way in Condillac), and ever more clearly (Say, Jevons, Walras, Pareto, etc.), exonerated from all predetermined normative and functional signification. Not only does this disjunction not contradict a properly economic logic, it is in perfect agreement with it, is inherent to it, and is foreseen in its constitutive act of birth—which consists precisely in this vigorous gesture of detachment and autonomisation which attempts to liquidate all theological and naturalist allegiance claiming to determine the needs of man in general and a priori. Thus the critique of Baudrillard, though it might work wonders against an Aristotelian or Thomist interpretation of use (with which, in fact, he credits Marx), in no way touches the utilitarian base and in fact only serves to confirm its solidity and its extension. Hence the fascination that this pseudo-critique without alternative eventually confesses having for a culture given over to simulacra and seduction, and in which, following the sound principle affirmed by J.-B. Say, supply precedes and creates demand.

We can add that if reflection on luxury (to which every thinker of the eighteenth century felt obliged to contribute) soon disappeared from economic thought, this is not because the bourgeoisie was hostile to luxury; rather, it is because in constructing the concept of utility it went beyond the opposition between the luxurious and the necessary. All questions concerning the ethical motivation of expenditure disappeared. The fact that the notion of luxury (and the interrogation of envy, "jealous vanity," the desire to distinguish [End Page 16] oneself from one's neighbor, etc.) was no longer a preoccupation for the economists of the nineteenth century, although it had flourished a century earlier, is the simple consequence of the axiological indifference of economics. Condillac, for example, although he still distinguishes between natural and artificial needs (both of which are seen as determining the value of goods, that is, their "utility"), immediately recognizes the great relativity of this distinction, and therefore the social and historical relativity of the notion of luxury. "What is a luxury for one people is not a luxury for another; and for the same people, what has been a luxury may cease to be" (Le Commerce 90). The most sought after things appear first as an excess, a luxury, but then gradually come into common usage, thus attesting to "progress in the arts." Thus Condillac is led to his own theory of "sign-value" and of "distinction" when he remarks that potatoes would be a luxury on our tables if our fields did not produce them, for then the rich, "whose taste is in proportion to the rarity of the dishes, would deem them excellent" (Le Commerce 192). The price of what one consumes can therefore be entirely determined by the gaze of the other. If potatoes were rare, it would indeed be a social sign of wealth and distinction that one would be eating potatoes, and not only their nutritive substance. Furthermore, when speaking of a capital city where wealth abounds and frivolity and fashion reign, Condillac finally states: "Caprice gave value [donnait du prix] to the most negligeable things: if you did not enjoy them, you wanted to appear to enjoy them, because you assumed that other people did" (Le Commerce 335). Political economy did not wait for Veblen or the theoreticians of consumer society to liberate the notion of use-value and utility from all naturalist anchorings and to include the gaze of the other in the intensity of desire. This is even a systematically a part of its act of birth; and we can see here the role and the enveloping power of the utilitarian philosophical base that makes this operation possible.

The concept of utility was constructed to be inclusive enough to absorb all possible oppositions (almost all of which have a moral origin) between the necessary and the superfluous, between expenditure that is reasonable or ruinous, between consumption that is serious or frivolous, thoughtful or capricious, functional or fanciful. This enlarged concept therefore dispenses with all meditation on the moral meaning of consumption, for it has in fact only one goal: to favor consumption by every means. Anything that can be the object of a demand, whether from elementary necessity or caprice, fantasy, vanity, fashion, etc., acquires by this very fact a "utility" and a "use-value." It is at the moment when luxury is no longer perceived as a moral problem and enters into the field of economics that it [End Page 17] also ceases to be a special object for the economist. And it is quite clear that in this rhetoric of the useful, in this operation of scientific purification which will claim its ethical indifference in order better to define its object, it is nothing other than a certain law of the market that is demanding to be theorized and, finally, in a subtle form, to be legitimized. The middle ages had its theology and its casuistry; the modern (and, if we hold to this denomination, the post-modern) world has its economic science.

#### Baudrillard’s K of Marx is just as totalizing as the systems he criticizes, except worse because he basically has zero warrant – if you don’t understand the specific reasoning for their claim, assume it’s nonsense

**Zander 14** [Pär-Ola, Associate Professor, Aalborg University, Dep’t of Communication and Psychology, “Baudrillard's Theory of Value: A Baby in the Marxist Bath Water?,” *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society*, Volume 26, Issue 3, 2014]

The Problems with Baudrillard's Anti-Marxism Baudrillard has lined up a number of arguments for abandoning Marxism, and perhaps as a result, his value theory has not attracted wide attention. Nevertheless, I will argue both that we can see some major weaknesses with the abandonment and also for the potential in his value theory. Although Smith (1990) dealt with Baudrillard's arguments in MoP, additional consideration is warranted. Before this attack on Baudrillard's late position, I want to highlight that his transition from Marxism to anti-Marxism does not mean the rejection of all his previous insights before MoP. It should be noted that the French subtitle of Mirror of Production is critique du matérialisme historique. Baudrillard concentrates his attack primarily on historical materialism, which is only a single part of the Marxian system, although some of the central tenets of dialectical materialism also get their share of critique. Baudrillard positions himself beyond needs, beyond truth, beyond ideology, and beyond revolution. Smith (1990) has convincingly refuted all these claims by showing that they are either untenable or tenable but compatible with the writings of Marx. But an important criticism not mentioned by Smith concerns Baudrillard's critique of historical universalism. The Marxist conceptions of (for example) history and material production are developed within the temporal context of capitalism. Marx conceives history as the history of modes of production, and thus periods before capitalism can also be analyzed through production, the concept is no longer temporal, and the Marxist analysis becomes universal (see Baudrillard 1975, 48). Baudrillard objects to this universalism, peculiarly enough by merely postulating that there were no dialectics in primitive societies. Poster (1975) rightly points out that this argument is problematic in several ways. Poster's strongest argument states that, if we accept that applying any contemporary concept to the past is a kind of universalism, Baudrillard is defeated by his own argument. Poster observes that Baudrillard's texts are infested with such “universalism.” For instance, his semiotic concepts are problematic, as he employs them on all stages of human societies without justification. Another problem is that Baudrillard has framed his critique so that it is in need of empirical support. He claims that there are no longer any exchange-value transactions untouched by sign values. That begs for empirical evidence, and the onus is on Baudrillard, if he is to be believed, rather than other social scientists. There may be some nonempirical explanation as to why exchange-value transactions must be dominated by sign values, but that is not the way Baudrillard frames the discussion. Instead, he treats current trends and possibilities as finalities, treats tendencies as realized states (see Kellner 1989), and extrapolates wildly from interesting insights (see Smith 1990). Related to this, Baudrillard makes no qualification or delimitation as to the scope of his ideas. Indeed, he tends to totalize the system of the society. This is very problematic because totalization is the germ source that will cause Baudrillard to rule out all political strategies, including his own theoretical interventions. In his later works, Baudrillard positions himself, in Smith's (1990) words, “beyond truth,” yet Baudrillard's arguments (in particular those in MoP) are made in such a way as to invite empirical evidence. He extrapolates from singular cases in his search for a strategy. From studies in fashion (CS), goods consumption (MoP), and French Communist Party activity (UB), Baudrillard wildly extrapolates that every political activity has one or more sign values as its objective, making any political activity futile (including even gifts and Saussurean anagrams). But this is an unwarranted extrapolation. A political activity that is use-value-oriented is conceivable, and theorization may also be proffered as an act governed by use value. A final problem is that his later theories generally overlook or neglect many aspects of many people's current social experience. This does not necessarily make the theory false—but it needs to be taken into account (Kellner 1989). How does Baudrillard respond to the many third-world workers who feel resentment over their labor being exploited? According to Baudrillard, they should rather be immersed in sign-value-related activity, such as identity management. He leaves unarticulated whether the perception of social injustice is exactly that. Before there is reason to take Baudrillard's later standpoints seriously, they need to be grounded in empirical investigations, or at least theoretically justified. What stands clear from the analysis of Baudrillard's attack on Marxism is that, while some of it is relevant, the attack is far too weak to justify abandoning his own value theory altogether—his theory from “within”—from the power of that analysis alone. And while Baudrillard simply abandoned Marxism because he thought that he had proven it completely untenable, there is no problem in continuing down the path from which he diverted.

#### Their alternative indicts are wild speculation, not rational argument. Class critique is a more effective and sustainable strategy than aff

**Smith 90** [Tony, Professor of Philosophy at Iowa State, “The Critique of Marxism in Baudrillard's Later Writings,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1990]

Two questions can be considered under this heading: (a) Does Baudrillard present a compelling case against the project of revolutionary class struggle? (b) Does he present an acceptable alternative? (a) We have seen that Baudrillard holds that the idea of a revolution furthering the interests of the working classes is senseless today. His argument was that in the age of hyperreality the very concept of class becomes a “parody,” a “retrospective simulation.” Baudrillard does not really claim that there are no classes today, but only that class struggle is useless. He holds that there is no dialectic within the present epoch that could possibly point to socialism’s being on the historical agenda. “Once capital itself has become its own myth, or rather an interminable machine, aleatory, something like a social genetic code, it no longer leaves any room for a planned reversal; and this is its true violence” (1987, 112). Arguments for the inevitable success of socialism are surely suspect. But are arguments for the inevitability of the failure of socialism any less suspect? Baudrillard’s case for the thesis that capital “no longer leaves any room for a planned reversal” appeals to the fact that in the industrialized West the labor union apparatus has been integrated into the bourgeois order. “Strikes...are incorporated like obsolescence in objects, like crisis in production... There is no longer any strikes or work, but...a scenodrama (not to say melodrama) of production, collective dramaturgy upon the empty stage of the social” (1987,48). The wild extrapolation here is transparent. From the present relative passivity of the labor movement, Baudrillard jumps to the conclusion that all capital/wage labor confrontations in principle can never be more than the mere simulation of conflict. He completely rules out in principle any possibility of there ever being dissident movements within the labor movement that successfully unite workers with consumers, women, racially oppressed groups, environmental activists, and so on in a common struggle against capital. He completely rules out in principle the possibility of a dynamic unfolding of this struggle to the point where capital’s control of investment decisions is seriously, called into question. He makes a wild extrapolation from the fact that these things are not on the agenda today to the conclusion that in principle they cannot ever occur. To say that he fails to provide any plausible arguments for such a strong position is to put things far too mildly. For a Marxist, capitalism remains a contradictory system. Baudrillard is correct when he states that some phenomena of contemporary capitalism make struggles for social change more difficult (for instance, the proliferation of electronically transmitted images celebrating hyperconsumerism). However, he fails to see that such things are systematically connected to other sorts of phenomena that may have quite different implications, such as increasing stratification, increasing extraction of surplus-value through job speed-ups, environmental degradation, the gradual delegitimation of established political parties, and so on. By overlooking the contradictions that pervade contemporary capitalism, Baudrillard is blind to the possibility that capitalism remains vulnerable to crises and to social movements aiming at its transformation. (b) Baudrillard’s alternatives to organized struggle against capital are hyperconformism and defiance. Examples of the former range from yuppies who accumulate the latest electronic gadgets with the proper demeanor of hip irony, to the crack-dealing B-Boys whose obsession with designer labels and BMWs simulates the hypermaterialism of the very system that has destroyed their communities. Rampant hyperconformism of this sort may very well lead the system to implode, from the waste, environmental damage, and community disintegration imposed by hyperconsumerism. The only problem is that by the time this implosion occurs it may be too late for the human species to pick up the pieces. Baudrillard’s crypto-existentialist odes to defiance perhaps present a more attractive option. However, these odes romanticize defeat. They honor the memory of rebels not for the heroism exemplified in their defeats, and not for the lessons that can be learned from those defeats. It is the defeats themselves that meet with Baudrillard’s approval, the fact that the rebels were “acting out (their) own death right a way... instead of seeking political expansion and class hegemony.” This form of implosion is like a fireworks display that brilliantly illuminates the landscape when it goes off, only to dissolve at once, leaving everything immersed in darkness as before. And this form of implosion is an option for suicide. In my view, neither of Baudrillard’s proposals provides a satisfactory alternative to revolutionary Marxism, however unfashionable the latter may be today. (284)

#### Baudrillard’s rejection of truth is laughable – can’t undermine all of Marxist theory

**Smith 90** [Tony, Professor of Philosophy at Iowa State, “The Critique of Marxism in Baudrillard's Later Writings,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1990]

Baudrillard is quite correct to insist that needs are socially and culturally defined. But he is mistaken if he believes that Marx was not aware of this.3 More importantly, he is wrong when he extrapolates from this to the conclusion that needs are solely a matter of codes, systems of signifiers that refer to no referent. In its own way, the view that states that human needs have no natural or biological basis is as one-sided—and therefore false—as the sociobiology position that ignores the historical and cultural component of our nature. Rather than developing this point, however, I would like to concentrate on Baudrillard’s more general claim. The denial that we can say anything true about the nature of our needs is just a specific case of a general rejection of the referent, a rejection of our being able to formulate truth claims regarding the signified in language. Let us consider some of the examples Baudrillard discusses. Baudrillard has a very plausible insight into the Watergate saga of the Nixon era. The Washington Post employed precisely the same undercover methods in breaking the story as the Nixon administration employed in planning the initial break-ins. Also, the source for the Post's stories, “Deep Throat,” may well have been someone within the Nixon administration itself. All of this is interesting enough. But at this point Baudrillard heads for the stratosphere, and extrapolates from the fact that in this case we may never know the truth of the matter to the conclusion that the very category of “truth” must be abandoned (1983b, 26-27). Or take another of Baudrillard’s cases: In the Franco years Franco ordered the public execution of some Basque nationalists. Baudrillard points out that this was Franco’s gift to Western Europe. Western Europe could piously complain about Franco, thereby indulging in pompous and pointless self-congratulations regarding its own liberalism. And this response was, in turn, Western Europe’s gift to Franco. The attacks on Spain allowed him to solidify his own rule by appealing to Spanish national unity. It is certainly true that in this complex web is it hard to distinguish posturing from the facts of the matter. But Baudrillard derives a much stronger conclusion: “Where is the truth in all that, when such collusions admirably knit together without their authors ever knowing it?” (1983b, 34). This implies that the category “truth” would only have validity if states of affairs corresponded to the subjective intentions of the social actors who brought them about. This is surely a wild extrapolation. Baudrillard himself has illuminated at least an essential part of the truth of this situation, and so he is hardly in a position to claim that this sort of situation undermines the category of truth. Anyone deriving this conclusion from the case being considered ought to feel dizzy. But anyone attempting to reject on these grounds a theory such as Marx’s that makes truth claims ought to think twice. Two more general points can be made here. First, Baudrillard presupposes that a cognitive validity claim necessarily implies a claim to possess absolute truth. This does not follow. One can hold a fallibilist epistemology while rejecting Baudrillard’s complete abandonment of the concept of “truth.” Second, Habermas has considered a number of postmodern thinkers who have followed Nietzsche in abandoning the notion of truth (1987). He has shown that none of them has avoided self-referential paradox. They all assert as true that there is no truth. Baudrillard must be added to this list.4 (280-2)

#### Move to hyperreality/simulation proves fundamentals of marxism correct

**Smith 90** [Tony, Professor of Philosophy at Iowa State, “The Critique of Marxism in Baudrillard's Later Writings,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1990]

Baudrillard begins with an interesting insight. Capitalism has indeed become so productive that the danger of producing commodities that are not absorbed by the market is ever present. This means that great effort must continually be made to create demand for products. When products are cultural signs the demand for them will not be limited by any functional use those products may have. In this sense, there is no longer any sphere of production separate from the sphere of culture.2 From this observation Baudrillard extrapolates to the claims that any attempt to consider production independently of culture is mistaken. A number of things can be noted in response. First, producers for the market have always had to concern themselves with demand manipulation, which typically occurs through appeal to cultural images. Marx was well aware that production is ultimately interconnected with consumption in this manner: “The needs of consumption determine production. Mutual interaction takes place between the different moments” (Marx 1973, 100). Second, it is true that the modes of demand manipulation have shifted with the evolution of electronic media. However, it does not necessarily follow that the consumption of images is now more crucial to the present stage of capital than the production of material products. After all, the very hyperreality of which Baudrillard speaks requires a vast expansion of material production. Television sets, VCRs, satellites, satellite discs, and so on, must all be produced. Finally, we cannot extrapolate from the new forms of demand manipulation to the conclusion that the question of the ownership and control of the means of production is not of crucial significance. There is a tremendous concentration of capital in the ownership and control of the means of producing messages. Robert Maxwell and Rupert Murdoch have created global media empires that spread through book, magazine, and newspaper publishing, TV station ownership, TV program planning, cable TV network ownership, satellite TV distribution, and electronic hardware production. Time and Warners have merged into a media conglomerate with revenues of $10 billion a year. The next Madonna wannabe will be signed by Wamers, given an HBO special, reviewed in Time, and appear on the cover of People in a hyperreal blitz, all as a result of a decision made by headquarters in New York. Surely a consideration of such matters cannot be avoided if we wish to understand the dynamics of our hyperreal postmodern world. Baudrillard cannot possibly provide any sort of argument that his thought leads us beyond Marx’s concern with the ownership and control of the means of production. Marxism has not suddenly become outdated with the rise of the electronic mass media. The age of hyperreality confirms Marx’s essential insight that the concentration and centralization of control of the means of production is inherent in the logic of capital, and that this generates alien social forces standing above the members of society. (279-80)

#### Marx better understands the nature of reality- Baudrillard’s theories are logically untennable

**Smith 90** [Tony, Professor of Philosophy at Iowa State, “The Critique of Marxism in Baudrillard's Later Writings,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1990]

Marx’s category of ideology depends upon there being an underlying reality that has been masked. In the age of hyperreality, however, Baudrillard insists that this cannot be the case. When it comes to the question of social reality, there is no doubt that Baudrillard once again begins with an important insight. Baudrillard’s notion of simulacrum tremendously illuminates our contemporary fate. An Italian girl from Michigan with a fairly ordinary voice has become an icon because of her sophisticated manipulation of the signs of sexuality in countless5 MTV videos. The producers of colored sugarwater have built vast corporate empires by associating sugarwater with the signs of youth in endlessly repeated commercials. In both cases, these signs do not refer back to the commodity in question; they refer to nothing at all. And yet they are more real than real; they are hyperreal. Baudrillard is at his best when he shows how contemporary politics is also nothing but a series of meaningless simulations. “Propaganda and advertising fuse in the same marketing and merchandising of objects and ideologies” (1983b, 125). A better description than his of our Redemopublicratic system could not be given: “Simulation of opposition between two parties, absorption of their respective objectives, reversibility of the entire discourse one into the other” (1983b, 133). Politics too has been taken over by the hyperreal. Consider the manner in which Bush wrapped himself in the American flag. What did this signify? To what did it refer? There was no reality to which his employment of the flag as sign referred, and yet the employment of the flag as sign had a reality of its own. In fact it, too, was more real than real; it was hyperreal. Or consider the Willie Horton ads. Those ads functioned as signs that were clearly designed to be perceived as referring to hordes of black rapists leniently treated by liberal administrators. But the social effect of those ads, those signifiers, had nothing whatsoever to do with the question of whether or not there was any real signified to which they referred. The only thing that mattered was that they were taken to refer to the real. In this sense, the ads took on a power that made them more than real. They also created a hyperreality. We are surrounded by signs that have profound effects in the social world without referring to anything real. In forcing us to confront this Baudrillard makes a significant contribution to contemporary social theory. But he is not content to leave things there. Instead, he pushes the wild extrapolation button and comes up with the thesis that the very notion of reality must be abandoned now that we have entered the epoch of the simulacrum. The “decisive turning point” that marks our age is “the transition from signs which dissimulate something to signs which dissimulate that there is nothing” (1983b, 12). This induces the sought-for dizziness, but it does so at the cost of coherence. In order to know that Bush’s appeal to the flag created a hyperreality rather than referring to anything real about Bush, one must already know that in reality Bush’s career as a Texas oilman, CIA director, and Vice President reflects a commitment to values quite different from those meant to be invoked through association with the flag. In order to know that the Willie Horton ads created a hyperreality rather than referring to anything real in the social world, one must already know that in reality the myth of the black rapist is just that, a myth (Davis 1983), and that in reality the U.S. legal system is guilty of massive and systematic discrimination against black males. The category of hyperreality thus cannot be a replacement for the concept of reality as Baudrillard holds. We must presuppose the validity of the latter category in order to determine instances where the former term is exemplified. The signs around us do not hide from us that there is nothing; they hide from us that Madonna’s poses oversimplify human sexuality, that Pepsi is colored sugarwater, that Bush is a hypocrite and a racist. These signs distort and mask an underlying reality, a reality that thought in principle can appropriate, as many of Baudrillard’s own writings show.6 This implies that the age of simulacra is another stage within the age of ideology and not some radically new epoch where the Marxist concept of ideology has become irrelevant. (282-4)

### link – gender

#### Capitalism polices identity along gendered and sexual lines—identity politics based on intersectional theories serve to atomize resistance and limit the potential for abolishing alienated labor itself

**Mitchell 13** [12/2, Eve, “I Am a Woman and a Human: A Marxist-Feminist Critique of Intersectionality Theory”, Unity and Struggle began in 2003 among a number of activists primarily involved in anti-Israeli apartheid work. Searching for a means to deepen our association and build on our experiences we formed a small grouping of people, which provided the basis for further discussion and support organizing in other areas important to us. Some of the areas of work we are or have been involved in include labor, anti-budget cuts in the schools, anti-racist, anti-apartheid, queer liberation work, as well as around public transportation. http://unityandstruggle.org/2013/09/12/i-am-a-woman-and-a-human-a-marxist-feminist-critique-of-intersectionality-theory/]

In order to understand “identity” and “intersectionality theory,” we must have an understanding of the movement of capital (meaning the total social relations of production in this current mode of production) that led to their development in the 1960s and 1970s in the US. More specifically, since “intersectionality theory” primarily developed in response to second wave feminism, we must look at how gender relations under capitalism developed. In the movement from feudalism to capitalism, the gendered division of labor, and therefore gender relations within the class began to take a new form that corresponded to the needs of capital. Some of these new relations included the following: (1) The development of the wage. The wage is the capitalist form of coercion. As Maria Mies explains in her book, Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale, the wage replaced serf and slave ownership as the method to coerce alienated labor (meaning labor that the worker does for someone else). Under capitalism, those who produce (workers) do not own the means of production, so they must go to work for those who own the means of production (capitalists). Workers must therefore sell the only thing they own, their ability to labor, or their labor power, to the capitalist. This is key because workers are not paid for their sensuous living labor, the act of producing, but the ability to labor. The labor-labor power split gives rise to the appearance of an equal exchange of value; it appears as though the worker is paid for the amount of value she produces but in essence she is paid only for her ability to labor for a given period of time. Furthermore, the working day itself is split into two parts: necessary labor time and surplus labor time. Necessary labor time is the time it takes the worker (on average) to produce enough value to buy all the commodities he needs to reproduce himself (everything from his dinner to his iPhone). Surplus labor time is the time the worker works beyond the necessary labor time. Since the going rate for labor power (again, our capacity to labor – not our actual living labor) is the value of all the commodities the worker needs to reproduce herself, surplus labor is value that goes straight into the capitalist’s pocket. For example, let’s say I work in a Furby factory. I get paid $10 a day to work 10 hours, I produce 10 Furbies a day, and a Furby is worth $10 each. The capitalist is only paying me for my ability to work 1 hour each day to produce enough value to reproduce myself (1 Furby = 1 hour’s labor = $10). So my necessary labor time is 1 hour, and the surplus labor time I give to the capitalist is 9 hours (10-1). The wage obscures this fact. Recall that under capitalism, it appears as though we are paid the equivalent value of what we produce. But, in essence, we are paid only for our necessary labor time, or the minimum amount we need to reproduce ourselves. This was different under feudalism when it was very clear how much time humans spent working for themselves, and how much time they spent working for someone else. For example, a serf might spend five hours a week tilling the land to produce food for the feudal lord, and the rest of her time was her own. The development of the wage is key because it enforced a gendered division of labor. (2) A separation of production and reproduction. Along with commodity production came a separation between production and reproduction. To be clear, “reproduction” does not solely refer to baby making. It also includes meeting the many various needs we have under capitalism, from cooking food and cleaning the home, to listening to a partner vent about their shitty day and holding their hand, to caring for the young, sick, elderly and disabled members of society. As capitalism developed, generally speaking, productive (value-producing) labor corresponded to the wage, and reproductive labor was unwaged (or extremely low waged), since in appearance it produced no surplus value for the capitalist. This separation, characterized by the wage, took on a specific gendered form under capitalism. Women were largely excluded from productive sphere and therefore did not receive a wage for the reproductive work they did. This gave men a certain amount of power over women, and created antagonisms within the class based on a gendered division of labor. Silvia Federici, in Caliban and the Witch, calls this the “patriarchy of the wage” (97-100). (3) The contradictory development of the nuclear family. With the development of capitalism and large-scale industry, the content of the nuclear family took a contradictory turn. On the one hand, as pointed out by theorists such as Selma James and Mariarosa Dalla Costa in “The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community,” the nuclear family was strengthened by the gendered division of labor characterized by the wage. Women and children were excluded from the wage and relegated to reproductive work; men received a wage and were relegated to productive work. This meant that men needed women and children to reproduce them, and women and children needed men to bring in a wage to reproduce the family as a whole (of course this wage was sometimes supplemented by a woman’s low wage earnings as a domestic or other paid reproductive worker). And so on the one hand, the development of capitalism strengthened the nuclear family. On the other hand; however, capitalist relations also undermined the nuclear family. As James and Dalla Costa point out, the gendered division of labor is: “rooted in the framework of capitalist society itself: women at home and men in the factories and office, separated from the other the whole day … Capital, while it elevates heterosexuality to a religion, at the same time in practice makes it impossible for men and women to be in touch with each other, physically or emotionally — it undermines heterosexuality as a sexual, economic, and social discipline” (James, Sex, Race and Class, 56). (4) The development of “identity” and alienation. John D’Emilio runs with this concept of the contradictory development of the nuclear family, arguing that “gay identity” (and we can infer “female identity”) as a category developed through this contradictory movement of the nuclear family. He argues for a distinction between gay behavior and gay identity, stating, “There was, quite simply, no ‘social space’ in the colonial system of production that allowed men and women to be gay. Survival was structured around participation in the nuclear family. There were certain homosexual acts — sodomy among men, ‘lewdness’ among women — in which individuals engaged, but family was so pervasive that colonial society lacked even the category of homosexual or lesbian to describe a person … By the second half of the nineteenth century, this situation was noticeably changing as the capitalist system of free labor took hold. Only when individuals began to make their living through wage labor, instead of parts of an interdependent family unit, was it possible for homosexual desire to coalesce into a personal identity — an identity based on the ability to remain outside the heterosexual family and to construct a personal life based on the attraction to one’s own sex” (“Capitalism and the Gay Identity,” 104-105). D’Emilio’s understanding of “identity” is key for understanding identity politics and intersectionality theory; however, I would slightly change his framework. In distinguishing between “behavior,” and “identity,” D’Emilio is touching on what could be broadened out to the Marxist categories, “labor” and “alienation.” I digress in order to fill out this idea. For Marx, labor is an abstract category that defines human history. In his early texts, Marx refers to labor as self- or life-activity. In “Estranged Labour,” Marx writes, “For in the first place labour, life-activity, productive life itself, appears to man merely as a means of satisfying a need — the need to maintain the physical existence. Yet the productive life is the life of the species. It is life-engendering life. The whole character of a species — its species character — is contained in the character of its life activity; and free conscious activity is man’s species character. Life itself appears only as a means to life” (76). Life-activity, or labor, is an abstraction that transcends a specific form, or a specific mode of production (capitalism, feudalism, tribalism, etc.). However, labor can only be understood within the context of these forms; it is through these forms, the social organization of our labor, that humans engage in the ever-expanding process of satisfying our needs, introducing new needs, and developing new ways of fulfilling our needs. Labor encompasses everything from our jobs under capitalism to tilling the land under feudalism, to creating art and poetry, to having sex and raising children. Through labor and its many expressions, or forms, we engage with the world around us, changing the world and changing ourselves in the process. Under capitalism, there is a separation between our labor and our conscious will. When Marx says “Life itself appears only as a means to life,” he is pointing toward this contradiction. As noted above, under capitalism, labor is divorced from the means of production so we must work for those who own the means of production. We engage in the same form of labor all day every day, and we receive a wage for this activity in order to exchange to meet our needs. We produce value in order to exchange for the use-values we need to survive. So what appears under capitalism as a mere means to satisfy our needs (work), is in essence the activity of life itself (labor). Because of this schism between our labor and our conscious will, our labor under capitalism is alienated, meaning it is not used for our own enrichment, instead, we give it away to the capitalist. Our multi-sided labor becomes one-sided; our labor is reduced to work. In “The German Ideology,” Marx writes, “as soon as the distribution of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood” (53). We are not fully enriched human beings, engaging in all forms of labor we wish to engage in, we are relegated into one form of labor in order to exchange to meet our needs. We are call center workers, hair stylists, nurses, teachers, etc. This one-sidedness, as the precondition for meeting our needs, is unique to the capitalist mode of production. In applying Marx’s categories to D’Emilio’s explanation of homosexuality, we could say that homosexual behaviors are an expression of labor, or self-activity, and homosexual identity is a one-sided, alienated form of labor unique to capitalism. It distinguishes the difference between a person who consciously engages in homosexual acts, and one who is defined by one form of labor: a homosexual. Women and people of color experience something similar in the development of capital; a shift from engaging in certain types of labor to engaging in feminized, or racially relegated forms of labor. To put it another way, under capitalism, we are forced into a box: we are a bus driver, or a hair stylist, or a woman. These different forms of labor, or different expressions of our life-activity (the way in which we interact with the world around us) limit our ability to be multi-sided human beings. There were plenty of homosexual acts, many forms of gender expression, and some divisions based on skin color in pre-capitalist societies. But “identity” as an individualistic category is unique to capitalism. If we understand “identity” in this way, we will struggle for a society that does not limit us as “bus drivers,” “women,” or “queers,” but a society that allows everyone to freely use their multi-sided life activity in whatever ways they want. In other words, we will struggle for a society that completely abolishes, or transcends, “identities.” I will explain more on this later. What is Intersectionality Theory and How Did it Develop? The term “intersectionality” did not become commonplace until the early 1980s. According to most feminist historians, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw was the first to coin the term, in a series of articles written between roughly 1989 and 1991 (for example, see “Mapping the Margins“). Intersectionality theory was then popularized by many critical race and gender theorists. Despite where the term was coined, intersectionality theory has its roots in the 1960s and 70s class struggle movements in the US and Europe (roughly speaking). This period was generally characterized by autonomous struggles based on the gendered and racialized division of labor. Black folks were the vanguard of this form of struggle, developing and leading many types of organizations from revolutionary parties like the Black Panther Party, to majority black workplace organizations like the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement. These forms of struggle influenced other groups, such as white women, latinos, gays and lesbians, to form similar organizations along race, gender and sexuality lines (while there were multi-ethnic projects in this time period, and many contradictions within these organizations themselves, it can be said that in this specific time and place, there was a general tendency to organize along these lines). This was due to the gendered and racialized division of labor; black folks were relegated to certain neighborhoods and certain forms of labor, the value of a black person’s labor was less than a white person’s, and a socially constructed skin color hierarchy and corresponding antagonisms within the class was fully developed and materially enforced. To be black meant to be objectified, relegated into one form of labor: producing and reproducing blackness. Black Power was therefore the struggle against the alienation and one-sidedness of blackness, a struggle to liberate labor, releasing its multi-sidedness, unifying labor with its conscious will. Similarly, women organized in response to the gendered division of labor in effort to break free from the alienation of “womanhood.” For example, women struggled for reproductive and sexual freedom in effort to gain control over the means of production (their bodies). Maria Mies describes how women’s bodies are their means of production under capitalism, stating, “The first means of production with which human beings act upon nature is their own body,” and later, she writes, “women can experience their whole body, not only their hands or their heads. Out of their body they produce new children as well as the first food for these children” (Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale, 52 and 53). Since women’s use of their bodies is a unique form of alienated labor for women under capitalism, it is historically the site of struggle for liberation. However, there was also a tendency within second wave feminism that sought to reproduce capitalist relations, arguing for “equal wages for equal work.” Both of these tendencies were acting in response to the gendered social relations under capital, and both shared a methodology of identity politics, arguing that women could unite on the basis of a shared “woman” experience, or “womanhood.” From this development, intersectionality theory took hold. As the autonomous struggles of the 60s and 70s began to recede, groups like the Combahee River Collective responded to the material divisions within the movement. They argued that the objectively white second wave feminist movement excluded women of color by assuming the white woman’s experience could be extended to women of color, and that white women were adequate spokespeople for women of color. In contrast, they argued that a revolutionary praxis must be informed by the experience of black lesbian women, stating, “This focusing upon our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics. We believe that the most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end somebody else’s oppression. In the case of Black women this is a particularly repugnant, dangerous, threatening, and therefore revolutionary concept because it is obvious from looking at all the political movements that have preceded us that anyone is more worthy of liberation than ourselves” (“Combahee River Collective Statement”). What developed in practice through the Combahee River Collective’s specific set of identity politics (a black, lesbian, working class-based politics) was solidified theoretically with the development of intersectionality theory. The intersectionality theorists who emerged in the late 70s and early 80s rightly expressed antagonisms within the class, arguing that one cannot discuss gender without discussing race, class, sexuality, disability, age, etc. Patricia Hill Collins describes intersectionality theory as an “analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of a social organization, which shape Black women’s experiences and, in turn, are shaped by Black Women” (Black Feminist Thought, 299). Using this definition and the prominent intersectionality theorists’ writings, I have identified four core components of the theory: (1) a politics of difference, (2) a critique of women’s organizations and people of color organizations, (3) the need to develop the most oppressed as leaders and take the leadership from them, and (4) the need for a politics that takes all oppressions into account. (1) A politics of difference. Intersectionality theorists argue that our various identities, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, etc., necessarily differentiate us from people who do not have those identities. So a ruling class, gay, black man will have a different experience, and therefore, a different politics, than a straight, white, working class woman. On the other hand, people with shared identities, such as being black or lesbian, will have a shared experience that organically unites the individuals. Some of these shared identities are more likely to unite some people than others. As Collins explains, “On the one hand, all African-American women face similar challenges that result from living in a society that historically and routinely derogates women of African descent. Despite the fact that U.S. Black women face common challenges, this neither means that individual African-American women have all had the same experiences nor that we agree on the significance of our varying experiences. Thus, on the other hand, despite the common challenges confronting U.S. Black women as a group, diverse responses to these core themes characterize U.S. Black women’s group knowledge or standpoint. Despite differences of age, sexual orientation, social class, region, and religion, U.S. Black women encounter societal practices that restrict us to inferior housing, neighborhoods, schools, jobs, and public treatment and hide this differential consideration behind an array of common beliefs about Black women’s intelligence, work habits, and sexuality. These common challenges in turn result in recurring patterns of experiences for individual group members” (25). This is a cornerstone of intersectionality theory: some individuals or groups are differentiated from other individuals or groups based on their experiences. This can be cut along many different identity lines. (2) Critiques of women’s organizations and people of color organizations. Women of color were marginalized in the 1960s and 70s women’s, Black Power, Chicanismo, and other people of color-led organizations. Most intersectionality theorists attribute this to a unique experience women of color (and particularly Black women) have around race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression. For example, Collins argues that women of color have abstained from joining white feminist organizations on the grounds that they have been “racist and overly concerned with White, middle-class women’s issues” (5). Similarly, Collins argues that black studies is traditionally based on a “male-defined ethos,” and contains a “predominantly masculinist bias” (7), despite historically joining and feeling marginalized in African American organizations. Again, this is an objective and historical situation that intersectionality theorists attribute to difference along identity lines. (3) The need to develop the most oppressed as leaders, and take leadership from them. Following this analysis, intersectionality theorists argue that the experience of being an oppressed person places individuals in a uniquely privileged position for struggle. In other words, if you’ve experienced the multiple, identity-based oppressions, you are the vanguard of the struggle against it. bell hooks writes, “As a group, black women are in an unusual position in this society, for not only are we collectively at the bottom of the occupational ladder, but our overall social status is lower than that of any other group. Occupying such a position, we bear the brunt of sexist, racist, and classist oppression. At the same time, we are the same group that has not been socialized to assume the role of exploiter/oppressor in that we are allowed no institutional “other” that we can exploit or oppress … Black women with no institutionalized “other” that we may discriminate against, exploit, or oppress, often have a lived experience that directly challenges the prevailing classist, sexist, and racist social structure and its concomitant ideology. This lived experience may shape our consciousness in such a way that our world view differs from those who have a degree of privilege (however relative within the existing system). It is essential for continued feminist struggle that black women recognize the special vantage point our marginality gives us and make use of this perspective to criticize the dominant racist, classist, sexist hegemony as well as to envision and create a counter-hegemony” (Feminist Theory from Margin to Center, 16). This point justifies the need to develop queer, women, and people of color as movement leaders, and allows intersectionality theorists to explain why historically the most oppressed tend to be the most militant. (4) The need for a politics that takes all oppressions into account. Finally, all intersectionality theorists argue the need to analyze every form of oppression, using the terms, “interlocking system of oppressions,” “matrix of domination,” or some variation thereof. The idea is that it is impossible to view one identity or category of oppression without looking at all the others. As Barbara Smith simply puts, “the major ‘isms’ … are intimately intertwined” (The Truth that Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender, and Freedom, 112); they cannot be separated. While intersectionality theory seems to overcome the limitations of identity politics, it falls short. The next section will show how intersectionality theory is, in fact, a bourgeois ideology. A Marxist Critique of Identity Politics and Intersectionality Theory. Identity politics is rooted in a one-sided expression of capitalism, and is therefore not a revolutionary politics. As noted earlier, “identity” can be equated with alienated labor; it is a one-sided expression of our total potential as human beings. Frantz Fanon discusses something similar in the conclusion to Black Skin White Masks. He writes, “The black man, however sincere, is a slave to the past. But I am a man, and in this sense the Peloponnesian War is as much mine as the invention of the compass” (200 – Philcox Translation, 2008). On the one hand, Fanon points to a particular, one-sided expression: blackness. On the other hand, he points toward the multi-sides of a potentially universal human. Fanon is at once both of these things: a black man, and a man (or, more generally, a human); a particular and a universal. Under capitalism, we are both the alienated worker and labor itself, except the universal has not been actualized concretely. The identity politics of the 60s and 70s conflates a particular moment, or a determinant point, in the relations of capitalism with the potential universal. Furthermore, it reproduces the schism between appearance and essence. Under capitalism there is a contradiction between the particular and the universal; appearance and essence. We appear to be alienated individuals (a bus driver, a hair stylist, a woman, etc.), though in essence we are multi-sided individuals capable of many forms of labor. Identity politics bolsters one side of this contradiction, arguing for collective struggle on the basis of “womanhood,” or “blackness,” or “black lesbianhood,” etc. To borrow from Fanon, identity politics states, “I am a black man,” “I am a woman,” or “I am a black lesbian,” etc. This is a key first step. As he writes in his critical chapter, “The Lived Experience of the Black Man:” “I finally made up my mind to shout my blackness” (101), “On the other side of the white world there lies a magical black culture. Negro sculpture! I began to blush with pride. Was this our salvation?” (102), and “So here we have the Negro rehabilitated, ‘standing at the helm,’ governing the world with his intuition, rediscovered, reappropriated, in demand, accepted; and it’s not a Negro, oh, no, but the Negro, alerting the prolific antennae of the world, standing in the spotlight of the world, spraying the world with his poetical power, ‘porous to the every breath in the world.’ I embrace the world! I am the world! The white man has never understood this magical substitution. The white man wants the world; he wants it for himself. He discovers he is the predestined master of the world. He enslaves it. His relationship with the world is one of appropriation. But there are values that can be served only with my sauce. As a magician I stole from the white man a ‘certain world,’ lost to him and his kind. When that happened the white man must have felt an aftershock he was unable to identify, being unused to such reactions” (106-107). For several pages, Fanon argues that black people must embrace blackness, and struggle on the basis of being black, in order to negate white supremacists social relations. But to stop there reproduces our one-sided existence and the forms of appearance of capitalism. Identity politics argues, “I am a black man,” or “I am a woman,” without filling out the other side of the contradiction “…and I am a human.” If the starting and ending point is one-sided, there is no possibility for abolishing racialized and gendered social relations. For supporters of identity politics (despite claiming otherwise), womanhood, a form of appearance within society, is reduced to a natural, static “identity.” Social relations such as “womanhood,” or simply gender, become static objects, or “institutions.” Society is therefore organized into individuals, or sociological groups with natural characteristics. Therefore, the only possibility for struggle under identity politics is based on equal distribution or individualism (I will discuss this further below). This is a bourgeois ideology in that it replicates the alienated individual invented and defended by bourgeois theorists and scientists (and materially enforced) since capitalism’s birth. Furthermore, this individualism is characteristic of the current social moment. As left communist theorist Loren Goldner has theorized, capitalism has been in perpetual crisis for the last 40 years, which has been absorbed in appearance through neoliberal strategies (among others). Over time, capital is forced to invest in machines over workers in order to keep up with the competitive production process. As a result, workers are expelled from the production process. We can see this most clearly in a place like Detroit, where automation combined with deindustrialization left hundreds of thousands jobless. The effects of this contradiction of capitalism is that workers are forced into precarious working situations, jumping from gig to gig in order to make enough money to reproduce themselves. Goldner refers to this condition as the “atomized individual worker.” As Goldner has written elsewhere, this increased individualism leads to a politics of difference, where women, queers, people of color, etc., have nothing in common with one another. Intersectionality theorists correctly identified and critiqued this problem with identity politics. For example, bell hooks, in a polemic against liberal feminist Betty Friedan, writes, “Friedan was a principal shaper of contemporary feminist thought. Significantly, the one-dimensional perspective on women’s reality presented in her book became a marked feature of the contemporary feminist movement. Like Friedan before them, white women who dominate feminist discourse today rarely question whether or not their perspective on women’s reality is true to the lived experiences of women as a collective group. Nor are they aware of the extent to which their perspectives reflect race and class biases…” (3). hooks is correct to say that basing an entire politics on one particular experience, or a set of particular differences, under capitalism is problematic. However, intersectionality theory replicates this problem by simply adding particular moments, or determinant points; hooks goes on to argue for race and class inclusion in a feminist analysis. Similarly, theories of an “interlocking matrix of oppressions,” simply create a list of naturalized identities, abstracted from their material and historical context. This methodology is just as ahistorical and antisocial as Betty Friedan’s. Again, patriarchy and white supremacy are not objects or “institutions” that exist throughout history; they are particular expressions of our labor, our life-activity, that are conditioned by (and in turn, condition) our mode of production. In Capital, Marx describes labor as the “metabolism” between humans and the external world; patriarchy and white supremacy, as products of our labor, are also the conditions in which we labor. We are constantly interacting with the world, changing the world and changing ourselves through our “metabolic” labor. So patriarchy and white supremacy, like all social relations of labor, change and transform. Patriarchy under capitalism takes a specific form that is different from gendered relations under feudalism, or tribalism, etc. There will be overlap and similarities in how patriarchy is expressed under different modes of production. After all, the objective conditions of feudalism laid the foundation for early capitalism, which laid the foundation for industrial capitalism, etc. However, this similarity and overlap does not mean that particular, patriarchal relations transcend the mode of production. For example, under both feudalism and capitalism there are gendered relations within a nuclear family, though these relations took very different forms particular to the mode of production. As Silvia Federici describes, within the feudal family there was little differentiation between men and women. She writes, “since work on the servile farm was organized on a subsistence basis, the sexual division of labor in it was less pronounced and less discriminating than the capitalist farm. … Women worked in the fields, in addition to raising children, cooking, washing, spinning, and keeping an herb garden; their domestic activities were not devalued and did not involve different social relations from those of men, as they would later, in a money-economy, when housework would cease to be viewed as real work” (25). A historical understanding of patriarchy needs to understand patriarchy from within a set of social relations based on the form of labor. In other words, we cannot understand the form of appearance, “womanhood,” apart from the essence, a universal human. A Marxist Conception of Feminism. At this point, I should make myself very clear and state that the limitations of identity politics and intersectionality theory are a product of their time. There was no revolution in the US in 1968. The advances of Black Power, women’s liberation, gay liberation, and the movements themselves, have been absorbed into capital. Since the 1970s, academia has had a stronghold on theory**.** A nonexistent class struggle leaves a vacuum of theoretical production and academic intellectuals have had nothing to draw on except for the identity politics of the past. A new politics that corresponds to a new form of struggle is desperately needed; however, the Marxist method can provide some insight into the creation of a politics that overcomes the limitations of identity politics. Marx offers a method that places the particular in conversation with the totality of social relations; the appearance connected to the essence. Consider his use of the concept of “moments.” Marx uses this concept in “The German Ideology” to describe the development of human history. He describes the following three moments as the “primary social relations, or the basic aspects of human activity:” (1) the production of means to satisfy needs, (2) the development of new needs, and (3) reproduction of new people and therefore new needs and new means to satisfy new needs. What is key about this idea is that Marx distinguishes between a “moment” and a “stage.” He writes, “These three aspects of social activity are not of course to be taken as three different stages, but just as three aspects, or, to make it clear to the Germans, three ‘moments,’ which have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today” (48). The particulars of this specific argument are not relevant; what is key is Marx’s use of “moments” juxtaposed to “stages.” Marx makes this distinction to distinguish himself from a kind of determinism that sees the development of history in a static, linear fashion, versus a fluid and dialectical historical development. Throughout many of Marx’s writings, he refers back to this term, “moments,” to describe particular social relations in history, or, more precisely, particular expressions of labor. “Moments” also helps fill out Marx’s idea of fluid modes of production. As noted earlier, for Marx, there is no pure feudalism or pure capitalism; all relations of production move and must be understood historically. This concept is useful for understanding our various alienated existences under capitalism. For example, in the Grundrisse, Marx writes, “When we consider bourgeois society in the long view and as a whole, then the final result of the process of social production always appears as the society itself, i.e. the human being itself in its social relations. Everything that has a fixed form, such as a product etc., appears as merely a moment, a vanishing moment, in this movement. The direct individuals, but individuals in a mutual relationship, which they equally reproduce and produce anew. The constant process of their own movement, in which they renew themselves even as they renew the world of wealth they create” (712). To be a “woman” under capitalism means something very specific; it is even more specific for women in the US in 2013; it is even more specific for black lesbians in the US in 2013; it is even more specific for individual women. But, in a universal sense, to be a “woman” means to produce and reproduce a set of social relations through our labor, or self-activity. Taking a cue from Fanon, our method must argue: I am a woman and a human. We must recognize the particular in conversation with the totality; we must consider a moment, or a single expression of labor, in relationship to labor itself. It is important to note that identity politics and intersectionality theorists are not wrong but they are incomplete. Patriarchal and racialized social relations are material, concrete and real. So are the contradictions between the particular and universal, and the appearance and essence. The solution must build upon these contradictions and push on them. Again, borrowing from Fanon, we can say “I am a woman and a human,” or “I am a black person and a person.” The key is to emphasize both sides of the contradiction. Embracing womanhood, organizing on the basis of blackness, and building a specifically queer politics is an essential aspect of our liberation. It is the material starting point of struggle. As noted earlier, Frantz Fanon describes this movement in “The Lived Experience of the Black Man” chapter of Black Skin, White Masks. However, at the end of the chapter, Fanon leaves the contradiction unresolved and leaves us searching for something more, stating, “Without a black past, without a black future, it was impossible for me to live my blackness. Not yet white, no longer completely black, I was damned” (117), and, “When I opened my eyes yesterday I saw the sky in total revulsion. I tried to get up but the eviscerated silence surged toward me with paralyzed wings. Not responsible for my acts, at the crossroads between Nothingness and infinity, I began to weep” (119). Fanon points to the contradiction between the particular form of appearance (blackness) and the essence, the universal (humanness). In the conclusion, as noted earlier, Fanon resolves this contradiction, arguing for further movement toward the universal, the total abolition of race. He writes, “In no way does my basic vocation have to be drawn from the past of peoples of color. In no way do I have to dedicate myself to reviving a black civilization unjustly ignored. I will not make myself the man of any past. I do not want to sing the past to the detriment of my present and my future” (201). For Fanon then, and for Marx, the struggle for liberation must include both the particular and the universal, both the appearance and essence. We must build upon and push on both sides of these contradictions. Some Practical Consequences. Since identity politics, and therefore intersectionality theory, are a bourgeois politics, the possibilities for struggle are also bourgeois. Identity politics reproduces the appearance of an alienated individual under capitalism and so struggle takes the form of equality among groups at best, or individualized forms of struggle at worse. On the one hand, abstract “sociological” groups or individuals struggle for an equal voice, equal “representation,” or equal resources. Many have experienced this in organizing spaces where someone argues that there are not enough women of color, disabled individuals, trans\*folks, etc., present for a campaign to move forward. A contemporary example of this is the critique of Slut Walk for being too white and therefore a white supremacist or socially invalid movement. Another example is groups and individuals who argue that all movements should be completely subordinate to queer people of color leadership, regardless of how reactionary their politics are. Again, while intersectionality theorists have rightly identified an objective problem, these divisions and antagonisms within the class must be address materially through struggle. Simply reducing this struggle to mere quantity, equality of distribution, or “representation,” reinforces identity as a static, naturalized category. On the other hand, identity politics can take the form of individualized struggles against heteropatriarchy, racism, etc., within the class. According to Barbara Smith, a majority of Combahee River Collective’s work was around teaching white women to stop being racist by holding anti-racism workshops (95). Today, we might see groups whose only form of struggle is to identify and smash gendered, machismo, male-chauvinist, misogynist, and patriarchal elements within the left. Another example is Tumblr users’ constant reminder to “check your privilege.” Again, it is important to address and correct these elements; however, contradictions and antagonisms within the class cannot be overcome in isolation, and individual expressions of patriarchy are impossible to overcome without a broader struggle for the emancipation of our labor. We will never free ourselves of machismo within the movement without abolishing gender itself, and therefore alienated labor itself. A truly revolutionary feminist struggle will collectively take up issues that put the particular and the form of appearance in conversation with the universal and the essence. Elsewhere, I have offered the following as examples of areas that would do that work: Grassroots clinic defense takeovers and/or nonprofit worker committees that build solidarity across worker-“client” lines. Neighborhood groups engaged in tenant struggles with the capacity to deal directly with violence against women in the community. Parent, teacher, and student alliances that struggle against school closures/privatization and for transforming schools to more accurately reflect the needs of children and parents, for example on-site childcare, directly democratic classrooms and districts, smaller class sizes, etc. Sex worker collectives that protect women from abusive Johns and other community members, and build democratically women- and queer-run brothels with safe working conditions. Workplace organizations in feminized workplaces like nonprofits, the service industry, pink collar manufacturing, etc., or worker centers that specialize in feminized workplaces and take up issues and challenges specific to women. There are many, many others that I cannot theorize. As noted, we cannot project the forms of struggle and their corresponding theories without the collective and mass activity of the class, but it is our job as revolutionaries to provide tools that help overthrow the present state of affairs. To do so, we must return to Marx and the historical materialist method. We can no longer rely on the ahistorical, bourgeois theories of the past to clarify the tasks of today. For feminists, this means struggling as women but also as humans.

#### Intersectional gender theories fail—class is more than just another “ism” driving oppression—your ballot should recognize the centrality of material divisions, because those influence gender roles more than our personal attitudes

**Common Cause 14** [Common Cause is a specific anarchist-communist organization, founded in 2007, with active branches in Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto, Ontario. We believe that anarchists must participate in campaigns for social, environmental and economic justice as an organized force in order to help spread anarchist principles of direct action, autonomy and self-organization amongst wider segments of the class. We believe that the best way of spreading these principles is through active participation in struggle, and to this end, our members are actively engaged in many different fronts of the class war, ranging from labour and community struggles, to campus organizing, Indigenous solidarity and prison abolition work, 6/6, 2 Hamilton members, 1 Toronto member, “With Allies Like These: Reflections on Privilege Reductionism”, <http://linchpin.ca/?q=content/allies-these-reflections-privilege-reductionism>]

IV. Moving Forward

We have identified the current regime of anti-oppression politics as inadequate in providing a way forward in the task of developing a revolutionary movement capable of meaningfully challenging systems of oppression and exploitation. Not only are these politics inadequate, but ultimately regressive and counter productive. Attempts to address the inadequacies of anti-oppression are often met with accusations of class reductionism. While we acknowledge that class reductionism exists as an incorrect political orientation, the accusation of such can be used as a straw[person] ~~man~~ attack on those who transgress the dominant discourse within anarchist/radical circles.

Reducing the Class

As an actual political orientation, class reductionism can be largely described as a tendency on the Left which prioritizes the economic struggle in the workplace as the primary terrain of revolutionary or progressive action. Often this will go further to fetishize a particular segment of workplace struggle, namely that of blue collar, industrial workers. Whether or not it is implicitly stated, the belief is held that the struggle against other oppressions — white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, ableism, etc. — are incidental to the class struggle, to be engaged in as secondary, or that they are simply prejudices concocted by the ruling class to be dealt with "after the revolution."

On the other hand, we have the proponents of anti-oppression politics attempting to amalgamate “class” as another oppression alongside the rest, which "intersect" with one another at various times and places in a person's life. Here we are presented with the grotesque notion of "classism"—the result of an attempt by anti-oppression theory to reconcile inadequate politics with the entirety of capitalist social relations. The School Of the Americas Watch Anti-Oppression Toolkit section on classism offers a prime example:

The stereotype is that poor and working class people are unintelligent, inarticulate, and "overly emotional." A good ally (a non-working class committed supporter) will contradict these messages by soliciting the knowledge and histories of poor working class people, being a thoughtful listener, trying to understand what is being said…

Putting aside for a second the conflation of “poor” and “working class” which indicates this writer's lack of insight into the matter they seek to educate about, there is truth in the descriptions of the “stereotype”.

We are reminded of the 2010 movie, Made in Daginham, where Eddie O'Grady attempts to ingratiate himself to his wife by pointing out that he does not beat her or their children. Frustrated by her husband's lack of consideration of her struggle, Rita replies, “That is as it should be…You don't go on the drink, do ya? You don't gamble, you join in with the kids, you don't knock us about. Oh, lucky me. For Christ's sake, Eddie, that's as it should be! You try and understand that. Rights, not privileges. It's that easy. It really bloody is.”

Similarly, for all the back-patting going on with regards to “allies” most of what is advised and done constitutes nothing more than a minimal standard of behaviour. We do not feel respected when someone in a position of power “consults” us before making a decision regarding our lives, no matter how attentive and probing they may be. We see this emphasis on listening to rather than creating-with as uncomradely and tokenizing.

In their essay Insurrections at the Intersections anarchists Jen Rogue and Abbey Volcano address so-called classism by writing:

Since everyone experiences these identities differently, many theorists writing on intersectionality have referred to something called “classism” to complement racism and sexism. This can lead to the gravely confused notion that class oppression needs to be rectified by rich people treating poor people “nicer” while still maintaining class society. This analysis treats class differences as though they are simply cultural differences. In turn, this leads toward the limited strategy of “respecting diversity” […] This argument precludes a class struggleanalysis which views capitalism and class society as institutions and enemies of freedom. We don’t wish to “get along” under capitalism by abolishing snobbery and class elitism.

Both of these instances of reductionism point to a fundamental misunderstanding of class and class struggle, as well as to the limits of intersectionality in understanding social relationships under capitalism. The class reductionism we should be critical of is that which attempts to reduce the class to a mere section of it (whether it is simply the poorest, or the most blue collar), and that which attempts to hold up the interests of that section as that of the entire class. The reality is that the majority of the planet is working class, and we must recognize that the material obstacles within our class, and the manner by which they reproduce themselves must be attacked as a matter of necessity. Not because we are good allies or because we want to check privileges or because we want to reduce everything to "class first!" but because we are fucking revolutionaries and we have to.

The (Re)production of Division

If our intention is not strictly limited to maintaining activist enclaves, we are required to look for the means to understand the development of identity and division under capitalism. In Caliban and the Witch, Silvia Federici examines the position of women throughout the rise of capitalism. With an emphasis on the incredibly violent subjugation necessary, witch burnings being an especially stark example, Federici outlines the historical process that fostered the patriarchal social relationships which uphold, and define capitalism.

This process is one which ran alongside the period of primitive accumulation in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The enclosure of the commons by a fledgling bourgeoisie and the imposition of private property was the material basis for the proletarianization of populations—without the land base necessary for subsistence, peasants became workers who must sell their labour for a wage in order to survive. Primitive accumulation is the subsumption of life into the rubric of Capital — land into property, time into wages, things into commodities — and by extension the transformation of social relationships necessary to maintain and reproduce these categories. The subjugation of women to patriarchal capitalism was a crucial element of this process. The construction of the nuclear family, the assignment of domestic and reproductive labour as "women's work", and the subsequent devaluation and erasure of that labour, were historic tasks achieved through the development of capitalism. Attempting to understand patriarchy as limited to individual attitudes or actions, or somehow isolated from capitalism (regardless of patriarchal or gendered divisions of labour in pre-capitalist history) is therefore impossible. Speaking to the accomplishment of the implementation of these new social relationships, Federici writes:

… in the new organization of work every woman (other than those privatized by bourgeois men) became a communal good, for once women's activities were defined as non-work, women's labor began to appear as a natural resource, available to all, no less than the air we breathe or the water we drink.

The social, economic, and political position of women was thus defined under capitalism. This new reality meant that the class struggle, that is the struggle for the emancipation of the working class, takes on a particular character whether or not this is recognized by its would-be partisans. Federici further explains:

With their expulsion from the crafts and the devaluation of reproductive labor, a new patriarchal order was constructed, reducing women to a double dependence: on employers and on men.

This “double dependence” thus implies that the oppression of women under capitalism is not something that is incidental, nor something that can be addressed in isolation. As having particular features and the product of (ongoing) historic development, attacking patriarchy demands that we attack the conditions which allow the perpetuation of the social relationships by which it is constituted. As class struggle anarchists then we identify the class struggle as one against this "double dependence" as we struggle against the conditions which are necessary for capitalism to reproduce itself.

Struggling at the Barricades, Struggling at Home

In 2006, the Mexican state of Oaxaca became engulfed in a popular uprising that lasted several months. What began as an annual teachers strike developed into a popular conflict. Barucha Calamity Peller's Women in Uprising: The Oaxaca Commune, the State, and Reproductive Labour looks at the revolt and the particular role women played. The essay shows us both what the disruption of the reproduction of patriarchal social relations can look like and how the reinforcement of those relations from within the movement ultimately contributed to its limitation and defeat.

On April 1st, 2006, a march of the Cacerolas (later imitated in Quebec and across Canada) consisting of over ten thousand women, initiated the takeover of TV station Canal Neuve. Several hundred women from the march occupied the building, which was repurposed as a communication hub and resource to the ongoing struggle. Peller writes:

Besides transmitting, producing daily programming, and holding workshops, long hours were spent during nightly patrols of the transmitter and defensive barricades in which the women of Canal Nueve spoke to each other while huddled around small fires drinking coffee to stay awake. The dialogue and solidarity that emerged between the women was perhaps one of the most potent results of the takeover. What was before “private” and “personal” became a site for resistance. It was during these conversations that women for the first time experienced a space not dominated by men, in the absence of the market, in which they could organize freely and relate experiences, and talk to other women. This is where the idea of women’s autonomy emerged in Oaxaca, and it was to this formation of women, where there was no exploitation of their labor, no dominance of the market or the family, that the women would refer throughout the struggle.

What we find important here is the implication that the creation of new, anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal relations requires the creation of the material basis to do so. The creation of such a basis requires the negation and disruption of the conditions that produce the old ways of interacting. Here, the occupation of the Canal Neuve could be understood as what a revolutionary women's movement in embryo might look like—where the conditions were created for the creation of a new subjectivity and the destruction of the former identity.

In the case of Oaxaca, patriarchy still persisted within the movement. Women who attempted to challenge traditional gender roles were subjected to domestic abuse and/or forced to continue to take on the full burden of reproductive labour.

Rather than rely on limited class reductionist understandings, either limiting itself to the factory floor or sociological definitions of "proles," we must strive for a class struggle which directs us towards the abolition of the divisions within our class that are necessary to uphold capitalism. We find the example of the Oaxaca uprising useful insofar as it provides us with a glimpse of both the undoing of oppressive social relationships, and the defense of those relationships in a period of intensified struggle.

While this section has focused primarily on gendered division and oppression under capitalism, our intention is to emphasize that these categories and identities are historically constructed, and have a material basis to their continued reproduction. We see the process of their destruction as one that is necessarily part of the class struggle. To paraphrase Marx, this is the process of moving towards a class that is conscious of itself, and able to act in its own interest—a class for itself.

V. Conclusion

It is our belief that the ways in which humans are exploited, assaulted, pitted against one another, and robbed of individual and collective agency must (and furthermore, can) be overcome and replaced with a liberatory existence. While some see anti-oppression politics as contributing to this endeavour, we see these politics as a substantial hindrance to revolutionary organizing. We would like to challenge our comrades and fellow travellers to do better than this half-hearted liberal project that facilitates the reduction of complex social and economic problems to interpersonal dynamics and individual privileges. Our struggle is collective, and so too must be our tools and analysis.

#### Different starting point – they say look to experience, we say look to WHY reality is experienced certain ways – our method is better because it’s the only way to move beyond immediate experience

**Panton 4** [Margaret, former Prof @ St John’s College, Hertford College, “The Politics of Experience: Second-Wave Feminism and the Unmediated Society”, Political Studies Association Conference, 5-8 April 2004, University of Lincoln]

According to the British socialist feminist Sheila Rowbotham, writing in 1969, the chief limitation of Marxism is its lack of emphasis upon the interior or experiential level of social reality: ‘Unless the internal process of subjugation is understood, unless the language of silence is experienced from inside and translated into the language of the oppressed community themselves, male hegemony will remain. Without such a translation, Marxism will not be really meaningful’.68 Yet Marxist social theory and methodology stands in direct contrast to that of second-wave feminism: Feminism starts with the immediate, particular experience of women and develops a general explanation of society (‘patriarchy’) from this basis. Marxism, in contrast, starts with the formation of society in general and aims to explain how society as a whole is organised. It then situates experience in this context.69 Feminism cannot incorporate Marxism, and nor can Marxism incorporate feminism.70 The distinction summarised in this paragraph is developed in more detail in the remainder of this section. The key difference between Marxism and feminism is as follows. Where feminism begins with immediate experience, Marxist theory aims towards a theory of the underlying and determinate dynamic of society itself, and its capacity to explain particular experiences is dependent upon deriving those experiences from a broader social analysis. The starting point for Marxism is not the content of experience, but the question of why social reality is experienced or perceived in a particular way at a particular time: it does not assume the confluence of immediate experience with social reality. Experience is not false, but it is limited by its very immediacy; particular experience cannot be explained in terms of itself, but only in terms of a broader social theory. Marxism seeks to be a totalising theory, where feminism implies a rejection of any explanation that seeks to explain society in its totality precisely because a totalising explanation cannot at the same time be representative of the diversity of immediate experiences.

### impact – patriarchy

#### Capitalism is the root cause of patriarchy

**Cloud 3** [Dana, “Marxism and Oppression”, Talk for Regional Socialist Conference, Aoril 19, 2003 p. online]

In order to challenge oppression, it is important to know where it comes from. Historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists tell us that in pre-class societies such as hunter-gatherer societies, racism and sexism were unheard of. Because homosexuality was not an identifiable category of such societies, discrimination on that basis did not occur either. In fact, it is clear that racism, sexism, and homophobia have arisen in particular kinds of societies, namely class societies. Women’s oppression originated in the first class societies, while racism came into prominence in the early periods of capitalism when colonialism and slavery drove the economic system. The prohibition against gays and lesbians is a relatively modern phenomenon. But what all forms of oppression have in common is that they did not always exist and are not endemic to human nature. They were created in the interest of ruling classes in society and continue to benefit the people at the top of society, while dividing and conquering the rest of us so as to weaken the common fight against the oppressors. The work of Marx’s collaborator Friederich Engels onThe Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State in some respects reflects the Victorian times in which in was written. Engels moralizes about women’s sexuality and doesn’t even include gay and lesbian liberation in his discussion of the oppressive family. However, anthropologists like the feminist Rayna Reiter have confirmed his most important and central argument that it was in the first settled agricultural societies that women became an oppressed class. In societies where for the first time people could accumulate a surplus of food and other resources, it was possible for some people to hoard wealth and control its distribution. The first governments or state structures formed to legitimate an emerging ruling class. As settled communities grew in size and became more complex social organizations, and, most importantly, as the surplus grew, the distribution of wealth became unequal—and a small number of men rose above the rest of the population in wealth and power. In the previous hunter-gatherer societies, there had been a sexual division of labor, but one without a hierarchy of value. There was no strict demarcation between the reproductive and productive spheres. All of that changed with the development of private property in more settled communities. The earlier division of labor in which men did the heavier work, hunting, and animal agriculture, became a system of differential control over resource distribution. The new system required more field workers and sought to maximize women’s reproductive potential. Production shifted away from the household over time and women became associated with the reproductive role, losing control over the production and distribution of the necessities of life. It was not a matter of male sexism, but of economic priorities of a developing class system. This is why Engels identifies women’s oppression as the first form of systematic class oppression in the world. Marxists since Engels have not dismissed the oppression of women as secondary to other kinds of oppression and exploitation. To the contrary, women’s oppression has a primary place in Marxist analysis and is a key issue that socialists organize around today. From this history we know that sexism did not always exist, and that men do not have an inherent interest in oppressing women as domestic servants or sexual slaves. Instead, women’s oppression always has served a class hierarchy in society. In our society divided by sexism, ideas about women’s nature as domestic caretakers or irrational sexual beings justify paying women lower wages compared to men, so that employers can pit workers against one another in competition for the same work. Most women have always had to work outside the home to support their families. Today, women around the world are exploited in sweatshops where their status as women allows bosses to pay them very little, driving down the wages of both men and women. At the same time, capitalist society relies on ideas about women to justify not providing very much in the way of social services that would help provide health care, family leave, unemployment insurance, access to primary and higher education, and so forth—all because these things are supposed to happen in the private family, where women are responsible. This lack of social support results in a lower quality of life for many men as well as women. Finally, contemporary ideologies that pit men against women encourage us to fight each other rather than organizing together.

### link – deleuze

#### Openness to flux and constant becoming destroys the foundations for political institutions necessary to sustain radical democratic life---some universal, “fixed” guarantees of equality are crucial to politics

Joseph Schwartz 8, Professor of Political Science at Temple University, The Future of Democratic Equality, 56-61

Butler, Brown, and Connolly reject the essentialism of “narrow” identity politics as an inverted “ressentiment” of the Enlightenment desire for a universal, homogenized identity. They judge identity politics to be a politics of “wounding, resentment, and victimization” that only can yield bad-faith moralization Wendy Brown takes to task identity politics for “essentializing” conceptions of group identity. For example, she critiques the work of Catherine MacKinnon as epitomizing “identity” political theory, accusing MacKinnon of denying women agency by depicting them purely as victims.38 Brown also remains wary of the patriarchal, conformist nature of traditional left conceptions of solidarity and citizenship. Brown’s implicit concept of radical democratic citizenship rests upon the recognition that political identity is continually in flux and is socially constituted through “agonal” political struggle. Brown celebrates an Arendtian conception of a polity in which both shared and particular identities are continually open to reconstruction. In this “left Nietzschean” view of an “everyperson’s” will to power, there can be no cultural certainties or political givens, as such “givens” would repress difference and fluidity.39 But, if the human condition is a world of permanent flux, then we must postulate a human capability of living with constant insecurity, for in this world there can be no stable political institutions or political identities.40 An ability to calculate the probabilities of political actions or public policies would disappear in this world of infinite liminality. By assuming that the pre-eminent democratic value is that of leaving all issues as permanently open to question, post-structuralist “democratic theory” eschews the theoretical and political struggle over what established institutions and consensual values are needed to underpin a democratic society.¶ Post-structuralist analysis has contributed to a healthy suspicion of narrow and “essentializing” identity politics. But a self-identified feminist, African- American, or lesbian activist is likely to value the shared historical narratives that partly constitute such group identities. Of course, if one is a democrat and a pluralist, one would reject the oppressive homogenization and potentially authoritarian aspects of ethnic or racial chauvinism and of “essentializing” types of identity politics. The democratic political home should be open, fluid, and self-reflective; but if participation is to be open to all, then such a society also needs to reproduce a shared democratic culture and the institutional guarantee of democratic rights. That is, contrary to post-structuralist analysis, not all issues can be open to “agonal struggle” in a democratic society. The traditional radical democratic critique of democratic capitalism remains valid; the equal worth of the individual is devalued by rampant social inequality within and between groups. Thus, a radical democrat, whether post-structuralist or not, must not only be committed to institutional protections of political and civil rights, but also to social rights—the equal access to the basic goods of citizenship (education, health care, housing, child care). Of course, the precise nature and extent of these rights will be politically contested and constructed. But a democratic society cannot leave as totally “open” the minimal institutional basis of democracy— a democratic society cannot be agnostic as to the value of freedom of speech, association, and universal suffrage.¶ Social movements fighting for an expansion of civil, political, and social rights, rarely, if ever, rest their arguments on appeals to epistemological truths— whether “foundational” or “anti-foundational.” To remain democratic, their policy goals cannot be so specific that they preclude political argument about both their worth and how best to institutionalize them. If social movements in a 58 democratic society deemed that every policy defeat meant a betrayal of basic democratic principles, there would be no give-and-take or winners and losers within democratic politics. But if a government were to abolish freedom of speech and competitive elections, or deny a social group basic rights, it would be reasonable for an observer to judge that democratic principles had been violated. Democratic political movements and coalitions struggle to construct shared meanings about those political, civil, and social rights that should be guaranteed to all citizens—and they often work to expand the types of persons to be recognized as citizens (such as excluded immigrants). Such arguments are inevitably grounded in normative arguments that go beyond merely asserting the import of “flux,” “difference,” and “anti-essentialism.” The civil rights movement did not demand equal rights for all solely as an “agonal” assertion of the will of the excluded; they desired to gain for persons of color an established set of civil and political rights that had been granted to some citizens and denied to others. The movement correctly assumed that the exclusion of citizens from full political and civil rights violated the basic norms of a democratic society. Thus, postmodern epistemological commitments to “flux” and “openness” cannot in-and-of-themselves sustain the “fixed” moral positions needed to sustain a radical democracy.¶ Post-structuralist theorists openly proclaim their hostility to all philosophical “meta-narratives.” They reject comprehensive conceptions of how society operates and the type of society that would best instantiate human freedom. But post-structuralists go beyond rejecting “meta-narratives”; they insist that only an “anti-foundational” epistemology can ground a politics of emancipation. For Butler, Brown, and Connolly, not only do “meta-discourses” invariably fail in their efforts to ground moral positions in a theory of human nature or human reason. They also assert that an agonal politics of democratic “we” formation can alone sustain democratic society. This agonal politics, they claim, can only be sustained by a recognition of the inconstant signification of discourse and the ineluctable flux of personal and group identity.41 Rejecting the authoritarian, celebration of the “ubermensch” by Nietzsche, they offer a post-Nietzschean, “amoral” conception of democracy as an open-ended project of defining a self and community that is constantly open to the desires of “others.” These theorists constantly reiterate the definitiveness (dare we say “foundational truth”) of this grounding of democracy, despite the historical reality that social movements often contest dominant narratives in the name of a stable alternative narrative of a democratic and pluralist community.¶ One might well contend that the post-structuralist political stance is guilty of a new meta-narrative of “bad faith,” that of “anti-foundationalism.” According to this anti-foundational politics, a true democrat must reject any and all a priori truths allegedly grounded upon the nature of human reason or human nature. A committed democrat may well be skeptical of such neo-Kantian or neo-Hegelian conceptions of freedom; but, many committed democrats justify their moral commitments using these philosophical methods. A democrat might also reject (or accept) the arguments of a Jurgen Habermas or Hans Georg Gadamer that the structure of human linguistic communication contains within it the potential for a society based on reasoned argument rather than manipulation and domination. But there are numerous other philosophically “pragmatic” ways to justify democracy, even utilitarian ones. Political democrats may well disagree about the best philosophical defense of democracy. But, invariably, “practicing democrats” will defend the belief (however philosophically “proved” or “justified”) that democratic regimes best fulfill the moral commitment to the equal worth of persons and to the equal potential of human beings to freely develop and pursue their life plans.¶ To contend that only an anti-foundationalist, anti-realist epistemology can sustain democracy is to argue precisely for a foundational metaphysical grounding for the democratic project. It is to contend that one’s epistemology determines one’s politics. Hence, Brown and Butler both spoke at a spring 1998 academic conference at the University of California at Santa Cruz where some attributed “reactionary” and “left cultural conservatism” to belief in “reactionary” “foundationalist humanism.”42 Post-structuralism cannot escape its own essentialist conception of identity. For example, Butler contends in Feminist Contentions that democratic feminists must embrace the post-structuralist “nondefinability of woman” as best suited to open democratic constitution of what it is to be a “woman.”43 But this is itself a “closed” position and runs counter to the practices of many democratic feminist activists who have tried to develop a pluralist, yet collective identity around the shared experiences of being a woman in a patriarchal society (of course, realizing that working-class women and women of color experience patriarchy in some ways that are distinct from the patriarchy experienced by middle-class white women).¶ One query that post-structuralist theorists might ask themselves: has there ever existed a mass social movement that defined its primary “ethical” values as being those of “instability and flux”? Certainly many sexual politics activists are cognizant of the fluid nature of sexuality and sexual and gender identity. But only a small (disproportionately university educated) segment of the women’s and gay and lesbian movement would subscribe to (or even be aware of) the core principles of post-structuralist “anti-essentialist epistemology.” Nor would they be agnostic as to whether the state should protect their rights to express their sexuality. Post-structuralist theorists cannot avoid justificatory arguments for why some identities should be considered open and democratic and others exclusionary and anti-democratic. That is, how could post-structuralist political theorists argue that Nazi or Klan “ethics” are antithetical to a democratic society—and that a democratic society can rightfully ban certain forms of “agonal” (e.g. harassing forms of behavior against minorities) struggle on the part of such anti-democratic groups.

#### The problem with Delueze’s AND … AND … AND is sometimes you gotta say no

Litwack and Dean, ’18 Michael Litwack, assistant professor of English & Film Studies at the University of Alberta and trained in Modern Culture & Media at Brown University and American Studies at Wesleyan University, and Jodi Dean, political theorist and professor in the Political Science department at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, held the position of Erasmus Professor of the Humanities in the Faculty of Philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam, received her B.A. in History from Princeton University and her MA, MPhil, and PhD from Columbia University, December 1st, 2018, “The Cut Of The Generic: An Interview with Jodi Dean”, Public, Volume 29, Number 58, Intellect Ltd, EO

JD: I want to begin answering through a not well informed attack on Gilles Deleuze. [Laughs] You’ll recall that Deleuze stresses we have to get away from “EITHER/OR” and instead emphasize a multiplication of “AND … AND … AND …”8 I think this is absolutely terrible. There is no negation, no opposition, no way to know what people are for or against, and what you’re fighting for. When one just says “AND … AND … AND …,” you can neither know what’s happening nor act effectively. A negation makes some things possible and other things not possible. A negation cuts an infinitely open statement. The generic is a cut because what it does is say that we’re not just going to continue adding multiple identities. Rather, we’re going to cut through that aspect of contemporary culture and emphasize a flat, common form of being on the same political side.

#### The aff’s focus on becoming forever suspends political engagement in favor of self-therapy---accepting some axioms of commonality are necessary to achieve emancipation

Chamsy Ojeili 3, Senior Lecturer School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, Post-modernism, the Return to Ethics, and the Crisis of Socialist Values, [www.democracynature.org/vol8/ojeili\_ethics.htm#\_edn9](http://www.democracynature.org/vol8/ojeili_ethics.htm#_edn9)

Notably, anarchists have often been charged with this failing by Marxian thinkers.[157] Anarchism does include those suspicious of the demands of association, those who fear the tyranny of the majority and who emphasise instead the uniqueness and liberty of the individual. Here, the freedom of the creative individual, unhindered by the limitations of sociality, is essential. This second strand shows clearly the influence of liberal ideas. It is also, in its bohemian and nihilistic incarnation, a child to the malevolent trio of De Sade, Stirner, Nietzsche, that is, those who reject coercive community mores and who recoil from herdish, conformist pressures. The free individual must create his or her own guiding set of values, exploring the hitherto untapped and perhaps darker aspects of him or herself through an art which chaffs against the standards of beauty and taste of the ordinary mortal. Given that freedom cannot endure limitations and that all idols have been driven from the world and the mind, for these revolutionaries, “all is permitted”.[158] This emphasis on individual sovereignty is clear in Godwin and Stirner,[159] but also in Goldman’s suspicion of collective life, in her elevation of the role of heroic individuals in history, and in the work of situationist Raoul Vaneigem.[160] This accent within non-orthodox socialism has been much criticised. For instance, Murray Bookchin has contrasted “social” with “lifestyle” anarchism, rejecting the elevation the self-rule of the individual in the latter to the highest goal of anarchist thinking.[161] One might consider, here, the consequences, in the case of Emma Goldman, of the substitution of collective revolutionary change for boheme and for an intellectualist contempt for the masses. Goldman turned more and more to purely self-expressive activity and increasingly appealed to intellectuals and middle class audiences, who felt amused and flattered by her individualism and exotic iconoclasm.[162] This egoistic and personalistic turn ignores the essential social anarchist aspiration to freedom, the commitment to an end to domination in society, the comprehension of the social premises of the individualist urge itself, and the necessity of moving beyond a purely negative conception of liberty to a thicker, positive conception of freedom.[163] Perhaps, as Bookchin has rather trenchantly asserted, the recent individualist and neo-situationist concern with subjectivity, expression, and desire is all too much like middle class narcissism and the self-centred therapeutics of New Age culture. Perhaps also, as Barrot has said, the kind of revolutionary life advocated by Vaneigem cannot be lived.[164] Further, total freedom for any one individual necessarily means diminished freedom for others. As La Banquise argue, “Repression and sublimation prevent people from sliding into a refusal of otherness”.[165] For socialists, freedom must be an ineradicably social as well as an individual matter. The whole thrust of libertarian politics is towards a collective project that reconstructs those freedom-limiting structures of economy, power, and ideology.[166] It seems unlikely that such ambitions could be achieved by those motivated solely by a Sadean ambition to seek satisfaction of their own improperly understood desires. On this question, Castoriadis is again useful – accenting autonomy as a property of the collective and of each individual within society, and rejecting the opposition between community and humanity, between the “inner man [sic] and the public man [sic]”.[167] Castoriadis ridiculed abstract individualism: “We are not ‘individuals’, freely floating above society and history, who are capable of deciding sovereignly and in the absolute about what we shall do, about how we shall do it, and about the meaning our doing will have once it is done … Above all, qua individuals, we choose neither the questions to which we will have to respond nor the terms in which they will be posed, nor, especially, the ultimate meaning of our response, once given”.[168] Rejecting the contemporary tendency to posit others as limitations on our freedom, Castoriadis argued that others were in fact premises of liberty, “possibilities of action”, and “sources of facilitation”.[169] Freedom is the most vital object of politics, and this freedom – always a process and never an achieved state – is equated with the “effective, humanly feasible, lucid and reflective positing of the rules of individual and collective activity”.[170] An autonomous society – one without alienation – explicitly and democratically creates and recreates the institutions of its own world, formulating and reformulating its own rules, rather than simply accepting them as given from above and outside. The resulting institutions, Castoriadis hoped, would facilitate high levels of responsibility and activity among all people in respect of all questions about society.[171] Castoriadis’ notion of social transformation holds to the goals of integrated human communities, the unification of people’s lives and culture, and the collective domination of people over their own lives.[172] He was also committed to the free deployment of the person’s creative forces. Just as Castoriadis enthused over the capacity of human collectivities for immense works of creativity and responsibility,[173] so he insisted on the radical creativity of the individual and the importance of individual freedom. Congruent with the notion of social autonomy, Castoriadis posited the autonomous individual as, most essentially, one who legislates for and thus regulates him or herself.[174] Turning to psychoanalysis, he designated this autonomy as the emergence of a more balanced and productive relationship between the ego and the unconscious. For Castoriadis, these goals were not guaranteed by anything outside of the collective activity of people towards such goals, and he insisted that individual autonomy could only arise “under heavily instituted conditions … through the instauration of a regime that is genuinely … democratic”.[175] Such an outcome could not be solved in theory but only by a re-awakening of politics. Only in the clash of opinions – dependent on a restructured social formation – not determined in advance by naturalistic or religious postulates, could a true ethics emerge.[176] This, I believe, is the highpoint of libertarian thinking about ethics and politics. Conclusion I have argued that socialist orthodoxy has been eclipsed as a programme for the good life. On the one hand, it devolves into a project of pragmatic expediency bereft of a political and ethical dimension, where statist administration submerges both individual freedom and democratic decision-making. On the other hand, as social democracy the orthodox tradition coalesces into a variety of more or less straightforward liberalism. Liberalism tends to overstate the conception of humans as choosers, under-theorising and under-valuing the necessity of political community and the social dimension of individuality and the necessity of a positive conception of freedom. The communitarian critique, however, too readily diminishes the freedoms of the individual, subordinating people entirely to the horizons of community life and reducing politics to something like a “general will”. Possessed of both liberal and communitarian features, post-modernism has been skeptical about the idea of a unitary human essence. It has jettisoned the notion of humans as unencumbered choosers, and it has underscored the constructedness of all our values. In so doing, post-modernism signals a renewed interest in ethics, in questions of responsibility, evaluation, and difference, within contemporary social thinking. Post-modernism offers a valuable critique of the tendency of socialist orthodoxy to bury the socialist insight as to the sociality and historicity of values. Nevertheless, advancing as it does on orthodox socialism, post-modernism’s radical constructivism and its horror at the disasters of confident and unreflective modernity can issue in an ironic hesitancy, indicated in particular by an uncritical emphasis on pluralism and incommensurability that threatens to forever suspend evaluation.[177] One signal of this is the cautious and depoliticised obsession with Otherness and the subject as victim of the return to ethics.[178] Further, post-modernism all too often withdraws from universals and emancipation towards particularist – either individualist or community-based – answers to questions of justice and the content of the valuable life. In contrast, those seeking a radical, inclusive democracy must remain engaged and universalist in orientation. A number of libertarians have not hesitated in committing themselves, most importantly, to the emancipation of humanity without exception.[179] In fact, politics and ethics seem unthinkable without such universalistic aspirations. Post-modernists themselves have often had to submit to this truth, smuggling into their analyses universally-binding ethico-political principles and attempting to theorise the potential linkages between progressive political struggles. However, such linkages do not amount to a coherent anti-systemic movement that addresses the power of state and capital. In contrast, the universalist commitments of the ethics of emancipation held to by many libertarians accents both freedom and equality, and the establishment of a true political community, against the dominations and distortions of state and capital. Against the contemporary obsession with ethics, which is so often sloganistic, depoliticised, defensive, privatised, and trivial, we should, with Castoriadis, accent politics as primary and as the condition of proper ethical engagement. I have argued that, in line with Castoriadis’ strictures, such a political community and the aspiration to truly ethical and political deliberation, can only be attained when socialists free themselves from belief in the possibility of extra social guarantees “other than the free play of passions and needs”,[180] and from the expectation of an end to tensions and dilemmas around questions of social ordering. On these terms, libertarian goals are not – contra liberal strictures – the negation of aspirations for freedom and democracy but are rather a collective pressing of these aspirations to the very far limits of popular sovereignty. It is for this reason that the stubborn durability of these goals may, against all expectations, be an auspicious sign for libertarian utopianism.

### link – indigenous environment affs

#### The mythological grouping of all indigenous groups with land justifies romantic myths about cultural identities that provoke militarization and scapegoating – treating the globe as a commons where no identity is entitled to any land ownership is crucial to build the institutions capable of solving both the assault on Native peoples worldwide and global environmental catastrophe

**Dean 15** [Jodi, Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, “This Changes Some Things,” March 17. 2015, *Politics, Theory, Action,* <http://jdeanicite.typepad.com/i_cite/2015/03/this-changes-some-things.html>]

The second problem is Klein's association of communities with indigeneity and land. Klein writes, "communities with strong ties to the land have always, and will always, defend themselves against businesses that threaten their ways of life" (309). Here again she denies division, as if everyone in a community agreed on what constituted a threat, as if they were all similarly situated against a threat, as if they were never too deluded, tired, or exploited to defend themselves, as if they could never themselves constitute a threat to themselves. Cities, towns, states, and regions make bad decisions all the time; they stimulate industries that destroy them. Klein, though, has something else in mind, "a ferocious love" that "no amount of money can extinguish." She associates this love "with an identity, a culture, a beloved place that people are determined to pass on to their grandchildren, and that their ancestors may have paid for with great sacrifice." She continues, "And though this kind of connection to place is surely strongest in Indigenous communities where the ties to the land go back thousands of years, it is in fact Blockadia's defining feature" (342). Participants in my seminar found this description racist or fascist. Even though this is not Klein's intent, her rhetoric deploys a set of myths regarding nature, and some people's relation to nature, that make some people closer to nature (and further from civilization) than others. It also justifies an intense defense of blood and soil on the part of one group's attachment to a place such that others become foreign, invaders, rightly excluded as threats to our way of life, our cultural identity. Given that climate change is already leading to increased migration and immigration and that the US and Europe are already responding by militarizing borders, a language of cultural defense and ties to the land is exactly what we don't need in a global movement for climate justice. Klein's argument, though, gets worse as it juxtaposes indigenous people's love of place with the "extreme rootlessness" of the fossil fuel workforce. These "highly mobile" pipefitters, miners, engineers, and big rig drivers produce a culture of transience, even when they "may stay for decades and raise their kids" in a place. The language of rootless echoes with descriptions of cosmopolitan Jews, intellectuals, and communists. Some are always foreign elements threatening our way of life. In contrast, I imagine climate politics as breaking the link between place and identity. To address climate change, we have to treat the world itself as a commons and build institutions adequate to the task of managing it. I don't have a clear idea as to what these institutions would look like. But the idea that no one is entitled to any place seems better to me as an ethos for a red-green coalition. It requires us to be accountable to every place.

### link – settler colonialism

#### Postcolonial studies divorced from capitalist analysis reinforce the dominant interest that there is no alternative to the present – the resulting amnesia regarding collective political action imperils revolutionary change

**Eagleton 3** [Terry, Distinguished Professor of English Literature at Lancaster University, *After Theory*, 2003, Basic Books: New York, NY, p. 5-9]

Not all students of culture are blind to the Western narcissism involved in working on the history of pubic hair while half the world’s population lacks adequate sanitation and survives on less than two dollars a day. Indeed, the most flourishing sector of cultural studies today is so-called post-colonial studies, which deals with just this dire condition. Like the discourse of gender and sexuality, it has been one of the most precious achievements of cultural theory. Yet these ideas have thrived among new generations who, for no fault of their own, can remember little of world-shaking political importance. Before the advent of the so-called war on terrorism, it seemed as though there might be nothing more momentous for young Europeans to recount to their grandchildren than the advent of the euro. Over the dreary decades of post-1970s conservatism, the historical sense had grown increasingly blunted, as it suited those in power that we should be able to imagine no alternative to the present. The future would simply be the present infinitely repeated - or, as the postmodernist remarked, ‘the present plus more options’. There are now those who piously insist on ‘historicizing’ and who seem to believe that anything that happened before 1980 is ancient history. To live in interesting times is not, to be sure, an unmixed blessing, It is no particular consolation to be able to recall the Holocaust, or to have lived through the Vietnam war. Innocence and amnesia have their advantages. There is no point in mourning the blissful days when you could have your skull fractured by the police every weekend in Hyde Park. To recall a world-shaking political history is also, for the political left at least, to recall what is for the most part a history of defeat. In any case, a new and ominous phase of global politics has now opened, which not even the most cloistered of academics will be able to ignore. Even so, what has proved most damaging, at least before the emergence of the anticapitalist movement, is the absence of memories of collective, and effective, political action. it is this which has warped so many contemporary cultural ideas out of shape. There is a historical vortex at the centre of our thought which drags it out of true. Much of the world as we know it, despite its solid, wellupholstered appearance, is of recent vintage. It was thrown up by the tidal waves of revolutionary nationalism which swept the globe in the period after the Second World War, tearing one nation after another from the grip of Western colonialism. The Allies’ struggle in the Second World War was itself a successful collaborative action on a scale unprecedented in human history - one which crushed a malevolent fascism at the heart of Europe, and in doing so laid some of the foundations of the world wc know today. Much of the global community we see around us was formed, fairly recently, by collective revolutionary projects - projects which were launched often enough by the weak and hungry, but which nevertheless proved successful in dislodging their predatory foreign rulers. Indeed, the Western empires which those revolutions dismantled were themselves for the most part the product of revolutions. It is just that they were those most victorious revolutions of all - the ones which we have forgotten ever took place. And that usually means the ones which produced the likes of us. Other people’s revolutions are always more eye-catching than one’s own. But it is one thing to make a revolution, and another to sustain it. Indeed, for the most eminent revolutionary leader of the twentieth century, what brought some revolutions to birth in the first place was also what was responsible for their ultimate downfall. Vladimir Lenin believed that it was the very backwardness of Tsarist Russia which had helped to make the Bolshevik revolution possible. Russia was a nation poor in the kind of civic institutions which secure the loyalty of citizens to the state, and thus help to stave off political insurrection. Its power was centralized rather than diffuse, coercive rather than consensual: it was concentrated in the state machine, so that to overthrow that was to seize sovereignty at a stroke, But this very same poverty and backwardness helped to scupper the revolution once it had been made. You could not build socialism in an economic backwater, encircled by stronger, politically hostile powers, among a mass of unskilled, illiterate workers and peasants without traditions of social organization and democratic self-government. The attempt to do so called for the strong-armed measures of Stalinism, which ended up subverting the very socialism it was trying to construct. 8 THE POLITICS OF AMNESIA Something of the same fate afflicted many of those nations who managed in the twentieth century to free themselves from Western colonial rule. in a tragic irony, socialism proved least possible where it was most necessary. Indeed, post-colonial theory first emerged in the wake of the failure of Third World nations to go it alone. It marked the end of the era of Third World revolutions, and the first glimmerings of what we now know as globalization. In the I 9 50s and 60s, a series of liberation movements, led by the nationalist middle classes, had thrown off their colonial masters in the name of political sovereignty and economic independence. By harnessing the demands of an impoverished people to these goals, the Third World elites could install themselves in power on the back of popular discontent. Once ensconced there, they would need to engage in an ungainly balancing act between radical pressures from below and global market forces from outside. Marxism, an internationalist current to its core, lent its support to these movements, respecting their demand for political autonomy and seeing in them a grievous setback to world capitalism. But many Marxists harboured few illusions about the aspiring middle-class elites who spearheaded these nationalist currents. Unlike the more sentimental brands of post-colonialism, most Marxism did not assume that ‘Third World’ meant good and ‘First World’ bad. They insisted rather on a class-analysis of colonial and post-colonial politics themselves. Isolated, poverty-stricken and poor in civic, liberal or democratic traditions, some of these regimes found themselves taking the Stalinist path into crippling isolation. Others had to acknowledge that they could not go it alone - that political sovereignty had brought with it no authentic economic self-government, and could never do so in a West-dominated world. As the world capitalist crisis deepened from the early 1970s onwards, and as a number of Third World nations sank further into stagnation and corruption, the aggressive restructurings of a Western capitalism fallen upon hard times finally put paid to illusions of national-revolutionary independence. ‘Third Worldism’ accordingly gave way to ‘post-colonialism’. Edward Said’s magisterial Orientalism, published in 1978, marked this transition in intellectual terms, despite its author’s understandable reservations about much of the post-colonial theory which was to follow in its wake. The book appeared at the turning-point of the fortunes of the international left. Given the partial failure of national revolution in the so-called Third World, post-colonial theory was wary of all talk of nationhood. Theorists who were either too young or too obtuse to recall that nationalism had born in its time an astonishingly effective anti-colonial force could find in it nothing but a benighted chauvinism or ethnic supremacism. Instead, much post-colonial thought focused on the cosmopolitan dimensions of a world in which post-colonial states were being sucked inexorably into the orbit of global capital. In doing so, it reflected a genuine reality. But in rejecting the idea of nationhood, it also tended to jettison the notion of class, which had been so closely bound up with the revolutionary nation. Most of the new theorists were not only ‘post’ colonialism, but ‘post’ the revolutionary impetus which had given birth to the new nations in the first place. If those nation-states had partly failed, unable to get on terms with the affluent capitalist world, then to look beyond the nation seemed to mean looking beyond class as well - and this at a time when capitalism was more powerful and predatory than ever. It is true that the revolutionary nationalists had in a sense looked beyond class themselves. By rallying the national people, they could forge a spurious unity out of conflicting class interests.

## scalar competition

### Scalar Competition F/W—1NC

#### Interpretation: The aff should be responsible for defending the application of their method at scale. You should evaluate links and alts based on scalar competition; the neg should be allowed to test the aff at multiple scales of interaction.

#### Prefer this framework:

#### Prior question. Scalar comparison is a necessary accompaniment to any mode of inquiry.

DiCaglio, 21—Assistant Professor of English, Texas A&M University (Joshua, “Learning to Scale,” *Scale Theory: A Nondisciplinary Inquiry*, Introduction, 6-9, dml)

This book traces out the conceptual, perceptual, and discursive aspects of scale writ large, including how we find ourselves with scale as a notion, the conditions under which it operates, and the difficulties it presents for human knowledge built largely on nonscalar experience. It tries, first and foremost, to highlight scale as a certain way of thinking and speaking, and to train the reader in this way of thinking. I hope to demonstrate that the longer you dwell with scale, the more fundamental it appears.

There are three foundational philosophical concepts that scale indelibly alters. First, scale deals with the delineation of objects, transforming one field of objects into others depending on the scale of inquiry. Scale suggests that any object appears different—or does not even exist at all—if you change the scale of perception. As two ecologists note, “If you move far enough across scales, the dominant processes change. It is not just that things get bigger or smaller, but the phenomena themselves change.”3 In a framework of scale, objects are no longer clearly separate, apparent, and self-contained entities “in themselves,” since changes in scale reveal that the same thing also exists differently. All objects, therefore, must be defined via their scale of interaction and perception. In short, scale changes everything because it changes what every thing means.

Second, because scale deals with perspective, it is intertwined with notions of the subject, experience, consciousness, and interpretation. In applying scale to the body you call “mine” you find yourself looped into a disorienting question: whose body is it? The atoms’? The cells’? The planets’? The galaxies’? While this may seem absurd, this conundrum is already necessitated by scale and is, I argue, the most fundamental challenge presented by scale. We can only pretend that objects and relations exist “in themselves” and apart from these scalar delineations if we leave our conception of ourselves intact. Doing so makes scale inevitably abstract; it permits us to treat scalar objects as just any other objects and scalar relations as just more relations. But scale ties those relations back to our usual experience, saying that what I am is already atoms, cells, planets, galaxies. But then who is scaling?

Finally, scale reworks our notions of process, relation, and organization. Scale presents not only new objects but a tangle of new relations in two senses: first, scale reveals relationships that were previously not apparent simply because they were not discernible; and in turn, scale provides new possibilities for comprehending these aggregates and relations. Schemes of control and force—whether called “top-down,” “bottom-up,” the “great chain of being,” or hierarchy of things—contain presumptions about scale that are revised when we carefully examine this apparatus.

The center of this book (Part II) directly addresses these reconfigurations, with a chapter devoted to each. But because scale entails a particular, counterintuitive way of thinking, we must first experiment with this way of thinking and attempt to make this term “scale” clear. Thus, Part I provides a series of thought experiments that define the parameters of scale as I am using it here and train the reader in thinking in terms of scale.

The Philosophical Status of Scale

Before we begin these experiments, I want to highlight a few ways that scale has been positioned in theoretical conversations. In discussions of the “ontological status of scale,” scholars tend to be critical of the concept partially because it is unclear what scale is.4 Even in accounts favorable to scale, scale is said to be an “arbitrary mental device which allows us to make sense of our existence.”5 Or perhaps, “merely a way for humans to perceive and comprehend the world.”6 Or, as one geographer put it, “there is no such thing as scale.”7 Stripped of their diminutive qualities, these statements are partially correct: scale is a conceptual device that allows us to make sense of our existence, but not one which is entirely arbitrary. Scale provides a way for humans to perceive and comprehend the world, but one that is essential and not necessarily tied to humans. Finally, scale does not exist, in the sense that “scale” itself is not an entity but a reference for the structure of phenomena. The diminutive qualities of each of these statements relegates scale in relation to the social, the epistemological, and the ontological, respectively. But scale is not quite any of these.

To say that scale is ontological would imply that scale exists already as a kind of entity or fact of the world. To say that scale is epistemological would imply that it is a way of learning about or accessing the world. To say that scale is a social structure would imply that scale is one among many conceptual frameworks that society has built for mapping the world. And yet, scale relies both on the “being” of phenomena and a reference to the one who is measuring as a means of coming to know being. If we take the whole scaling process into account, considering whether scale is an epistemological, ontological, or social construct has less meaning. Rather, scale functions at a level above ontology and epistemology: scale is a means of orienting yourself both to experience and to the being of things. It is a metaphenomenal structure that makes use of a consistent measure to compare and calibrate ourselves to phenomena. Scale does not arise solely from beings (the ontological) or our mode of accessing beings (epistemology), but rather is a way of systematically organizing and comparing phenomena as they appear. Scale is an addendum and a reflecting back on what is discovered phenomenologically, first through attending to the presentation of the world and then systematically extending this presentation using a defined measure. In turn, the consistency of this defined measure then accounts for the way we are dividing reality, which means that scale cannot be solely a social construct.

Once discovered, scale becomes a necessary conceptual adjunct to any mode of inquiry—whether we want to speak of objects (ontology), our learning about objects (epistemology), or our way of organizing, speaking about, and distributing reality (sociality)—since the objects in question are only understood through the reorientation mapped by scale. Studying a cell only becomes possible once we extend our perceptual apparatus to sufficient resolution to identify cells, but it only becomes coherent when scale orients us to this perception. Regardless of the ontology of the cell (whether it actually exists), its epistemological status (how we find out about it), or the social aspects that go into its discovery (the training required to use a microscope), scale is required to understand what we mean by “cell.”

Scale provides us with a reference point to take note of how any phenomenon compares to any other. Doing so permits us to systematically attend to how what is is revised and structured as beings dissolve, shift, combine, layer, and relate to each other differently depending on the scale of examination. Scale does not mediate our access to the world; it permits us to make sense of mediated, extended, and projected experience. This status makes the scalar relation unlike any other kind of relation we find ourselves in. When we say that the Earth is made of rocks and the rocks are made of atoms, we are suggesting that the very being of each phenomenon is made up of, contained by, and holds reference to the others.

#### Ground. Allowing the aff to pick the scale of comparison is unpredictable and non-reciprocal because they get offense based on scaling a method down to debate.

#### Critical rigor. Scalar competition ensures that critical debates generate new forms of life instead of self-righteous skeptics.

DiCaglio, 21—Assistant Professor of English, Texas A&M University (Joshua, “Mapping the Vast Unknowing: The Science of Scale, the Scale of Science,” *Scale Theory: A Nondisciplinary Inquiry*, Chapter 10, 202-207, dml) [language modifications denoted by brackets]

This last option is not readily apparent in Latour’s philosophy, even as he moves from “critique to concern” in his reckoning with the science wars. This simple question—what are we talking about?—points us to the ways that scientific descriptions pull us out of the scale at which we live and require that we adjust our this-scale behavior on the basis of this reconfiguring of reality. On the one hand, this is all the more reason we need to figure out new ways to keep intact these matters of fact, so that we can make these extensions with some degree of confidence. On the other hand, these matters of fact are not enough. They become matters of concern not because they are constructed equally by other actants but because they run into tension with a this-scale, human way of understanding reality—when I have to reconcile the struggles of my life (paying rent, keeping a job, raising my kids) with the confusing scalar implications that connect together one scalar object (economics) with another (ecology) in a way that is not immediately apparent and easy to grasp.

In this light, we can wonder about Latour’s move to concern. While I am sympathetic with his echoing of Haraway’s aim for a discourse designed “to protect and to care,” “matters of concern” seems to also imply an overbearing scrutiny regardless of whether or not the thing is clearly understood—or even if we’re certain that we’re talking about the same thing.35 Is this not already what happens when science becomes entangled in a concern—about vaccines, climate change, women’s bodies, health-care systems, fracking sites, clean water, or mask mandates? Latour argues that facts are closed while points of concern are open, ready to be composed and recomposed. Yet both facts and these points of concern run into the problem of doxa, the marriage of opinion with social expectation, where everyone proceeds as if the issues at hand are clear and the points of concern are shared. In addition, we can follow Latour’s concern about critique and consider the affect here: does concern not imply worry, of being concerned about your neighbor, certain that something is wrong, that I must get involved and intervene? Is this not the unfortunate result of this insistent sociality? Like parents concerned about their teenager who has been staying out late—and have you seen what he’s been wearing? (and he spends so much time alone)—we find ourselves plagued with an excess of concern as we contemplate our scalar entanglements. Is this the attitude with which we will approach our dear Gaia or our fellow actants?

In this light, we can further reposition the idea of critique and push against Latour’s critique of critique in order to rediscover this more strictly critical maneuver: discovering what is not understood in what we think we understand. Latour’s characterization of critique is both egoic and suspicious, as if the critical move is inherently (1) about me, the critic, getting the upper hand, being more informed, and less naive, and (2) wary or even disdainful of the thing that is being critiqued. Certainly, there is a real target here (Latour puts his early work among them), and we need to scrub criticism of this attitude.36 But Latour uses that characterization to throw out what remains an essential move: attending to the conditions, parameters, limits, and implications of a mode of knowledge. Critique does not have to be suspicious; it does not need to reduce an object to something else (e.g., your distress to a death drive); it does not need to be an ego trip where you are the enlightened one bearing the truth to the ignorant. Latour mixes up the general tenor of “being critical” with the Kantian operation he insists that we get beyond: the task of observing how, within any particular experience, there are conditions, assumptions, and components that we may not be aware of but that can and should be examined.

It simply is not true that “what performs a critique cannot also compose.”37 Criticism is needed because we already suppose too much about reality. There are already social practices, languages, cultural regulations, personal sentiments, technological infrastructures, genetic inheritances, energy grids, oil sources, residual wastes slowly dissolving in the ocean—all of which must be examined and reopened for us to forge new forms of existence. Is it not strange that Latour would say that “With a hammer . . . you can do a lot of things . . . but you cannot repair, take care, assemble, reassemble, stitch together”?38 Need I point out that people do all kinds of repairs and assembling with a hammer? Surely Latour, who would so readily have us rethink our conception of science, politics, and things, understands that if you’re going to repave a road, you must first dig it up?

How bewildering! Do we know what we are haggling about? This, it seems to me, is the fundamental question brought on by a basic critical impulse: what is it that we are talking about? Is it as clear as it seems to be? I’m not taking the strategy shared by Bloor and Sokal and simply accusing Latour of obscurantism; rather, I am pointing to a set of more basic questions prompted by a different affect meant to set stage for a different conversation. What is Latour referring to, for instance, by “nature” when he insists that “ecology seals the end of nature”?39 When he says “all the various notions of nature” does he mean Emerson’s nature and the one that evolved in frontier America, and the national parks movement, and the one assumed by physicists, and the one environmentalists are trying to save? No. In Latour’s own work he means particular notions and stances tied to this term “nature,” such as the world conceived as a place apart or an object to be dominated by a knowing subject. Such aspects, uncovered by critique, do not themselves totalize “nature” in a way that warrants such strong dismissals.

In their deconstructive form, these questions arise from bewilderment, in the not-understanding and confusion that is taken as neither mine (my inability to understand, my not being properly trained in your discipline) nor yours (your obscurantism) but as a way past pretending to understand or that there is only one way that descriptions work, experiences are configured, or actions are performed. What are we even talking about? To what does it apply? How might that be understood? How do we know it? What is not accounted for in this articulation or mode of knowing? How can we work with it? In their most productive forms, these questions hinge on wonder: I wonder what X is? What if we try X? How does X relate to Y? Can there be something else here? Bewilderment is the feeling one gets in a tangle, the “confusion arising from losing one’s way”; it is the acknowledgment of the labyrinthine form of our attempt to understand where we are, what we are doing, and what we are saying (OED). Wonder arises from the astonishment with objects, things, ideas. The two affects are complementary, both moving us to appreciate anew and ask again, more carefully, with less certainty and more interest.40

The same questions could be asked of skeptical scientists such as Sokal when they adopt the same strong modes of rhetoric, which assume too much common ground in the understanding of the terms and acceptable forms of proof. Skepticism is the counterpart to critical suspicion; it risks hiding the need to specify, trace conditions, and withhold certainty behind an egoic, superior affect. In this form, as Latour fairly notes, skepticism has been excellent for “debunking quite a lot of beliefs, powers, and illusions,” but it is also reaching its limits.41 The problem arises when scientists make skepticism into an attitude based in authority and mistake their highly regimented mode of specification for the only mode of parsing the world.42

By way of illustration, one can wonder what would have happened if Carl Sagan had taken a different approach in the conversation he recounts at the beginning of Demon-Haunted World. There, he finds himself in the car with a driver who, upon finding out that he’s “that scientist guy,” begins to question him about “frozen extraterrestrials languishing in an Air Force base near San Antonio, ‘channeling’ . . . , crystals, the prophecies of Nostradamus, astrology, the shroud of Turin.” With each new topic, says Sagan, “I had to disappoint him. ‘The evidence is crummy,’ I kept saying. ‘There’s a much simpler explanation.’”43 Instead of being skeptical, assuming the role as the arbiter of truth, and simply recounting the evidence for and against such things, Sagan could have asked something different: to what is he referring? I’ve wondered about channeling . . . what is it describing? Why are we so certain these are spirits? What do we mean by that? Undoubtedly these questions can be disarming, and they probably would have confused the driver. But, if done with more nuance and less ego, this approach can respect that there is some configuration toward reality being expressed here. What is it? These questions, if adequately shared, can induce a mutual bewilderment from which we can start to have a conversation about these different kinds of questions, what they apply to, why we hold to them, and what they serve to do.

It certainly is harder to have this kind of conversation with ideas like Atlantis. But many of the things described by science are closer to Atlantis than they are to the immediacies of one’s life—and harder to wrap one’s head around. In science, bewilderment is thus the first step toward working with these broader difficulties and reorientations. This is the method of the current project: it began with a bewilderment (how is it possible that I am simultaneously atoms, cells, quarks, ecologies, galaxies?) and a wondering (how does this apparatus function? Why does it show up in everything from descriptions of mystical union with God to descriptions of ecological entrainment? But also: have you seen the “Inner Life of the Cell”?!).44 The method then proceeded by criticism—a tracing of the conditions under which scale can be articulated—but also through other methods of textual exegesis, historical questioning, comparative analysis, and thought experiment. In many ways, I can hardly get past the first detail, the basic structure of scale; I keep unfolding more considerations out of this fractal question that might simply be reduced to a word, with an affect: scale?!

Yet as the breadth of this inquiry implies, such bewilderment can be productive of new avenues of discussion as we unfold a simple point in the many contexts in which it inevitably applies. It is an invitation to step back from the things assumed (the critical maneuver, but here performed mutually, starting first with the critic’s confusion and willingness to admit an impasse) but also to specify (Say more about what you mean by that? I’m not sure that we’re talking about the same thing. I’ve often wondered . . .). Perhaps such an affect and intellectual stance are difficult to maintain. But I wonder if this is only because we get so involved in the matter, concerned about its implications, its problematic uses, its terrible associations, its naïveté. My experience is that such conversations end in discord primarily because someone, at some point, invokes authority, insists on his [their] understanding, or simply runs out of energy (pick it up again tomorrow?). Is this not a practice for humanists to take up: helping ourselves and others step back from this insistent sense of knowing, to trace these disjunctures, and help ourselves navigate these bewildering transformations of our existence?45

### 1NC — Midterms

#### Midterms will be close — chart.

Cohn ’7-13 — Nate; The New York Times’s chief political analyst. He covers elections, polling and demographics for The Upshot. In addition to writing for The Times, he has discussed politics on CNN, MSNBC, C-SPAN and NPR, and at major colleges and universities. Before joining The Times in 2013, he was a staff writer for The New Republic and a research associate at The Henry L. Stimson Center. He is a graduate of Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash. July 13, 2022; "Poll Shows Tight Race for Control of Congress as Class Divide Widens"; *New York Times*; https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/upshot/poll-2022-midterms-congress.html; //CYang

But Democrats and Republicans begin the campaign in a surprisingly close race for control of Congress, according to the first New York Times/Siena College survey of the cycle.

Chart, bar chart

Description automatically generated

#### The aff causes Dems to lose the midterms.

Demissie & Alfonesca ’22 — Hannah Demissie and Kiara Alfonseca are journalists at ABC News. March 18, 2022; "How schoolhouse culture wars may factor into the 2022 midterms"; *ABC News*; https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/schoolhouse-culture-wars-factor-2022-midterms/story?id=83343766; //CYang

States nationwide are grappling with ongoing debates over critical race theory, sexual orientation and book censorship. In many ways, some of the most contentious and deeply divisive issues in politics are anchored in the classroom and playing out in school boards across America.

Republicans across the country have been zeroing in on how social issues are covered by teachers, including lessons on race, gender identity, sexual orientation and more. At least 35 states have introduced what is being called anti-critical race theory legislation that limits lessons about race and inequality which are perceived to be divisive by Republican bill supporters.

The country saw the power of "parental rights" and education play out in the Virginia election, where the now-governor was propelled to victory by focusing on those exact issues. Experts say that Democrats have to pay close attention to these debates and shift the conversation away from the culture wars to avoid losses at the ballot box in 2022. But students themselves are caught in the middle, especially those in vulnerable groups who are suffering as a result, experts say.

Parental Rights

While education has always been a key issue in America, it has gained steam in the past two years a proxy for the culture wars that were intensified during the pandemic. Many Republicans have been pushing back against what they believe to be aspects of public education systems run amok, first with COVID-related restrictions and then with issues like race and sexuality, attempting to restrict and refocus discussions. The Florida legislature recently passed the deeply controversial Parental Rights Education Bill, dubbed the "Don't Say Gay" bill by LGBTQ activists, which would limit what some classrooms can teach about sexual orientation and gender identity.

Under the new legislation, these lessons "may not occur in kindergarten through grade 3 or in a manner that is not age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards." It's an effort that gives parents and guardians more control over what their children learn in school and that opponents say is overly broad. Similar bills from Republican legislators restricting LGBTQ education have crept up in several other states, including Tennessee, Arkansas, Montana and Georgia.

However, a new ABC News/IPSOS poll found that 62% of Americans oppose legislation that would prohibit classroom lessons about sexual orientation or gender identity in elementary school, while 37% of Americans support legislation that would. There have also been attempts to impart issues like structural racism and comprehensive sex education into school curricula. Especially since protests sparked by the killing of George Floyd, there has been a renewed push to highlight the role of racism in American history and institutions.

Many of those efforts have been lumped under the banner of "critical race theory," a discipline in higher education that teaches about racism in U.S legal systems. While it is not taught in K-12 classes, many legislators have been invoking critical race theory broadly in their arguments to attempt to restrict discussions of race in the classroom. What is taught in schools has typically been a state and local issue (with relatively recent exceptions like No Child Left Behind), impacting governor races across the country, according to experts. However, many experts now predict that the importance of education may extend nationally to the midterm elections.

A recent CNN poll found that 81% of respondents said education was either extremely or very important to them heading into the 2022 elections. Shavar Jeffries, the national president of political advocacy organization Democrats for Education Reform, said he believed that growing frustrations from parents on their involvement in education may be swaying them at the polls. Jeffries pointed to Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin's win in Virginia, after making education a centerpiece of his campaign and promising to “invest more in schools, raise teacher pay, and demand better performance from our schools." His slogan: "parents matter." “The 2022 midterms will hinge on Democrats’ ability to learn from these lessons and lead on education,” said Jeffries in a press release on Youngkin's win.

Republicans steer education debate

Joanna Rodriguez, a spokesperson for the Republican Governor Association, told ABC News that Republican governors said they are hearing from parents that they want a say in their children's education. Now, governors are channeling that energy, and believe a parent's say "needs to be codified into law."

Most, if not all, legislation that restricts LGBTQ content or race education in schools comes from Republican legislators. "As we begin to see those successes -- with those surface-level successes, and public opinion changing -- we also begin to have these very big conversations around the nation's history and inequality within the nation's history," Rigueur told ABC News. The debate even made it into the White House, with the Trump administration issuing its 1776 Report in opposition to the 1619 project which reframes the story of America by placing "slavery and its continuing legacy at the center of the [country's] national narrative," according to the project website.

Rigueur said that so-called "culture warriors" are trying to channel the fears and vulnerabilities of some parents to turn back the clock on social progress. "One of the fastest ways to get parents to rally around a cause is to [imply] that schools are teaching something that's inappropriate … something dangerous," Rigueur said. "It is a relatively easy way to get parents, who often feel powerless in the education process, deeply invested in order to change both the curriculum and the subject matter that their children have access to."

#### <<< INSERT IMPACT >>>

### 1NC — Heg/Good

#### Heg decline causes global nuclear war.

Wright ’20 — Thomas; Director of the Center on the United States and Europe and a Senior Fellow in the Project on International Order and Strategy at the Brookings Institution. April 2020; “The Folly of Retrenchment”; *Foreign Affairs*; <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2020-02-10/folly-retrenchment>; //CYang

The realists and the progressives arguing for retrenchment differ in their assumptions, logic, and intentions. The realists tend to be more pessimistic about the prospects for peace and frame their arguments in hardheaded terms, whereas the progressives downplay the consequences of American withdrawal and make a moral case against the current grand strategy. But they share a common claim: that the United States would be better off if it dramatically reduced its global military footprint and security commitments.

This is a false promise, for a number of reasons. First, retrenchment would worsen regional security competition in Europe and Asia. The realists recognize that the U.S. military presence in Europe and Asia does dampen security competition, but they claim that it does so at [too high a price](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/restraint-new-foundation-us-grand-strategy) — and one that, at any rate, should be paid by U.S. allies in the regions themselves. Although pulling back would invite regional security competition, realist retrenchers admit, the United States could be safer in a more dangerous world because regional rivals would check one another. This is a perilous gambit, however, because regional conflicts often end up implicating U.S. interests. They might thus end up drawing the United States back in after it has left — resulting in a much more dangerous venture than heading off the conflict in the first place by staying. Realist retrenchment reveals a hubris that the United States can control consequences and prevent crises from erupting into war.

The progressives’ view of regional security is similarly flawed. These retrenchers reject the idea that regional security competition will intensify if the United States leaves. In fact, they argue, U.S. alliances often promote competition, as in the Middle East, where U.S. support for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates has emboldened those countries in their cold war with Iran. But this logic does not apply to Europe or Asia, where U.S. allies have behaved responsibly. A U.S. pullback from those places is more likely to embolden the regional powers. Since 2008, Russia has [invaded](https://www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine) two of its neighbors that are not members of NATO, and if the Baltic states were no longer protected by a U.S. security guarantee, it is conceivable that Russia would test the boundaries with gray-zone warfare. In East Asia, a U.S. withdrawal would force Japan to increase its defense capabilities and change its constitution to enable it to compete with China on its own, straining relations with South Korea.

The second problem with retrenchment involves nuclear proliferation. If the United States pulled out of NATO or ended its alliance with Japan, as many realist advocates of retrenchment recommend, some of its allies, no longer protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella, would be tempted to acquire nuclear weapons of their own. Unlike the progressives for retrenchment, the realists are comfortable with that result, since they see deterrence as a stabilizing force. Most Americans are not so sanguine, and rightly so. There are good reasons to worry about [nuclear proliferation](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-10-15/do-nuclear-weapons-matter): nuclear materials could end up in the hands of terrorists, states with less experience might be more prone to nuclear accidents, and nuclear powers in close proximity have shorter response times and thus conflicts among them have a greater chance of spiraling into escalation.

Third, retrenchment would heighten nationalism and xenophobia. In Europe, a U.S. withdrawal would send the message that every country must fend for itself. It would therefore empower the far-right groups already making this claim — such as the Alternative for Germany, the League in Italy, and the National Front in France — while undermining the centrist democratic leaders there who told their populations that they could rely on the United States and NATO. As a result, Washington would lose leverage over the domestic politics of individual allies, particularly younger and more fragile democracies such as Poland. And since these nationalist populist groups are almost always protectionist, retrenchment would damage U.S. economic interests, as well. Even more alarming, many of the right-wing nationalists that retrenchment would empower have called for greater accommodation of China and Russia.

A fourth problem concerns regional stability after global retrenchment. The most likely end state is a spheres-of-influence system, whereby China and Russia dominate their neighbors, but such an order is inherently unstable. The lines of demarcation for such spheres tend to be unclear, and there is no guarantee that China and Russia will not seek to move them outward over time. Moreover, the United States cannot simply grant other major powers a sphere of influence — the countries that would fall into those realms have agency, too. If the United States ceded [Taiwan](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-02-15/will-china-seize-taiwan) to China, for example, the Taiwanese people could say no. The current U.S. policy toward the country is working and may be sustainable. Withdrawing support from Taiwan against its will would plunge cross-strait relations into chaos. The entire idea of letting regional powers have their own spheres of influence has an imperial air that is at odds with modern principles of sovereignty and international law.

A fifth problem with retrenchment is that it lacks domestic support. The American people may favor greater burden sharing, but there is no evidence that they are onboard with a withdrawal from Europe and Asia. As a survey conducted in 2019 by the [Chicago Council on Global Affairs](https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/publication/rejecting-retreat) found, seven out of ten Americans believe that maintaining military superiority makes the United States safer, and almost three-quarters think that alliances contribute to U.S. security. A 2019 [Eurasia Group Foundation poll](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/9QHRCwpR0mHqMQmCVthSz?domain=egfound.org) found that over 60 percent of Americans want to maintain or increase defense spending. As it became apparent that China and Russia would benefit from this shift toward retrenchment, and as the United States’ democratic allies objected to its withdrawal, the domestic political backlash would grow. One result could be a prolonged foreign policy debate that would cause the United States to oscillate between retrenchment and reengagement, creating uncertainty about its commitments and thus raising the risk of miscalculation by Washington, its allies, or its rivals.

Realist and progressive retrenchers like to argue that the architects of the United States’ postwar foreign policy naively sought to remake the world in its image. But the real revisionists are those who argue for retrenchment, a geopolitical experiment of unprecedented scale in modern history. If this camp were to have its way, Europe and Asia — two stable, peaceful, and prosperous regions that form the two main pillars of the U.S.-led order — would be plunged into an era of uncertainty.

### AT: Heg Unethical

#### US military presence is non-coercive and a force for good — allies welcome our troops because of the security and economic benefits.

Timothy Kane ‘19. JP Conte Fellow in Immigration Studies at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University; PhD in economics from UC San Diego. "The United States as a Promethean Power." Hoover Institution. 6-17-2019. <https://www.hoover.org/research/united-states-promethean-power>

The global scope of American military power has been described in many ways: hegemony, primacy, and unipolarity. Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth (2012)1 cover the nuances of the terminology well, and I agree with their preference for the term “Deep Engagement” that Joseph Nye coined in a 1995 article.2 The complex patterns and nuances of engagement remain poorly understood, with a focus on conflict that ignores the preponderance of cases, where U.S. forces have been peacefully based for decades. In short, foreign policy has focused on the heat instead of the light — countless studies, essays, and books on Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq stand in contrast to the negligible attention given to countries where the U.S. maintained large-scale and long-term troop basing such as Belgium, Korea, Turkey, and Kuwait.

Is the United States an empire? We may just as well debate whether an elephant most closely resembles a Tyrannosaurus Rex or Triceratops. Some will point to the imperial characteristics that are reflected in the United States force posture. But characteristics of dinosaurs or empires (size, martial strength, breadth) really have no meaning in a world where that entire order is extinct. The 21st century is filled with a new order of nation-states, markedly different from eras prior to 1945.

American power is best understood not by its type: hard, soft, or smart, but its motivation. This is not to say the “imperial” motivation has disappeared from human affairs; self-preservation and domination are instinctive human qualities. But there is a new aspect to international relations that has been in place for more than a century, a form of altruism, illustrated by the widespread support that exists in the U.S. and other countries for universal human rights. For many decades now, nations have routinely sought to advance something beyond their narrow national interests. I call this a Promethean motivation, and America a Promethean power.

The phrase is rooted in the myth of Prometheus, the rebellious god of ancient Greek mythology who stole fire from Zeus and gave it to the human race, sparking the beginning of technology, growth, civilization, and prosperity. Zeus was the ruler of the Gods of Olympus, archetype of the emperor/king. The Gods were rulers, and humans were mere subjects. Prometheus represents rebellion, the trickster God, undercutting the authority of the imperial order. Legend has it that Prometheus tricked Zeus — repeatedly — in order to help uplift the human race.

Critics of American intervention reflexively use the term “imperial” when discussing foreign affairs. By far the dominant theme of imperialism in American foreign policy has been voiced by Leftist thinkers such as Howard Zinn, Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, and Gore Vidal. But since 1990, the end of the Cold War, neo-isolationists on the right have adopted the term as well, notably Pat Buchanan and Congressman Ron Paul. Thus the tendency is for thinkers on the political extremes — globalists on the left, nationalists on the right — to find common cause, whereas centrists tend to view American power more favorably, as do many foreign scholars.

Following the 9/11 attacks and concerns about state failure abroad, proponents of American intervention began suggesting American empire in explicit and favorable ways. Such voices included Richard Haas, Sebastian Mallaby, and Max Boot. The fullest expression of this new theme is found in Colossus, a 2004 book by Niall Ferguson3 (now a colleague at the Hoover Institution), who argued “not merely that the United States is an empire, but that it always has been an empire” and that the ultimate threat to the nation is its own “absence of a will to power.” The book is an unappreciated gem, but one wonders if Ferguson and his intellectual opponents share the same framework, which refuses to draw a line between imperial states of the 15th-19th centuries and the modern states of the 21st.

Ferguson wonderfully skewers the slipperiness of the term hegemon, which remains “the most popular term among writers on international relations.” Hegemony refers to a coercive state, like an empire, but one that aims to create mutually beneficial relationships. Trying to define the nature of state power by the distribution of benefits (exploitative or shared) misses the point. The point is: what are first principles that motivate foreign action?

America on the world stage should be understood in the context of its revolutionary founding. The republic’s anti-imperial birth and its sense of manifest destiny have colored foreign affairs from early on. Consider again Thomas Jefferson’s “Empire of Liberty,” which was more than a poetic phrase. In 1809 Jefferson wrote to his successor James Madison, “I am persuaded no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire & self-government.” In one of his final letters, written in 1824, Jefferson wrote, “where this progress will stop no-one can say. Barbarism has, in the meantime, been receding before the steady step of amelioration; and will in time, I trust, disappear from the earth.”

To simplify matters, let’s accept the framework of definitions on the Left (and also popularly understood by Americans throughout history). Define an empire as a nation that exploits foreign peoples, aiming to colonize them and/or extract their resources for the advantage of the empire and at the cost of the foreigners. And for the sake of clarity, recognize a bright line that distinguishes imperial relationships as those where subjugated peoples do not want but are forced to abide by foreign intervention. To be specific, the U.S. role in South Korea fails the imperial test, as does the post-1955 role of the U.S. in Germany and Japan. Those three countries accounted for nearly three-quarters of U.S. troop deployments since 1950. Not to mention Spain, Turkey, Taiwan, and Kuwait. All of these are voluntary alliances, and qualitatively distinct from forces based in Iraq.

For the Leftist criticism of American empire to hold, evidence of domination should be easy to see. One would expect to see the countries of the world that are occupied by American troops suffering economic decline as a result, or at a minimum a relative decline. Here the critique falls apart. The countries of the world that have hosted the greatest number of American troops since 1950 have grown the fastest economically. Furthermore, host countries have experienced faster declines in child mortality, faster increase in overall longevity, faster growth in infrastructure, and even greater improvements in the broadly measured human development index (HDI). Consider as evidence the average economic growth rates presented in table 2, reproduced from Jones and Kane (2012).4

The record shows that America’s engagement with allied nations is unequivocally beneficial for those countries. But the context is what matters for future policy choices. Public perceptions of world affairs are dominated by negatives: bombings in Iraqi cities, AIDS rampant in Africa, genocides, earthquakes. Foreign policy experts focus on negatives of a subtler nature: the dilemma over Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons, the poppy trade and corruption in Afghanistan, the strategic mystery that is China. Yet despite real and looming crises, the underlying theme of the American century is a patient march of human prosperity, deepening and broadening as economic growth unfolds in the free world.

The American strategy of patient, forward deployment of U.S. troops, even and especially when it is not self-interested, has benefitted our allies and the world. America’s engagement in Asia and Europe since 1945 created a security umbrella fostering peace and unprecedented prosperity. If this model were applied to the Middle East — supporting allies rather than hunting monsters — it would reshape the region’s future for the better. On this point, Fallows might agree.

The question that haunts contemporary foreign policy is not whether the U.S. military is a force for good around the globe. It is. The question is: Can Promethean power be sustained? Does the United States have the willpower to maintain a forward force posture?

### 1NC — Econ Brink/Link

#### The economy is on the brink but public perception matters most.

Bush ’7-12 — Daniel; White House Correspondent. July 12, 2022; "Joe Biden, some economists say recession not imminent, but public disagrees"; *Newsweek*; https://www.newsweek.com/joe-biden-some-economists-say-recession-not-imminent-public-disagrees-1723995; //CYang

President Joe Biden has insisted for months that the U.S. is not heading into a recession, pointing most recently to the latest jobs report as proof the economy is strong and on its way to a complete recovery from the pandemic.

But economists outside the White House, and many Americans, aren't so sure.

The debate around a potential recession reflects widespread concern about the state of the economy, underscoring Biden's struggle to convince most Americans that they're better off financially under him than his predecessor — a long standing litmus test that could spell doom for Democrats in the midterm elections this fall, and for Biden should he choose to run again in 2024.

In political terms, the public perception of a weak economy on the brink of recession may be much more important than the official determination, which is made by the National Bureau of Economic Research, a private nonprofit organization known as NBER, which most voters know little about.

### 1NC — Regulation

#### Rejection of neoliberalism is consistent with affirming capitalism as a net force for good.

Budolfson ’21 — Mark; PhD in Philosophy. Assistant Professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and Justice at the Rutgers School of Public Health and Center for Population–Level Bioethics May 7, 2021; "Arguments for Well-Regulated Capitalism, and Implications for Global Ethics, Food, Environment, Climate Change, and Beyond"; *Cambridge Core*; [https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ethics-and-international-affairs/article/abs/arguments-for-wellregulated-capitalism-and-implications-for-global-ethics-food-environment-climate-change-and-beyond/96F422D04E171EECDEF77312266AE9DD; //CYang](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ethics-and-international-affairs/article/abs/arguments-for-wellregulated-capitalism-and-implications-for-global-ethics-food-environment-climate-change-and-beyond/96F422D04E171EECDEF77312266AE9DD;%20//CYang)

Using the Argument for Well-Regulated Capitalism to Diagnose the Problems with Neoliberalism

The literature on political theory, ethics, and society generally, and on food ethics specifically, often includes critiques of neoliberalism as the alleged root of many problems, often as a synonym for the root of problems with capitalism.31 However, the argument previously made for well-regulated capitalism can help focus our attention on what the important problems are with neoliberalism (as well as with crony capitalism and other suboptimal forms of capitalism), and thus on what reforms and progress are genuinely needed. Recall that premise 2 defines well-regulated capitalism in terms of the conditions that are necessary (as well as sufficient, given assumptions like perfect information and complete markets),32 according to mainstream public and welfare economics, to generate ethically optimal outcomes; summarizing premise 2, these conditions are the following:

1. Regulation of externalities and public goods: optimal regulation of positive and negative externalities, including investments in public goods;

2. Distributive justice: redistribution to achieve equity and distributive justice;

3. Rule of law: rule of law, clearly defined property rights, basic rights as side constraints, and equitable redistribution for historical rights violations;

4. Free exchange: free exchange subject to the constraints of conditions 1, 2, and 3.

With this definition in hand, we can make a number of observations relevant to evaluating neoliberalism.

First, well-regulated capitalism need not ignore equity and justice. It is consistent with disagreement about what redistribution should happen for purposes of equity; some proponents favor large-scale redistribution, while others endorse a conception of equity that favors only minimal redistribution. What all proponents agree on is that whatever form of redistribution we need, it should happen within the structural framework of well-regulated capitalism. Similarly, proponents might disagree about the empirical reasons for how big the externality is associated with GHG emissions, but they agree on the basic framework of how they should be addressed within the theory of externalities and within this structure of well-regulated capitalism, more generally. Neither a concern for equity nor a concern for externalities such as environmental pollution provides a reason to reject capitalism per se, as we saw above.

Indeed, well-regulated capitalism is consistent with radical redistribution. If, for example, large reparations are required due to the historical injustices of colonialism, slavery, and resulting inequities, then well-regulated capitalism implies that large redistributions and corrections should happen as a matter of distributive justice (condition 2) and rule of law (condition 3). The argument for well-regulated capitalism does not itself take a stand on such specific issues, but rather argues that insofar as a correction of inequity and injustice is required, it should happen within this structural framework of well-regulated capitalism.

Second, the word “neoliberalism” is often used to refer to a particular undesirable form of capitalism that falls far short of well-regulated capitalism. Note that in ordinary language, economic systems that depart from the ideal of well-regulated capitalism are still regarded as forms of capitalism, insofar as they involve free exchange, the rule of law, and clearly defined property rights (in other words, the nonnormative parts of free exchange (condition 4) and the procedural justice components of the rule of law (condition 3)).33 Neoliberalism is often used to refer to forms of capitalism that incorporate only these limited features and none of the others. This brings into clear focus why such a form of capitalism is undesirable — because ignoring pollution, inequity, injustice, and failing to provide public goods in such a way leads to much worse outcomes for society than are possible, and outcomes that are highly unjust. However, proponents of capitalism would insist that the best solution is to adopt a better form of capitalism closer to the ideal that includes concerns for the regulation of externalities and public goods (condition 1), distributive justice (condition 2), and all aspects of the rule of law (condition 3).

### AT: Racial Capitalism

#### Racial capitalism doesn’t have causal explanatory power.

**Go, 21**—Professor of Sociology, University of Chicago (Julian, “Three Tensions in the Theory of Racial Capitalism,” Sociological Theory, Volume 39, Issue 1, 2021, dml)

Despite this emerging literature, the **relevance** of existing discussions of racial capitalism for sociological theory remains **unclear**. What might the racial capitalism literature teach us about **theories** or **conceptual frameworks** around race and capitalism? The problem is that the term racial capitalism **does not refer** to a “**theory**” in the sense of a “**singular logically integrated causal explanation**” (Calhoun 1995:5). The term refers **broadly** to relationships between racial inequality and capitalism, but the literature **does not specify** a single set of **causal relations** or **connections** between them. Nor does the literature offer **uniform concepts** or a **shared conceptual apparatus**. Given this, does the racial capitalism literature—by which I mean the scholars across different disciplines who centralize the term racial capitalism—have any relevance for theory at all?1

#### Racial hierarchy isn’t metaphysically intrinsic to capitalism, even if the two are empiricallyconnected.

**Go, 21**—Professor of Sociology, University of Chicago (Julian, “Three Tensions in the Theory of Racial Capitalism,” Sociological Theory, Volume 39, Issue 1, 2021, dml)

The final tension within racial capitalism is whether the interconnectedness of racial difference and capitalism is a **logical** or **contingent** necessity.6 If, as the racial capitalism literature suggests, slavery and its associated logics of racism have been **crucial** for the development of capitalism, and if global capitalism today **remains intertwined** with racial stratification, to **what extent** are these relations **intrinsic** to capitalism or **accidental**? Put differently, is capitalism **necessarily racist** (Fraser 2019; Lemann 2020)?7

For some, the relationship is only contingent. Walzer (2020) argued that in **some** countries, capitalism **proceeds along just fine**without racial difference, and if there is racial difference on a **global scale**, it is **historically contingent**. Although the **vast majority** of workers are **nonwhite**, Walzer suggested that this is **not** due to any **intrinsic logic** of capitalism but rather the **accident of demographics** (because **most** of the world is **nonwhite**, the **majority** of the world’s workers will be **nonwhite**). For this reason, Walzer suggested we disavow the racial capitalism concept. Alternatively, others claim that racism is indeed intrinsic to capitalism.8 There are two versions of this claim. One is that racism is necessary to divide the working class and legitimate the rule of the bourgeoisie. Racism is an ideological necessity of capitalism, justifying its unequal relations (Camp, Heatherton, and Karuka 2019; McCarthy 2016; Taylor 2016). “Capitalism requires inequality,” suggested Gilmore (2015), “and racism enshrines it.” A very different version, coming most predominantly from Fraser (2019), is that capitalism necessarily entails relations of exploitation and expropriation that feed off each other. Exploitation is the extraction of value from “free subjects” through wage labor. But expropriation, which includes slavery and colonialism, extracts value from racialized “dependent subjects” and is what enables exploitation to happen in the first place. Expropriation is “a necessary background condition for the exploitation of ‘workers’” (Fraser 2019) and therefore for capitalism itself. Capitalism is thus logically dependent upon racism.9

So what is the answer? Again, it helps differentiate between a theory of capital and a theory of capitalism. A theory of capitalism **might**demonstrate that race has been historically necessary for capitalist accumulation by reference to **empirical reality**: historically, capitalism and race have always been intertwined. But the claim that race is a **logical necessity** to capitalism would have to derive from a **theory of capital**, **not from empirics alone**. One would have to **deduce**, from the categories of Marx’s **theory**, the **necessity** of racism or racial differentiation in society. On this score, the arguments for the **logical necessity** of capitalism’s entanglements with race **fall short**.

Consider the argument that racism is necessary for capitalism because capitalism **requires** racist ideology to **divide** the working class. This is a **functionalist** argument that is **not functionalist enough**, for it **effaces** the logical possibility of **functional substitution**. We may find that racism has **historically always functioned** to divide the working class, but **in theory** other “**isms**” could serve the **same function**. There is **nothing inherent** to the logic of capital that **requires** race to be the ideology of division (Lebowitz 2006:39).10 Why not **ethnicity**? Why not **sexuality**? ConsiderFraser’s argument that **expropriation** is **intrinsic** to capitalism and that racial differentiation **must be too**. It is **plausible** and indeed **persuasive** to claim that **expropriation** is necessary for capitalism, but it is **less persuasive** to claim that racial difference is **logically necessary** for expropriation. **Gender** could **easily** serve as the **main axis**of dependent classification (and, to feminist-Marxist thought, it has served that function), as could **ethnicity**, **religion**, **sexuality**, or **citizenship**. Fraser would have to show that **expropriation**, and hence **capitalism**, **requires** a racial classification as opposed to **other** social categories. This is a **task left unfulfilled**.11

### 1NC — Presumption

#### Symbolically affirming their method despite its lack of ties to the material strengthens power.

Rigakos and Law, 9—Assistant Professor of Law at Carleton University AND PhD, Legal Studies, Carleton University (George and Alexandra “Risk, Realism and the Politics of Resistance,” Critical Sociology 35(1) 79-103, dml)

McCann and March (1996: 244) next set out the ‘justification for treating everyday practices as significant’ suggested by the above literature. First, the works studied are concerned with proving people are not ‘duped’ by their surroundings. At the level of consciousness, subjects ‘are ironic, critical, realistic, even sophisticated’ (1996: 225). But McCann and March remind us that earlier radical or Left theorists have made similar arguments without resorting to stories of everyday resistance in order to do so. Second, everyday resistance on a discursive level is said to reaffirm the subject’s dignity. But this too causes a problem for the authors because they:

query why subversive ‘assertions of self’ should bring dignity and psychological empowerment when they produce no greater material benefits or changes in relational power … By standards of ‘realism’, … subjects given to avoidance and ‘lumping it’ may be the most sophisticated of all. (1996: 227)

Thus, their criticism boils down to two main points. First, everyday resistance fails to tell us any more about so-called false consciousness than was already known among earlier Left theorists; and second, that a focus on discursive resistance ignores the role of material conditions in helping to shape identity.

Indeed, absent a broader political struggle or chance at effective resistance it would seem to the authors that ‘powerlessness is learned out of the accumulated experiences of futility and entrapment’ (1996: 228). A lamentable prospect, but nonetheless a source of closure for the governmentality theorist. In his own meta-analysis of studies on resistance, Rubin (1996: 242) finds that ‘discursive practices that neither alter material conditions nor directly challenge broad structures are nevertheless’ considered by the authors he examined ‘the stuff out of which power is made and remade’. If this sounds familiar, it is because the authors studied by McCann, March and Rubin found their claims about everyday resistance on the same understanding of power and government employed by postmodern theorists of risk. Arguing against celebrating forms of resistance that fail to alter broader power relations or material conditions is, in part, recognizing the continued ‘real’ existence of identifiable, powerful groups (classes). In downplaying the worth of everyday forms of resistance (arguing that these acts are not as worthy of the label as those acts which bring about lasting social change), Rubin appears to be taking issue with a locally focused vision of power and identity that denies the possibility of opposing domination at the level of ‘constructs’ such as class.

Rubin (1996: 242) makes another argument about celebratory accounts of everyday resistance that bears consideration:

[T]hese authors generally do not differentiate between practices that reproduce power and those that alter power. [The former] might involve pressing that power to become more adept at domination or to dominate differently, or it might mean precluding alternative acts that would more successfully challenge power. … [I]t is necessary to do more than show that such discursive acts speak to, or engage with, power. It must also be demonstrated that such acts add up to or engender broader changes.

In other words, some of the acts of everyday resistance may in the real world, through their absorption into mechanisms of power, reinforce the localized domination that they supposedly oppose. The implications of this argument can be further clarified when we study the way ‘resistance’ is dealt with in a risk society.

Risk theorists already understand that every administrative system has holes which can be exploited by those who learn about them. That is what makes governmentality work: the supposed governor is in turn governed – in part through the noncompliance of subjects (Foucault, 1991a; Rose and Miller, 1992). For example, where employees demonstrate unwillingness to embrace technological changes in the workplace, management consultants can create:

a point of entry, but also a ‘problem’ that their ‘packages’ are designed to resolve. … In short, consultants readily constitute certain forms of conduct as ‘resistance to technology’ as this gives them some purchase on its reform by identifying a space in which expertise can be brought to bear in the exercise of power. Resistance consequently plays the role of continuously provoking extensions, revisions and refinements of those same practices which it confronts. (Knights and Vurdubakis, 1994: 80)

This appears to be a very different kind of resistance from that contemplated by Rubin, but perhaps not so different from that of the authors whom he and McCann and March critique: those whose analysis ends at the discursive production of noncompliance. Instead, the above account is of a resistance that almost invariably helps power to work better. A conclusion in the present day that ominously foreshadows the futuristic, dystopic risk assemblage described by Bogard (1996).

Another example of the ‘resolution’ of resistance proposed above is the institution of a tool library described by Shearing (2001: 204–5). In this parable, a business deals with the issue of tool theft on the part of workers by installing a ‘lending library’ of tools instead of engaging in vigorous prosecution and jeopardizing worker morale. While the parable is meant to indicate a difference between actuarial and more traditional (moral) forms of justice, it also demonstrates how an act that may be considered ‘resistant’ is incorporated without conflict into the workplace loss-prevention scheme – an eminently preferable, ‘forward-looking’ solution within the logic of risk management. The same is possible in the case of more discursive forms of resistance. If I do not see myself as a Guinness man, for example, market researchers will do their best to adapt Guinness to the way I do see myself (Miller and Rose, 1997). The end result, of course, is that I purchase the beer. As manifested in a form of justice (Shearing and Johnston, 2005), it always consolidates, tempers emotions, cools the analysis, reconciles factions, and always relentlessly moves forward, assimilating as it grows. In this sense, therefore, Bogard’s ‘social science fiction’ actually pre-supposes and logically extends Shearing’s (2001) rather cheery and benevolent rendering of risk thinking. In this context of governmentality theory – as self-described and lauded for its political non-prescription by its own pundits – the acts or attitudes described as resistant are, in the end, absorbed by those who govern. Resistance as an oppositional force – that pushes against or has the potential to take power – is theoretically and politically neutralized. In the neutralization process, power is reproduced.

So, along with McCann and March’s observations that everyday resistance adds little to our understanding of false consciousness and that it denies the role of material factors in shaping identity, we can add Rubin’s two main criticisms of everyday resistance: it relies on an inaccurate understanding of power, and acts of resistance which supposedly emancipate actually may reinforce domination. All four of these criticisms demand the same thing: to know what is really going on, to get an adequate grasp of the social.

### 1NC — IR Scenario Planning Good

#### IR scenario planning and probabilistic forecasting is pedagogically valuable — it’s accurate, breaks down biases and solves any Ks of non-rigorous approaches.

Scoblic & Tetlock ’20 — Peter J. Scoblic; Co-Founder of Event Horizon Strategies, a Senior Fellow in the International Security Program at New America, and a Fellow at Harvard’s Kennedy School. Philip E. Tetlock; Leonore Annenberg University Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. October 13, 2020; "A Better Crystal Ball: The Right Way to Think About the Future"; *Foreign Affairs*; [edited for gendered and ableist language] https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-10-13/better-crystal-ball; //CYang

Every policy is a prediction. Tax cuts will boost the economy. Sanctions will slow Iran’s nuclear program. Travel bans will limit the spread of COVID-19. These claims all posit a causal relationship between means and ends. Regardless of party, ideology, or motive, no policymaker wants ~~his or her~~ [their] recommended course of action to produce unanticipated consequences. This makes every policymaker a forecaster. But forecasting is difficult, particularly when it comes to geopolitics — a domain in which the rules of the game are poorly understood, information is invariably incomplete, and expertise often confers surprisingly little advantage in predicting future events.

These challenges present practical problems for decision-makers in the U.S. government. On the one hand, the limits of imagination create blind spots that policymakers tend to fill in with past experience. They often assume that tomorrow’s dangers will look like yesterday’s, retaining the same mental map even as the territory around them changes dramatically. On the other hand, if policymakers addressed all imaginable threats, the United States would need so large and expensive a national security establishment that the country could do little else. By many measures, it is nearing this point already. The United States has military bases in more than 70 countries and territories, boasts more than four million federal employees with security clearances, and fields 1.3 million active-duty troops, with another million in reserve. According to one estimate, the United States spends $1.25 trillion annually on national security. When it comes to anticipating the future, then, the United States is getting the worst of both worlds. It spends untold sums of money preparing yet still finds itself the victim of surprise — fundamentally ill equipped for defining events, such as the emergence of COVID-19.

There is a better way, one that would allow the United States to make decisions based not on simplistic extrapolations of the past but on smart estimates of the future. It involves reconciling two approaches often seen to be at philosophical loggerheads: scenario planning and probabilistic forecasting. Each approach has a fundamentally different assumption about the future. Scenario planners maintain that there are so many possible futures that one can imagine them only in terms of plausibility, not probability. By contrast, forecasters believe it is possible to calculate the odds of possible outcomes, thereby transforming amorphous uncertainty into quantifiable risk. Because each method has its strengths, the optimal approach is to combine them. This holistic method would provide policymakers with both a range of conceivable futures and regular updates as to which one is likely to emerge. For once, they could make shrewd bets about tomorrow, today.

PLANNING FOR UNCERTAINTY

Although widely used in business today, the first element of this duo — scenario planning — grew out of post–World War II national security concerns, specifically the overwhelming uncertainty of the nuclear revolution. Previously, martial experience was thought to offer some guidance through the fog of war. Nuclear weapons, however, presented a novel problem. With the newfound ability to destroy each other as functioning societies in a matter of minutes or hours, the United States and the Soviet Union faced an unprecedented situation. And unprecedented situations are, by definition, uncertain. They lack any analogy to the past that would allow decision-makers to calculate the odds of possible outcomes.

Still, early U.S. efforts at nuclear-war planning sought to turn that problem into a calculable one. During World War II, the Allies had great success with the new field of operations research, the application of statistical methods to improve the outcome of tactical engagements. After the war, the RAND Corporation — a “think factory” that the U.S. Air Force established as a repository for leading researchers — hoped to parlay this success into a new, more rational approach to war, based less on the intuition of generals and more on the quantification afforded by models and data.

Unfortunately, methods that worked at the tactical level proved nearly farcical at the strategic level. As the historian David Jardini has chronicled, RAND’s first attempt to model a nuclear strategy ignored so many key variables that it nonsensically called for deploying a fleet of aging turboprop bombers that carried no bombs because the United States did not have enough fissile material to arm them; the goal was simply to overwhelm Soviet air defenses, with no regard for the lives of the pilots. In the wake of such failures, it became clear that analysts could not entirely banish uncertainty. In 1960, even Charles Hitch, a man predisposed to calculation by dint of being RAND’s top economist and president of what was then the Operations Research Society of America, cautioned, “No other characteristic of decision-making is as pervasive as uncertainty.”

That, of course, raised the question of how to formulate sensible strategy. Unexpectedly, it was a RAND mathematician and physicist, Herman Kahn, who offered an answer. If the lived past could not shape strategy, perhaps the imagined future could. Frustrated with RAND’s attempts to scientize war, Kahn devoted himself to crafting scenarios in the pursuit of “ersatz experience” that would prepare the United States for the future through what were essentially thought experiments. Policymakers could use these scenarios as “artificial ‘case histories’ and ‘historical anecdotes,’” Kahn wrote, thus making up for a lack of actual examples or meaningful data. They would provide analogies where there were none.

Early methods of generating scenarios were often freewheeling and discursive. But after scenario planning migrated to the business world, it took on more structured forms. The most recognizable is a two-by-two matrix in which planners identify two critical uncertainties and, taking the extreme values of each, construct four possible future worlds. Regardless of the specific shape they take, rigorous scenario-planning exercises all involve identifying key uncertainties and then imagining how different combinations could yield situations that are vastly different from what mere extrapolation of the present would suggest. By then “backcasting” — taking one of these imagined futures as a given and asking what conditions produced it — scenario planners derive both a story and a system. They come up with a plausible narrative of how a future happened and an internal logic that describes how it operates. Scenarios are not supposed to be predictive. They are meant to be provocative, challenging planners’ assumptions, shaking up their mental models of how the world works, and giving them the cognitive flexibility to better sense, shape, and adapt to the emerging future.

The pandemic has occasioned a renaissance in the use of scenarios, as organizations from think tanks to technology companies grapple with the question of what a “new normal” might look like and how soon it might arrive. But the national security community has long used scenarios to address some of its most wicked problems — particularly high-stakes issues that are in flux, such as the U.S.-Chinese relationship. This past summer, RAND released a report on Chinese grand strategy. It concluded with four scenarios that offered brief vignettes of China’s possible place in the world 30 years from now. “Triumphant China” dominates the world stage in most domains, with a modern military and an innovative economy. “Ascendant China” is the preeminent power not only in Asia but in other regions, as well. “Stagnant China” has suffered from low growth and faces social unrest. And “Imploding China” experiences a crisis of existential proportions, in which domestic instability undercuts the country’s international influence.

Although comprehensive, the wide range of these scenarios highlights the chief challenge of the method: If China’s potential futures encompass rise, fall, and everything in between, how can they aid in the formulation of strategy and policy? Although this cornucopia of scenarios could lead policymakers to develop strategies that would improve the United States’ position no matter which future comes to pass, in practice, having too many different versions of the future can make it nearly impossible to act. Good scenario planning puts boundaries on the future, but those limits are often not enough for decision-makers to work with. They need to know which future is most likely.

TURNING UNCERTAINTY INTO RISK

Probabilistic forecasting — the second element of the duo — tries to address that shortcoming. Forecasters see scenario planning as maddeningly vague or, worse, dangerously misleading. They not only point to the lack of consistent evidence to support the alleged benefits of scenario planning; they also argue that the compelling nature of a good story can trigger a host of biases. Such biases fuel irrationality, in part by tricking decision-makers into making basic statistical errors. For example, even though a detailed narrative may seem more plausible than a sparse one, every contingent event decreases the likelihood that a given scenario will actually transpire. Nevertheless, people frequently confuse plausibility for probability, assigning greater likelihood to specific stories that have the ring of truth. They might, illogically, consider a war with China triggered by a clash in the Taiwan Strait more likely than a war with China triggered by any possible cause.

In contrast to scenario planning’s emphasis on imagination, forecasting tends to rely on calculation. Deductive approaches use models or laws that describe the behavior of a system to predict its future state, much like Newtonian mechanics allows astronomers to anticipate the position of the planets. Inductive approaches do not require such understanding, merely enough data and the assumption that the future will in some way reflect the past. This is how Netflix anticipates what you might like to watch or Amazon what you might want to buy, based purely on your previous actions. Increasingly, thanks to advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning, analysts use hybrid approaches. Meteorology is a good example, in which researchers combine sophisticated models and big data collection, which feed into each other and enable ever-better weather forecasts.

International politics poses a challenge for these methods because the laws governing the system are elusive or highly debatable, relevant data points are often unavailable or unprecedented, and thousands of variables interact in countless ways. History functions as a series of unfolding events, with highly contingent branching paths sometimes separated by mere happenstance. Tectonic shifts can hinge on seemingly mundane occurrences. That makes it hard to deduce future events from theoretical principles or to induce them from past experience.

As a result, historians and foreign policy experts are often bad forecasters. In 2005, one of us, Philip Tetlock, published a study demonstrating that seasoned political experts had trouble outperforming “dart-tossing chimpanzees” — random guesses — when it came to predicting global events. The experts fared even worse against amateur news junkies. Overconfidence was the norm, not the exception. When experts expressed 100 percent certainty that events would occur, those events materialized only 80 percent of the time. Yet there were pockets of excellence amid this unimpressive performance. Those who were surest that they understood the forces driving the political system (“hedgehogs,” in the philosopher Isaiah Berlin’s terminology) fared significantly worse than their humbler colleagues, who did not shy from complexity, approaching problems with greater curiosity and open-mindedness (“foxes”).

This distinction caught the eye of the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity, which set up a geopolitical “forecasting tournament,” in which Tetlock participated. He recruited a team of volunteers to provide probabilistic answers to sharply defined questions, such as “Will the euro fall below $1.20 in the next year?” or “Will the president of Tunisia flee to exile in the next six months?” By measuring the difference between estimates and the actual occurrence of events, Tetlock and his colleagues could calculate a score showing how “well-calibrated” the expectations of any given forecaster were with reality. By analyzing these data, Tetlock discovered that the key to more accurate geopolitical forecasting was to take people who were naturally numerate and open-minded, train them to think probabilistically and avoid common biases, and then group them so they could leverage the “wisdom of the crowd.” The best forecasters would approach seemingly intractable questions by decomposing them into parts, researching the past frequency of similar (if not precisely analogous) events, adjusting the odds based the uniqueness of the situation, and continually updating their estimates as new information emerged. By the end of the tournament, Tetlock’s top performers had achieved scores that were 30 percent better than those of career CIA analysts with access to classified information. Somehow, they had transmuted uncertainty into measurable risk.

The advantages of being able to put realistic odds on possible futures are obvious. It gives you a peek into the future. But even the best forecasters have their limits. If asked to predict events three to five years out, their performance becomes increasingly indistinguishable from random guessing. Still, many critical policy questions are short term: perhaps the most famous recent example concerned whether Osama bin Laden was in the Abbottabad compound in May 2011. Highly consequential short-term questions now include when a COVID-19 vaccine will be widely available. As of this writing, the smart money (68 percent probability) is on or before March 31, 2021.

But to the extent that leaders need to make consequential, difficult-to-reverse decisions that will play out over the long run — the strategic choices that will give the United States an advantage over time — it becomes more difficult to link forecasts to policymaking. Well-calibrated forecasters, for instance, can estimate the likelihood that a skirmish with the Chinese navy in the South China Sea will result in at least two American deaths by December 31. But what policymakers really want to know is the extent to which China will threaten U.S. interests in the coming years and decades.

Answers to that type of inquiry are beyond the reach of forecasters because it is impossible to define precisely what constitutes an interest or a threat. To provide forecasts, questions must pass the “clairvoyance test,” which is to say that were it possible to pose the question to a genuine clairvoyant, that omniscient seer must be able to answer it without having to ask for clarification. “Will I fall in love?” is not a forecasting question. “Will I marry Jane Smith by this time next year?” is.

From a policy perspective, then, the greatest challenge to forecasts is that although they can clarify slices of the future, they do not necessarily provide enough information to inform decision-making. Indeed, making a decision based on one specific forecast would be a mistake: the estimated probability of an event is a poor proxy for the significance of that event. “Will Vladimir Putin relinquish power within the next two years?” is a far different question from “What would Vladimir Putin’s abdication of power mean for U.S.-Russian relations?” The problem with forecasting is thus the exact opposite of the problem with scenarios: if the latter often provide too panoramic a view of the future to be useful, the former provides too narrow a glimpse.

AN ANSWER FOR THE FUTURE

How should these different approaches to anticipating the future be linked? The answer lies in developing clusters of questions that give early, forecastable indications of which envisioned future is likely to emerge, thus allowing policymakers to place smarter bets sooner. Instead of evaluating the likelihood of a long-term scenario as a whole, question clusters allow analysts to break down potential futures into a series of clear and forecastable signposts that are observable in the short run. Questions should be chosen not only for their individual diagnostic value but also for their diversity as a set, so that each cluster provides the greatest amount of information about which imagined future is emerging — or which elements of which envisioned futures are emerging. As a result, the seductiveness of a particular narrative will not tempt decision-makers into mistaking plausibility for probability. Instead, preliminary answers to specific questions can provide a simple metric for judging in advance how the future is most likely to unfold — a metric that analysts can then refine once the event in question takes place or not.

Consider the scenarios RAND produced as part of its analysis of China’s grand strategy. The four scenarios envisioned for 2050 — “Triumphant China,” “Ascendant China,” “Stagnant China,” and “Imploding China” — can be roughly placed on a classic two-by-two matrix, with the strength of China’s political leadership on one axis and the strength of China’s economy on the other. A cluster of questions that would give a heads-up that history is on a “Triumphant China” trajectory might include “On December 31, 2020, will China exercise de facto control over Itu Aba (or Taiping Island) in the South China Sea (which is currently under the de facto control of Taiwan)?” “Will China’s GDP growth in 2023 exceed ten percent?” and “Among African audiences, when will the China Global Television Network have a higher weekly viewership than Voice of America?”

These questions are useful both individually and collectively. Knowing that top forecasters see an increased chance of China controlling the island (from, say, a ten percent probability to a 20 percent probability), for instance, would provide immediate tactical value to the U.S. Navy. It should not necessarily tip the balance in the debate over whether China will be “triumphant,” but if all the forecasts resulting from the question cluster are trending in the same direction, the United States may want to recalibrate its strategy. As forecasts change and individual questions are answered by the course of events, the view of the far-off future becomes a little bit clearer. Analysts can then update their scenarios and generate new clusters of questions. They can thus develop a continually evolving sense of plausible futures, as well as a probabilistic estimate of which policies will yield the most bang for the buck today.

This method resembles the U.S. defense and intelligence community’s use of indications and warnings. In the early 1960s, for example, the National Intelligence Council developed a list of actions — large troop maneuvers, for instance — that might precede an attack by the Sino-Soviet bloc. The idea was that tactical changes might provide an early warning of future strategic shifts. Indications and warnings have come to play an important role in many national security scenarios. Unfortunately, there are potential problems with scouring today’s environment for hints of tomorrow. For one thing, as psychological research shows, having envisioned a particular scenario, humans are not only inclined to consider it more likely; they are also more prone to see evidence of its emergence—a form of confirmation bias that U.S. intelligence has battled for decades. For another, analysts are not particularly good at discerning in real time which events matter—which signposts are actually indicative of a particular future. Developments initially considered to be earthshattering may turn out to be significantly less important, whereas a story buried well beneath the day’s headlines can end up changing the course of history. In a statistical analysis of nearly two million State Department cables sent in the 1970s, for instance, one recent study demonstrated that U.S. diplomats were often bad at estimating the historical importance of contemporaneous events.

Linking scenarios to clusters of forecasting questions mitigates these problems. First, because the questions must be precise enough to pass the clairvoyance test, there is no wiggle room about what constitutes, say, large troop maneuvers. Second, because questions that disprove hypotheses often yield the greatest information, selecting questions for their diagnostic value decreases forecasters’ susceptibility to confirmation bias. Third, much as diversified stock portfolios spread risk through multiple, uncorrelated investments, the diversity of question clusters prevents forecasters from overweighting a potentially unimportant signpost and mistakenly concluding that a particular scenario is coming to pass. Finally, and most important, because question clusters yield forecasts, one can attach meaningful probabilities to the likelihood that particular events will occur in the future. This provides a sort of advance early warning system. An event does not need to actually transpire for the United States to have actionable information. That, more than anything else, gives question clusters an advantage over traditional indications and warnings.

PLANNING IN PRACTICE

To be useful, any vision of the future must be connected to decisions in the present. Scholars and practitioners often claim that scenario planning and probabilistic forecasting are incompatible given their different assumptions and goals. In fact, they mesh well. A scenario planner’s conviction that the future is uncertain need not clash with a forecaster’s quest to translate uncertainty into risk. Rather, the challenge lies in understanding the limits of each method. Question clusters make it possible to leverage the strength of each approach, transforming the abstract long term into the concrete short term so that leaders can understand the future quickly and act to stave off danger, seize opportunity, and strengthen national security.

The greatest barrier to a clearer vision of the future is not philosophical but organizational: the potential of combining scenario planning with probabilistic forecasting means nothing if it is not implemented. On occasion, the intelligence community has used forecasting tournaments to inform its estimates, but that is only a first step. Policymakers and consumers of intelligence are the ones who must understand the importance of forecasts and incorporate them into their decisions. Too often, operational demands — the daily business of organizations, from weighty decisions to the mundane — fix attention on the current moment.

Overcoming the tyranny of the present requires high-level action and broad, sustained effort. Leaders across the U.S. government must cultivate the cognitive habits of top forecasters throughout their organizations, while also institutionalizing the imaginative processes of scenario planners. The country’s prosperity, its security, and, ultimately, its power all depend on policymakers’ ability to envision long-term futures, anticipate short-term developments, and use both projections to inform everything from the budget to grand strategy. Giving the future short shrift only shortchanges the United States.

## nato link / ban nato cp

### NATO Good CP---1NC

#### The United States federal government should reduce defense spending and pressure other NATO member states to center all cooperative ventures around the promotion of economic, gender, LGBTQ+, and racial equality.

#### “NATO bad” causes disastrous foreign policy choices -- other bad actors exist besides the US -- letting Russia overrun small and defenseless countries ensures failure -- but reducing military spending while repurposing our alliances towards beneficial cooperative activities solves all of their criticisms of alliances.

Burmilla 19 [Ed Burmila, assistant professor of political science, “Naughty by NATO,” September 2019, *The Baffler* 47]

The “crises” created by the neoliberal flavored military-foreign policy establishment will not always be so easy to answer correctly. Imagine that a hypothetical perfect leftist finds his or her way into the White House. He or she will obviously be smart enough not to start stupid wars as stunts. But what happens if, for example, Vladimir Putin or his successors seek to bolster their domestic standing by invading the Baltic States—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia—to reclaim them as former parts of the USSR? What if another country, say China or Russia, uses non-state actors as a proxy to launch a coordinated attack via the internet on critical U.S. infrastructure? “LOL aren’t you glad I’m not a warmongering neocon!” isn’t going to cut it as a response, despite being a true statement. And the weird idea of a far left-far right coalition—exemplified by Tulsi Gabbard, the “leftist” candidate every right-winger loves for not-at-all suspicious reasons—arguing that avoiding conflict with a country like Russia is best achieved by doing whatever Russia wants is, let us just say, not viable.

What is the appropriate response? Right now, it is impossible to say what the position of the American left would be in this situation, because its foreign policy is ambiguous and situational. The gut reaction of anti-interventionism has appeal. So too does the argument that if the United States should not be overrunning small and relatively defenseless countries, then neither should other military powers. There will be situations, no matter how much they would better be avoided, in which a hypothetical Congress or White House occupied by a true leftist would need to react to events beyond his or her control.

Alternatives to That

What would that look like? What, in short, is left foreign policy? Michael Walzer, in his commendable A Foreign Policy for the Left (2018), is among the few people who have seriously taken on that question in a practical (as opposed to strictly academic) context. He gets right the fundamental formulation: left foreign policy should and must flow naturally from the core values of the left.

In modern American politics, “defense” and “foreign policy” are sometimes treated as interchangeable concepts; that’s bad. A basic first principle for left foreign policy could be a return to the wider, traditional conception of foreign policy as a toolkit. Foreign aid, economic agreements, traditional diplomacy, combatting inequality and violent extremism (including domestically, of course), and cooperation with international organizations to address truly global issues would all combine to offer more potential than the current bipartisan stance that foreign policy is best reduced to “We will bomb the shit out of you or not. Pick one.”

A second core principle would be a real commitment to the thing American foreign policy has paid condescending lip service to for decades: the promotion of democratic institutions in other countries. This must obviously stop short of direct intervention in the domestic affairs of other nations, and will only be plausible once the United States deals with its own panoply of problems with voter suppression, felon disenfranchisement, and other anti-democratic practices.

A third and more nebulous step must be to define, in accordance with the left’s core values, the “national interest” of the United States. It is simple enough to say that America must protect “its interests” but much harder to articulate what those interests are beyond “anything Congress and the president feel like it is at a given moment.” If the promotion of economic, gender, LGBTQ+, and racial equality were made a political priority at home and abroad, the considerable economic power of the United States could be a game-changer. That will require, of course, a ground-up rethinking of unregulated free markets as the basis for all American values and practices. Fortunately the left is already pretty good at proposing alternatives to that.

Finally and perhaps most obviously, the nation must shift decisively away from relying so heavily on military hegemony to advance its interests. Any leftist worth his or her salt can tell you that reducing the bloated, economically crippling defense spending that is a cornerstone of Washington consensus politics is a first step. To implement such changes will require the same kind of thoroughness and attention to detail that the left has applied to domestic issues like Medicare for All. Exactly what will be cut? Why? How will whatever function that spending performed (if any) be replaced by a more effective form of foreign policy?

Articulating a well-developed foreign policy worldview will be aided by moving beyond today’s limited foreign policy conceptions—to shift the paradigms, to put it in the most annoying possible terms. Left ideas are usually shoehorned into easy-to-digest categories like “pacifism” or “isolationism.” As the right has proven repeatedly, coming up with better language with which to communicate ideas to voters will be essential.

HyperSimplification

Look, I don’t have all of the answers, and to be frank and crass, if I did I would not likely give them away to the world for The Baffler’s going rate for freelance contributions. I am certain, though, that the current state of left foreign policy is a void that needs to be filled with something other than the Wikileaks Bro politics, perhaps best exemplified by the phenomenon that is Tulsi Gabbard, of apologias for authoritarian nationalist leaders around the world. It is not enough to identify the obvious flaws in liberal foreign policy, with its convoluted hawkishness and rebranded military-centered consensus worldview, and simply conclude that the polar opposite must be the best course.

Criticizing Hillary Clinton’s (or now Joe Biden’s) campaign for its terrible foreign policy stances is the low-hanging fruit. Looking inward and reflecting on the core goals and values of left politics—rejecting the allure of Tucker Carlson-approved ideas like “Hey, isn’t being friends with Putin a good thing?”—will be the more challenging part. For over a century the United States has been a global Bad Actor, and it is imperative that it interact differently with the world. But pretending that it alone is a Bad Actor, and the intentions of every other nation will become honorable as the United States renounces its sinful ways, is dumb.

Foreign policy is not merely a set of choices; it also requires responding to events other actors initiate. This is where modern left views come up shortest. Non-interventionism is intellectually appealing not only because it fixes many of the current evils and ills of U.S. foreign policy—Hey, let’s stop starting wars!—but because it reduces everything to one simple answer. There is no need to learn about the Spratly Islands dispute among China and its neighbors, oppression of the Uyghurs, Donbas, Syria, the multi-sided civil war in Yemen, and other current points of tension. Like the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, confusing foreign conflicts that do not conform to the narrative of one good guy fighting one bad guy are difficult for our political system to process. The urge to oversimplify or ignore these conflicts, especially when they are distant and not perceived as directly relevant to Americans, is strong.

Vestigial organs of the Cold War world order like NATO could, with a better underlying set of values, be useful tools toward promoting left foreign policy goals. That is not to assert that it will, as America’s role in NATO is only as good as the domestic politics driving it. Collective agreements can be a useful alternative to, for example, multi-trillion-dollar domestic defense spending. America’s military alliances are not inherently bad; the choices our elected officials make are the problem. Growing its foothold in domestic politics will be easier when the left can advance a coherent foreign policy worldview that communicates what it intends to do rather than only what it will not do.

### Stop RUS Imperialism!

#### Russia is a petro-autocracy that must be stopped. Ukraine is exhibit #1 in Russia’s ruthless imperialism.

Jesse Harasta 6-23-2022. Associate Professor of International Studies, Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology. "Wars for Oil, Wars by Oil: Understanding Petro-Autocracy and the ‘New’ Imperialism". Journal of the Research Group on Socialism and Democracy 31(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/08854300.2021.2076045. DL

In many ways the Russian Federation is the most powerful and archetypal petro-autocracy. Russian imperial designs on its neighbors are, of course, nothing new. Even during the relatively liberal Yeltsin Presidency (1991–1999), Russia intervened in conflicts in Georgia, Moldova, and Tajikistan and waged war internally against peripheral regions of the Russian Federation in Chechnya, Dagestan, and North Ossetia.

However, the Putin Regime (2000–Present) opened a new, fundamentally aggressive strain of the Russian imperialism. The assault upon the Chechen city of Grozny, an abomination of a siege that involved a month-long bombardment resulting in the city’s annihilation, was among Putin’s very first acts in office and set a new tone for ruthlessness and brutality. After this victory, the autocracy took several years to solidify its control over domestic politics.53

The first major international conflict that Putin’s autocracy engaged in was the 2008 Russian–Georgian War which, while a Russian victory, revealed structural weaknesses in the Russian military. This led to a massive reform of the military which culminated in the first invasion of the Ukraine in 2014, which marks – for our purposes – the point where the Russian Federation had completed its transformation into an imperialist petro-autocracy.54 Since 2014, Russia’s imperialist aggressions have had a particular focus on the Ukraine.

Much has been made both in Russia and abroad of Russian security concerns regarding the expansion of NATO and Ukrainian neutrality, and no doubt these factor highly into Russian calculations but cannot explain them entirely. NATO already borders Russia in the Baltic and what triggered the first wave of imperialist attack was not a security threat, but a crisis triggered by Ukrainian economic reorientation from Russia to the EU. It was the potential of Ukraine joining the Western economic, not military, bloc, that started the chain of events of 2014. This does not preclude the Russians seeking to strengthen their military position: for instance, early in the war, the Russian navy seized Snake Island in the Black Sea with a particularly famous exchange with the defenders.55 The propaganda value of the defenders’ defiance has overshadowed the strategic blow of the island’s loss: Russia now controls access not only to the Ukrainian western port cities but also the mouth of the Danube River.56

That said, ultimately, Ukraine is as important to Russian economic imperialism as it is to Russian military power – only that to admit it would require that the Russian Federation recognize its own imperial ambitions. Likewise for the West to state that Ukraine would become an economic adjunct and captive market to Russian manufacturers would invite discussions of how it would fulfill a similar role for German and Central European firms in the EU. Accusing Russia of this activity would potentially open up the West to the same accusations towards its own exploitative relationships with peripheral nations – gone is the time when Western diplomats could recognize that: “It cannot be stressed enough that without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine suborned and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire.”57

At the heart of any putative transition from semi-periphery to core is a diversification and expansion of economic activities, including specialized manufacturing for export to the periphery. Russia’s manufacturing sector is large but is almost entirely consumed domestically.58 Exceptions to this would include dependent satrapies in the former USSR “near abroad” such as Belarus. Russian exports to Belarus are far more diverse than its exports in general. Over half of Russia’s global exports are in mineral products, especially oil and natural gas. Other major exports are generally raw materials, such as gold (5.19% of exports), wheat (2.44%), sawn wood (1.3%) and raw aluminum (1.34%).59 The Russian manufacturing and automotive sectors are negligible elements of their exports except to dependent nations like Belarus, where automobiles make up a respectable 3.21% of exports.60 Kazakhstan, a similarly dependent economy, also imports a significant amount of manufactured goods from Russia and a diverse number of products.61 In comparison, other major trading partners like Germany and China overwhelmingly import oil (63.75% of exports to China and 61.3% to Germany).62

It makes sense, therefore, if the Russian state seeks to renegotiate its global position from the semi-periphery into the core of global nations, it needs to diversify its economy and strengthen its manufacturing base. This can be done by increasing domestic consumption or increasing exports. Domestic consumption can be increased through increasing the percentage of locally produced goods consumed by Russians or by increasing the number of Russians. Import-substitution policies in the face of external sanctions aim to increase domestic consumption but the conquest and annexation of new territories into the Russian Federation is the quickest way to increase the Russian population (tactics to encourage natural population growth have had marginal success in Russia and are expensive for the state).63 Increasing global exports – outside of energy and raw materials – has also not been successful, and it is an logical move within an imperialist framework to resolve this through the creation of new dependent territories.

The Ukraine, with its population of over 44 million, is the only significant territory bordering Russia, apart from China, that is not yet integrated into its system or the EU/NATO system and it makes sense that the Russians would seek to expand here. A successful imperial project that annexes large areas of the Ukraine and creates a dependent state(s) in the remainder could potentially be a long-term economic boon for Russian manufacturing.

It would also give Russia a stranglehold over the wheat export market. In 2021, Russia exported 17.7 percent of the world’s wheat and Ukraine a further 8 percent.64 In the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) nations, where Russian foreign policy has been deeply involved in the last decade, Russian and Ukrainian wheat make up 85 percent of the imports for both Turkey and Egypt and perhaps 60 percent of Tunisian imports.65 The entire region is heavily dependent on wheat prices and Russian control over the Ukrainian market would give the Russian Federation strong leverage over its historic rival, Turkey, and countries throughout the region.

In the aftermath of the 2014 invasion of Crimea and the Donbas, Russia faced crippling economic sanctions from the West and the federal government began a process of “Sanctions-proofing” the country, apparently in preparation for the 2022 war.66

One key tool was the accumulation of foreign currency and gold reserves. The Russian state drew heavily upon reserves to prop up its economy after the 2014 sanctions but then, by 2019, had recuperated those expenditures and greatly exceeded them.67 By the outset of the 2022 war, they had reached unprecedented highs of over $600 billion.68 Without the income from oil and gas sales, these gold and currency purchases would have been simply impossible. The Russians are not the first petro-autocracy to hoard gold as a check against foreign intervention. The Libyans under Col. Muammar Gaddafi had approximately $6.5 billion in gold in 2011 that they used to pay mercenaries after being sanctioned out of the banking system.69

The Russians also constructed the SPFS, an alternative system of electronic banking payments, in preparation for cut-off form the US-led SWIFT system; they also worked with China to attempt to harmonize SPFS with the Chinese CBIBPS system.70 This was part of a broader strategy of withdrawing from reliance on foreign capital and banking services and an aggressive import substitution subsidy system.

While Russia’s invasion of Ukraine was a break from the norms of post-Cold War international relations, it was hardly an example of Putin’s supposed insanity – instead it was carefully planned-for and consistent with inherent cruelty of Russia’s imperial objectives. Crucially, it was an act that would have been impossible without the phenomenal petro-wealth flowing into Russia or the autocratic system built upon that wealth.

#### Their criticism of NATO and the West is imperialism that muddles Russia’s inordinate role in its invasion of Ukraine, justifying the war. Reject their US-centric explanation.

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In the immediate aftermath of Russia’s 2022 invasion of the Ukraine, even those American Left groups that condemned the invasion typically coupled their critiques with a condemnation of NATO’s expansion. For example, on February 26th, the Democratic Socialists of America71 – the USA’s largest socialist organization – released a statement condemning the Russian attack, but did not use the term “imperialism” to describe it, reserving that term for the USA and NATO. They opened their last paragraph with the line:

DSA reaffirms our call for the US to withdraw from NATO and to end the imperialist expansionism that set the stage for this conflict.72

This fundamentally misunderstands the geopolitical situation. The dismantling of NATO and Western empire, while absolutely necessary to achieve global liberation, is not an immediate tool for the prevention of petro-autocracy imperialism. Even if NATO's threat to Russia in Ukraine were to be removed, the geostrategic economic concerns are like to remain sufficient to continue to fuel the war (as evidenced by the war continuing despite Kiev’s offers of military neutrality) so long as victory remains possible.73 If we are to accept a materialist understanding of social relations, we must be conscious of the economics involved in imperial expansion. Socialist and Left movements must expand their definitions of imperialism to include the assaults of petro-autocracies upon their neighbors and name them as such.

We cannot support a dualistic understanding of geopolitics where “imperialism” is solely the province of Western core states and primarily enacted through Wars for Oil and where any resistance to the West is inherently anti-imperial and liberatory in nature. This should not blunt our critiques of American military hegemony or the many tools used by the USA and other Core states to dominate the peripheral regions of the Global South; instead it can expand and sharpen our analysis and opposition to imperialism in all its forms. This paper aims to begin this process through identifying the general trends and identifying examples that might be used to demarcate the varying forms that petro-autocratic imperialism takes. This requires further work to test hypotheses that emerge out of this preliminary analysis.

In a broader sense, this article’s theorizing provokes questions of praxis: in situations of non-US-centered imperialism, we must reconsider what international solidarity looks like. If the American Left cannot help the Ukrainian anti-imperial movement through changing US imperial policy (which has been its ideological go-to since at least the Cuban Revolution), then what can it do?

In the absence of our presence, what remains of anti-imperial international solidarity is likely to be the often-conservative diaspora politics. It was exactly this type of organizing by the non-Left Armenian diaspora that allowed Armenia to resist Azeri attacks to the extent it did, to the point where frustrated Armenians declared that “we are alone.” 74 Imagine if, instead of showing up to rallies where they met only other ethnic Armenians, they also found cadres of socialists ready to stand with them and bearing an anti-imperialist critique of the situation. In the words of the Azerbaijani anti-war youth:

We don’t blame the people though: in the absence of alternative interpretative frameworks to make sense of the war and the conflict between the two nations, the nationalist ideology remains uncontested. 75

Future theorization might also focus on the ways that decarbonization might be understood as as anti-imperial solidarity. If petro-autocracy imperialism can be demonstrated to be a significant force internationally, this could be a particularly fruitful area of analysis and action.

In contrast, what will have absolutely no impact on the Ukraine War will be a protest against NATO in New York – if anything, it will have the pro-imperial outcome by ideologically muddling the political discourse and diverting attention from the imperial nature of the Russian assault. This does not mean that solidarity protests cannot be useful, only that they cannot be our only tool and they must name all of the imperial actors for what they are and condemn them accordingly. The American Left’s own cultural narcissism that “our” imperialism must be the only target of our criticism is itself a product of an imperial imagination.

The American Left has largely neglected its responsibilities of international solidarity and left its anti-imperial solidarity obligations (ideological and organizational) to the most sectarian of factions. This can lead to situations where observers can claim that “the Left” supports Assad,76 Putin,77 or the Iranian state.78 Leftists who would be horrified to be associated with Stalinism at times passively defer to contemporary Stalinists for direction on anti-imperialism. A critique of modern imperialism that recognizes all forms of imperial violence is a necessary precondition to stronger international solidarity.

To conclude, we turn to the words of a Ukrainian Socialist, Volodymyr Artiukh, who wrote:

Maybe the US has drawn the outline of this board game, but now other players move the chips and add their own contours with a red marker. US-centric explanations are outdated.  …  You face a challenge of reacting to a war that is not waged by your countries. Given all the theoretical impasses I alluded to above, there is no simple way to frame an anti-war message. …  Do not let half-baked political positions substitute an analysis of the situation. The injunction that the main enemy is in your country should not translate into a flawed analysis of the inter-imperialist struggle.79

### AT: NATO Bad

#### Putin’s is jedi mind tricking us. Don’t fall for it!

Ravi Agrawal 7-14-2022. Fiona Hill, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and worked in the Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations. Interviewed by Ravi Agrawal, the editor in chief of Foreign Policy. "Fiona Hill: Putin’s Running Out of Time". Foreign Policy. https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/07/14/putin-russia-war-fiona-hill-future-west-nato/. DL

FH: He’s going to try to make it as easy for himself as possible. Russia can keep on terrorizing everybody and lobbing missiles all over the place. [It] can keep on putting an embargo on grain and making it very difficult. Putin’s assumption is that the Turks, the Lebanese, the African Union, and everybody will start putting pressure on the United States and the West because he’s saying, “That’s the result of their sanctions.” Which it isn’t, of course—it’s him deliberately manipulating famine in Africa to put us all in the hot seat as the bad guys here. Putin’s game is to have us defeat ourselves, basically, because we can’t imagine being able to sustain this over several years.

FP: A lot of this sounds like mind games. There’s the well-known story from Putin’s childhood where a young Putin chased a rat around his family’s apartment building. He traps the rat in a corner, and then the rat lashes out at him. Putin’s takeaway from that scenario was that there’s never a retreat; you have to fight to the bitter end. But that’s what he wants us to think, right? That if we go too far, he’ll launch World War III?

FH: Exactly. And the only documentation of that story is Vladimir Putin telling his biographers about it.

FP: That’s right.

FH: Putin’s been a wartime president from the very beginning. Look, we’re already in World War III in terms of this being an epoch-making conflict. There’s an information war. He’s already annexed territory. World War I wasn’t a nuclear war, but there was the using of mustard gas and chlorine. Putin has already used Novichok, polonium, and all kinds of other chemical weapons aiding and abetting [Syrian President] Bashar al-Assad.

We’ve been in this for a very long time. Putin takes us on these historical magical mystery tours all the time for justification. Sometimes he blames NATO. Sometimes he blames the European Union. And then he’s always trying to find the hot-button issues that he can press to scare people. In 2019, at the G-20 in Osaka, [Japan], in the last meeting that I sat in between Trump and Putin, he already threatened Trump about invoking the idea of the euro missile crisis of the 1980s over the U.S. pull out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, basically saying, “If there are no treaties left to underpin European security, what’s going to happen then, Donald?” He says, “Your European allies won’t want to go back to the time of the euro missile crisis.” So, he’s always been in the business of nuclear saber-rattling.

### AT: Nuclear War Anti-Black

#### The argument that nuclear weapons don’t affect communities is anti-black white washing.

**Thompson ’18** [Nicole; April 4th; Creative Writer; RaceBaitR, “Why I will not allow the fear of a nuclear attack to be white-washed,” https://racebaitr.com/2018/04/06/2087/; GR]

I couldn’t spare empathy for a white woman whose biggest fear was something that hadn’t happened yet and might not. Meanwhile, my most significant fears were in motion: women and men dying in cells after being wrongly imprisoned, choked out for peddling cigarettes, or shot to death during ‘routine’ traffic stops. I twitch when my partner is late, worried that a cantankerous cop has brutalized or shot him because he wouldn’t prostrate himself.

As a woman of color, I am aware of the multiple types of violence that threaten me currently—not theoretically. Street harassment, excessively affecting me as a Black woman, has blindsided me since I was eleven. A premature body meant being catcalled before I’d discussed the birds and the bees. It meant being followed, whistled at, or groped. As an adult, while navigating through neighborhoods with extinguished street lights, I noticed the correlation between women’s safety and street lighting—as well as the fact that Black and brown neighborhoods were never as brightly lit as those with a more significant white population.

I move quickly through those unlit spaces, never comforted by the inevitable whirl of red and blue sirens. In fact, it’s always been the contrary. Ever so often, cops approach me in their vehicle’s encouraging me to “Hurry along,” “Stay on the sidewalk,” or “Have a good night.” My spine stiffening, I never believed they endorsed my safety. Instead, I worried that I’d be accused of an unnamed accusation, corned by a cop who preys on Black women, or worse. A majority of my 50-minute bus ride from the southside of Chicago to the north to join these women for the birthday celebration was spent reading articles about citywide shootings. I began with a Chicago Tribute piece titled “33 people shot, seven fatally, in 13 hours,” then toppled into a barrage of RIP posts on Facebook and ended with angry posts about police brutality on Tumblr. You might guess, by the time I arrived to dinner I wasn’t in the mood for the “I can’t believe we’re all going to die because Trump is an idiot” shit.

I shook my head, willing the meal to be over, and was grateful when the check arrived just as someone was asking me about my hair. My thinking wasn’t all too different from Michael Harriot’s ‘Why Black America Isn’t Worried About the Upcoming Nuclear Holocaust.” While the meal was partly pleasant, I departed thinking, “fear of nuclear demolition is just some white shit.”

Sadly, that thought would not last long.

I still vibe with Harriot’s statement, “Black people have lived under the specter of having our existence erased on a white man’s whim since we stepped onto the shore at Jamestown Landing.” However, a friend—a Black friend—ignited my nuclear paranoia by sharing theories about when it might happen and who faced the greatest threat. In an attempt to ease my friend’s fear, I leaned in to listen but accidentally toppled down the rabbit hole too. I forked through curated news feeds. I sifted through “fake news,” “actual news,” and foreign news sources. Suddenly, an idea took root: nuclear strike would disproportionately impact Black people, brown people, and low-income individuals.

North Korea won’t target the plain sight racists of Portland, Oregon, the violently microaggressive liberals of the rural Northwest, or the white-hooded klansmen of Diamondhead, Mississippi. No, under the instruction of the supreme leader Kim Jong-un, North Korea will likely strike densely populated urban areas, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington D.C., and New York City. These locations stand-out as targets for a nuclear strike because they are densely populated U.S. population centers. Attacking the heart of the nation or populous cities would translate to more casualties. With that in mind, it’s not lost on me that the most populous cities in the United States boast sizeable diverse populations, or more plainly put: Black populations. This stresses me out! There’s a creeping chill that follows me, a silent alarm that rings each time my Google alert chimes letting me know that Donald Trump has yet again provoked Kim Jong-Un, a man who allegedly killed his very own uncle. I’ve grown so pressed by the idea of nuclear holocaust that my partner and I started gathering non-perishables, candlesticks, a hand-crank radio, and other must-buy items that can be banked in a shopping cart. The practice of preparing for a nuclear holocaust strike sometimes feels comical, particularly when acknowledging that there has long been a war on Black people in this country.

Blackness is bittersweet in flavor. We are blessed with the melanized skin, the MacGyver-like inventiveness of our foremothers, and our blinding brightness—but the anti-blackness that we experience is also blinding as well as stifling. We are stuck by rigged systems, punished with the prison industrial complex, housing discrimination, pay discrimination, and worse. We get side-eyes from strangers when we’re “loitering,” and the police will pull us over for driving “too fast” in a residential neighborhood. We get murdered for holding cell phones while standing in our grandmother’s backyard.

The racism that strung up our ancestors, kept them sequestered to the back of the bus and kept them in separate and unequal schools still lives. It lives, and it’s more palpable than dormant. To me, this means one thing: Trump’s America isn’t an unfortunate circumstance, it’s a homecoming event that’s hundreds of years in the making, no matter how many times my white friends’ say, “He’s not my president.”

In light of this homecoming, we now flirt with a new, larger fear of a Black genocide. America has always worked towards Black eradication through a steady stream of life-threatening inequality, but nuclear war on American soil would be swift. And for this reason I’ve grown tired of whiteness being at the center of the nuclear conversation. The race-neutral approach to the dialogue, and a tendency to continue to promote the idea that missiles will land in suburban and rural backyards, instead of inner-city playgrounds, is false.

“The Day After,” the iconic, highest-rated television film in history, aired November 20, 1983. More than 100 million people tuned in to watch a film postulating a war between the Soviet Union and the United States. The film, which would go on to affect President Ronald Reagan and policymakers’ nuclear intentions, shows the “true effects of nuclear war on average American citizens.” The Soviet-targeted areas featured in the film include Higginsville, Kansas City, Sedalia, Missouri, as well as El Dorado Springs, Missouri. They depict the destruction of the central United States, and viewers watch as full-scale nuclear war transforms middle America into a burned wasteland. Yet unsurprisingly, the devastation from the attack is completely white-washed, leaving out the more likely victims which are the more densely populated (Black) areas.

Death tolls would be high for white populations, yes, but large-scale losses of Black and brown folks would outpace that number, due to placement and poverty. That number would be pushed higher by limited access to premium health care, wealth, and resources. The effects of radiation sickness, burns, compounded injuries, and malnutrition would throttle Black and brown communities and would mark us for generations. It’s for that reason that we have to do more to foster disaster preparedness among Black people where we can. Black people deserve the space to explore nuclear unease, even if we have competing threats, anxieties, and worries.

#### Anticipating nuclear extinction breeds empathy and entangled care. Distancing ourselves from considering extinction reifies detached elitism.

Offord, 17—Faculty of Humanities, School of Humanities Research and Graduate Studies, Bentley Campus (Baden, “BEYOND OUR NUCLEAR ENTANGLEMENT,” Angelaki, 22:3, 17-25, dml) [ableist language modifications denoted by brackets]

You are steered towards overwhelming and inexplicable pain when you consider the nuclear entanglement that the species Homo sapiens finds itself in. This is because the fact of living in the nuclear age presents an existential, aesthetic, ethical and psychological challenge that defines human consciousness. Although an immanent threat and ever-present danger to the very existence of the human species, living with the possibility of nuclear war has infiltrated the matrix of modernity so profoundly as to paralyse [shut down] our mind-set to respond adequately. We have chosen to ignore the facts at the heart of the nuclear program with its dangerous algorithm; we have chosen to live with the capacity and possibility of a collective, pervasive and even planetary-scale suicide; and the techno-industrial-national powers that claim there is “no immediate danger” ad infinitum.8

This has led to one of the key logics of modernity's insanity. As Harari writes: “Nuclear weapons have turned war between superpowers into a mad act of collective suicide, and therefore forced the most powerful nations on earth to find alternative and peaceful ways to resolve conflicts.”9 This is the nuclear algorithm at work, a methodology of madness. In revisiting Jacques Derrida in “No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives),”10 who described nuclear war as a “non-event,” it is clear that the pathology of the “non-event” remains as active as ever even in the time of Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un with their stichomythic nuclear posturing.

The question of our times is whether we have an equal or more compelling capacity and willingness to end this impoverished but ever-present logic of pain and uncertainty. How not simply to bring about disarmament, but to go beyond this politically charged, as well as mythological and psychological nuclear algorithm? How to find love amidst the nuclear entanglement; the antidote to this entanglement? Is it possible to end the pathology of power that exists with nuclear capacity? Sadly, the last lines of Nitin Sawhney's “Broken Skin” underscore this entanglement:

Just 5 miles from India's nuclear test site

Children play in the shade of the village water tank

Here in the Rajasthan desert people say

They're proud their country showed their nuclear capability.11

As an activist scholar working in the fields of human rights and cultural studies, responding to the nuclear algorithm is an imperative. Your politics, ethics and scholarship are indivisible in this cause. An acute sense of care for the world, informed by pacifist and non-violent, de-colonialist approaches to knowledge and practice, pervades your concern. You are aware that there are other ways of knowing than those you are familiar and credentialed with. You are aware that you are complicit in the prisons that you choose to live inside,12 and that there is no such thing as an innocent bystander. You use your scholarship to shake up the world from its paralysis, abjection and amnesia; to unsettle the epistemic and structural violence that is ubiquitous to neoliberalism and its machinery; to create dialogic and learning spaces for the work of critical human rights and critical justice to take place. All this, and to enable an ethics of intervention through understanding what is at the very heart of the critical human rights impulse, creating a “dialogue for being, because I am not without the other.”13

Furthermore, as a critical human rights advocate living in a nuclear armed world, your challenge is to reconceptualise the human community as Ashis Nandy has argued, to see how we can learn to co-exist with others in conviviality and also learn to co-survive with the non-human, even to flourish. A dialogue for being requires a leap into a human rights frame that includes a deep ecological dimension, where the planet itself is inherently involved as a participant in its future. This requires scholarship that “thinks like a mountain.”14 A critical human rights approach understands that it cannot be simply human-centric. It requires a nuanced and arresting clarity to present perspectives on co-existence and co-survival that are from human and non-human viewpoints.15

Ultimately, you realise that your struggle is not confined to declarations, treaties, legislation, and law, though they have their role. It must go further to produce “creative intellectual exchange that might release new ethical energies for mutually assured survival.”16 Taking an anti-nuclear stance and enabling a post-nuclear activism demands a revolution within the field of human rights work. Recognising the entanglement of nuclearism with the Anthropocene, for one thing, requires a profound shift in focus from the human-centric to a more-than-human co-survival. It also requires a fundamental shift in understanding our human culture, in which the very epistemic and rational acts of sundering from co-survival with the planet and environment takes place. In the end, you realise, as Raimon Panikkar has articulated, “it is not realistic to toil for peace if we do not proceed to a disarmament of the bellicose culture in which we live.”17 Or, as Geshe Lhakdor suggests, there must be “inner disarmament for external disarmament.”18 In this sense, it is within the cultural arena, our human society, where the entanglement of subjective meaning making, nature and politics occurs, that we need to disarm.

It is 1982, and you are reading Jonathan Schell's The Fate of the Earth on a Sydney bus. Sleeping has not been easy over the past few nights as you reluctantly but compulsively read about the consequences of nuclear war. For some critics, Schell's account is high polemic, but for you it is more like Rabindranath Tagore: it expresses the suffering we make for ourselves. What you find noteworthy is that although Schell's scenario of widespread destruction of the planet through nuclear weaponry, of immeasurable harm to the bio-sphere through radiation, is powerfully laid out, the horror and scale of nuclear obliteration also seems surreal and far away as the bus makes its way through the suburban streets.

A few years later, you read a statement from an interview with Paul Tibbets, the pilot of “Enola Gay,” the plane that bombed Hiroshima. He says, “The morality of dropping that bomb was not my business.”19 This abstraction from moral responsibility---the denial of the implications on human life and the consequences of engagement through the machinery of war---together with the sweeping amnesia that came afterwards from thinking about the bombing of Hiroshima, are what make you become an environmental and human rights activist. You realise that what makes the nuclear algorithm work involves a politically engineered and deeply embedded insecurity-based recipe to elide the nuclear threat from everyday life. The spectre of nuclear obliteration, like the idea of human rights, can appear abstract and distant, not our everyday business. You realise that within this recipe is the creation of a moral tyranny of distance, an abnegation of myself with the other. One of modernity's greatest and earliest achievements was the mediation of the self with the world. How this became a project assisted and shaped through the military-industrial-technological-capitalist complex is fraught and hard to untangle. But as a critical human rights scholar you have come to see through that complex, and you put energies into challenging that tyranny of distance, to activate a politics, ethics and scholarship that recognises the other as integral to yourself. Ultimately, even, to see that the other is also within.20

## aff answers

### 2ac alt fails

#### Capitalism is not bounded by the exploitation of labor but extends itself through a productive imperative and the expropriation of land from the Native and the body of the slave. Their appeal to a transition state established by a worker’s party [insert their alternative] strengthens systems of state-based theft, racial accumulation and policing because the state requires these formations in order to function.

Wang 18 [Jackie, writer, poet, musician, and academic whose writing has been published by Lies Journal, HTML Giant, and BOMBlog, PhD African-American Studies @ Harvard, p. 112-25//AK47]

Racial Capitalism and Settler Colonialism Given the dual character of capitalist accumulation identified by both Rosa Luxemburg and David Harvey, what new understanding of capitalism would be generated by focusing on dispossession and expropriation over .work and production? Contemporary political theorists as well as critical ethnic studies, black studies, and Native studies scholars and activists analyze how racial slavery and seeder colonialism provide the material and territorial foundation for U.S. and Canadian sovereignty. Rather than casting slavery and Native genocide as temporally circumscribed events chat inaugurated the birth of capitalism in the New World ("primitive accumulation"), they show how the racial logics produced by these processes persist to this day: In order to recuperate the frame of political economy, a focus on the dialectic of racial slavery and settler colonialism leads to important revisions of Karl Marx's theory of primitive accumulation. In particular, Marx designates the transition from feudal to capitalist social relations as a violent process of primitive accumulation whereby "conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, force, play the greatest part." For Marx, chis results in the expropriation of the worker, the proletariat, who becomes the privileged subject of capitalist revolution. [f we consider primitive accumulation 35 a persistent structure rather than event, both Afro-pessimism and settler colonial studies destabilize normative conceptions of capitalism through the conceptual displacements of the proletariat. As Coulthard demonstrates, in considering Indigenous peoples in relation to primitive accumulation, "it appears that the history and experience of dispossession, not proletarianization, has been the dominant background structure shaping the character of the historical relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state." It is thus dispossession of land through genocidal elimination, relocation, and theft that animates Indigenous resistance and anticapitalism and "less around our emergent status 35 'rightless proletarians.'" If we extend the frame of primitive accumulation to the question of slavery, it is the dispossession of the slave's body rather than the proletarianization of labor that both precedes and exceeds the frame of settler colonial and global modernity. 13 As lyko Day notes, Native dispossession occurs through the expropriation of land, while black dis􀄅 possession is characterized by enslavement and bodily dispossession. Although both racial logics buttress white accumulation and are defined by a "genocidal limit concept" that constitutes these subjects as disposable, Day notes that "the racial content of Indigenous peoples is the mirror opposite of blackness. From the beginning, an eliminatory project was driven to reduce Native populations through genocidal wars and later through statistical elimination through blood quantum and assimilationist policies. For slaves, an opposite logic of exclusion was driven to increase, not eliminate, the population of slaves."14 A debate has ensued in critical ethnic studies about which axis of dispossession is capitalism's condition of possibility: the expropriation of Native land or chattel slavery? Was the U.S. made possible primarily by unbridled access to black labor, or through territorial conquest? Is the global racial order defined-as Day writes-primarily by the indigenous-settler binary or the black-nonblack binary? At stake in this debate is the question of which axis of dispossession is the "base" from which the "superstructures" of economy, national sovereignty, or even subjectivity itself emerge. Those who argue that settler colonialism is central have sometimes made the claim that even black Americans participate in settler colonialism and indigenous displacement by continuing to live on stolen land, while those who center slavery and antiblackness have sometimes viewed Native Americans as perpetrators of anriblackness insofar as some uibes have historically owned slaves and seek state recognition by making land-based claims to sovereignty-a claim that relies on a political grammar that black Americans do not have access to, as slaves were rem from their native lands when they were transported co the Americas (see Jared Sexton's "The Vel of Slavery"). Although weighing in on this debate is beyond rhe scope of this essay, I generally agree with Day's assertion that to treat this set of issues as a zero-sum game obfuscates the complexity of these processes. With that said, it is important to note that this book deals primarily with the antiblack dimensions of prisons, police, and racial capitalism, though I acknowledge that analyses of settler colonialism are equally vital to understanding the operations of racial capitalism and how race is produced through multiple expropriative logics. Gendered Expropriation Though this book focuses primarily on black racialization in a contemporary context, it is worth noting that expropriation reproduces multiple categories of difference--including the man-woman gender binary. Although categories of difference were not invented by capitalism, expropriative processes assign particular meanings to categories of difference. "Woman" is reproduced as inferior through the unwaged theft of her labor, while the esteem of the category of "man" is propped up by the valorization of his labor. Even when women are in the professional workforce, they are still vulnerable to expropriation when they are given or take on work beyond their formal duties-whether it's washing the dishes at the office, mentoring students, or doing thankless administrative work while male colleagues gee the "dysfunctional genius" pass. But above all, gendered expropriation occurs through the extraction of care labor, emotional labor, as well as domestic and reproductive labor all of which is enabled by the enforcement of a rigid gender binary. This system is propped up by gender socialization, which compels women to psychologically internalize a feeling of responsibility for others. Although, at a glance, ic might seem that the expropriation of women's labor happens primarily through housewifeitization, the marriage contract, and the assignment of child-care duties to women, in the current epoch-characterized by an aging baby boomer population and a shortage of geriatric health-care workers-women are increasingly filling this void by taking care of sick parents, family members, and loved ones. It is hardly surprising that two-thirds of those who care for chose with Alzheimer's disease are women, even as women are the primary victims of this disease. Given thac women's lives are often interrupted by both childcare duties and caring for ailing family members, it's also hardly surprising that women accumulate many fewer assets and arc more likely to retire into poverty than their male counterparts. A recent report found that the European Union gender pension gap was 40 percent, which far exceeds the gender pay gap of 16 percent. Overall, gender is a material relation that, among other things, bilks women of their futures. The aged woman who has toiled by caring for others is left with little by the end of her life. Though gender distinctions are maintained through expropriative processes, they also have consequences beyond the economic and material realm. While it could be said that disposability is the logic that corresponds to racialized expropriation, gendered subjectivation has as its corollary rapeability. It also goes without saying that these expropriative logics are not mutually exclusive, as nonwhite women and gender-nonconforming people may be subject to a different set of expropriative logics than white women. Racalized Expropriation Although I do not claim that expropriation should be defined exclusively as racialization (again, because different expropriative logics reproduce multiple categories of difference), this book deals primarily with the antiblack racial order that is produced by late-capitalist accumulation. Michael C. Dawson and Nancy Fraser are two contemporary political theorists who have defined expropriation as a racializing process in capitalist societies. In "Hidden in Plain Sight," Dawson takes Fraser to task for not acknowledging racialized expropriation as one of the "background domains" of capitalist society. Understanding the logic of expropriation, in his view, is necessary for understanding which modes of resistance are needed at this historical juncture. His article begins with a meditation on the question: Should activists and movements such as Black Lives Matter focus on racialized state violence (police shootings, mass incarceration, and so forth), or should they focus on racialized inequality cawed by expropriation and exploitation? What is the relationship between the first logic-characterized by disposability-and the second logic-characterized by exploitability and expropriability? Rather than describing these logics as distinct forms of antiblack racism, he analyzes them as two dimensions of a dynamic process whereby capitalist expropriation generates the racial order by fracturing the population into superior and inferior humans: Understanding the foundation of capitalism requires a consideration of "the hidden abode of race": the ontological distinction between superior and inferior humans-codified as race-that was necessary for slavery, colonialism, the theft of lands in the Americas, and genocide. This racial separation is manifested in the division between full humans who possess the right to sell their labor and compete within markets, and chose that are disposable, discriminated against, and ultimately either eliminated or superexploited.15 Black racialization, then, is the mark that renders subjects as suitable for-on the one hand-hyperexploitation and expropriation, and, on the other hand, annihilation. Before the neoliberal era, the racial order was propped up by the state, and racial distinctions were enforced through legal codification, Jim Crow segregation, and other formal arrangements. In a contemporary context, though the legal regime undergirding the racial order has been dismantled, race has maintained its dual character, which consists of "not only a probabilistic assignment of relative economic value but also an index of differential vulnerability to state violence." 16 In other words, vulnerability to hyperexploitation and expropriation in the economic domain and vulnerability to premature death in the political and social domains. My essay on the Ferguson Police Department and the city's program of municipal plunder is an attempt to make visible the hidden backdrop of Mike Brown's execution: the widespread racialized expropriation of black residents carried out by the criminal justice arm of the state. It is not just that Mike Brown's murder happened alongside the looting of residents at the behest of the police and the city's financial manager, but that racial legacies that have marked black residents as lootable are intimately tied to police officers' treatment of black people as killable. The two logics reinforce and are bound up with each other. In her response co Dawson's analysis of racialization as expropriation, Fraser develops Dawson's claims by looking at the interplay between economic expropriation and "politically enforced status distinctions." 17 Not only does accumulation in a capitalist society occur along the two axes of exploitation and expropriation, but one makes the other possible in that the "racialized subjection of those whom capital expropriates is a condition of possibility for the freedom of those whom it exploits." 18 In other words, the "front story" of free workers who are contracted by capitalists to sell their labor-power for a wage is enabled by, and depends on, expropriation that takes place outside this contractual arrangement.

Fraser further extends Dawson's analysis by offering a historical account of the various regimes of racialization. In her analysis of the "proletarianization" of black Americans as they migrated from the South to industrial centers in the North and Midwest during the flrst half of the twentieth century, she points out that even in the context of industrial "exploitation," the segmented labor market was organized such that a "confiscatory premium was placed on black labor." Black industrial workers were paid less than their white counterparts. In some sense, the racialized gap in earnings can be thought of as the portion that was expropriated from black workers. It is not as though the black laborers who joined the ranks of the industrial proletariat were newly subjected to exploitation rather than expropriation, but that these two methods of accumulation were operating in tandem. In the "present regime of racialized accumulation"- which she refers to as "financialized capitalism"-Fraser notes that there has been a loosening of the binary that has historically separated who should be subjected to expropriation from who should be subjected to exploitation, and that during the present period, debt is regularly deployed as a method of dispossession: Much large-scale industrial exploitation now occurs outside the historic core, in the BRICS countries of the semi-periphery. And expropriation has become ubiquitous, afflicting not only its traditional subjects but also those who were previously shielded by their status as citizenworkers. In these developments, debt plays a major role, as global financial institutions pressure states to collude with investors in extracting value from defenseless populations. 19 While I agree with Fraser's claim that the "sharp divide" berween "expropriab le subjects and exploitable citizen-workers" has been replaced by a "contin uum" (albeit a continuum chat remains racialized), I would add that the existence of poor whites who have fallen out of the middle class or have been affected by the opiate crisis at the present juncture represents not racial progress for black Americans, but the generalization of expropriability as a condition in the face of an accumulation crisis. In other words, immiseration for all rather than a growing respect for black Americans. Fraser rightly points out that "expropriation becomes tempting in periods of crisis."20 Sometimes the methods of accumulation that were once reserved exclusively for racialized subjects bleed over and are used on those with privileged status markings. If expropriation and exploitation now occur on a continuum, then it has been made possible, in part, by late capitalism's current modus operandi: the probabilistic ranking of subjects according to risk, sometimes indexed by a person's credit score. As I will demonstrate in the coming sections, this method is not a race-neutral way of gleaning information about a subject's personal integrity, credibility, or financial responsibility. It is merely an index of already-existing inequality and a way to distinguish between which people should be expropriated from and which should be merely exploited.

### 2ac capitalism top level

#### All or nothing critique of capital relies on a flawed critique of reform-no root cause, no alt solvency-those arguments are based on essentialist assumptions

ROBBINS, PhD Harvard, 13

(BRUCE, Old Dominion Foundation Professor in the Humanities, https://nplusonemag.com/issue-16/reviews/balibarism/)

BALIBAR’S NEW BOOKS will appear in an intellectual landscape where a revolutionary Marxism — at least from a glance at bookstores and syllabi — is still in vogue. Ambivalent as they are about revolution, what kind of reception will these books receive? Why do people read Marxist philosophers anyway? It would be hard to argue that the fashion for Marxism during the past decade or so has had anything to do with the perceived proximity of revolution or even the strength or militancy of working-class organizations. In the 1960s Marxist writers rode a wave of political energy and hope. That has mostly not been true for the generation that came of age around or after September 11, 2001, which saw inequality and unemployment rising but labor unions and left-wing parties falling. Interest in Marxism makes more sense as a response to the intensified financialization and globalization of capital, with its most revelatory moments in the bursting of the dot-com bubble in 2000–01 and more recently the 2008 financial crisis. It seems worth adding here that the digital revolution, which did for today’s generation something like what the Industrial Revolution did for Marx — prove that dramatic change was possible — helps explain some of the otherwise inexplicable enthusiasm for Hardt and Negri. As Balibar observes, their argument splits apart the Marxist concept of the material base, making much of (digital) technology, which has changed, but leaving out the relations of production, which have not, or at least not for the better. If you want to be a serious materialist, he says, you have to hold onto both. One consequence of capitalism’s ever-firmer annexation of the global scale and ever-tighter squeezing of the majority’s living standards has been that ordinary domestic politics, especially electoral politics, have come to feel ever more trivial and irrelevant. One need only look at voter turnout, even for elections like 2008, to see that abstention is the one principle in the US that enjoys broad consensus. Under these circumstances, even hard-won battles in the name of race, gender, and sexuality could come to seem a bit beside the point. To Žižek, who routinely gets laughs at the expense of multiculturalism, Balibar no doubt looks too eager to please the “identity” constituencies. To Balibar, Žižek and Badiou no doubt seem to have given up on the idea of speaking to any constituencies — that is, to have given up on the project of politics. Paradoxical as it may seem, giving up on politics has probably been part of Marxism’s seductiveness for a long time. No one in Balibar’s cohort (Balibar was born in 1942, Badiou in 1937, Rancière in 1940, Žižek in 1949) could have felt confident that as Marxists they came of age at a propitious time for plunging into the class struggle. If 1968 didn’t turn out to be the revolutionary conjuncture, no moment that has followed has come closer. In nonrevolutionary times, the most tempting and pervasive of revisionisms is to give up on changing the world and just interpret it. Nothing supplies serviceable analytic distance like the conviction that you don’t have a horse in this race. Witness the quietism of the New Left Review, the foremost organ of Marxism in the English-speaking world and yet a journal that you go to for searching analysis, not for uplifting news of movements and conflicts. For some years NLR, strongly influenced by Althusser, ostentatiously ignored thinkers in the messianic mode — and bless them for it. But isn’t there a sort of secret alliance between messianism and quietism? How can you stay so coolly detached unless you’re absolutely sure that in the end your day will come? Balibar wants no part of this alliance. His unwillingness to maintain an authoritative detachment from ongoing political struggles, however insignificant posterity may judge those struggles to be, is of a piece with his lack of certainty that he knows where History is going or who will lead it there. For some readers, this will be frustrating. His distaste for political theology, his premise that even in situations of political urgency there is no excuse for pretending that Marxism has all the answers, has doubtless driven away some who, whether aware of it or not, preferred a system that did have all the answers while also preferring prophets who carry those answers down from the mountain and deliver them in thunder. This seems the most likely reason why, as radical social transformation has reappeared as a historical possibility, as Marxism has reappeared to analyze its chances, and as Americans in search of political enlightenment continue to eavesdrop on exchanges among left-wing French philosophers, many of them Althusser’s former students, Balibar has had less of a hearing than the aging superstars around him. It is true that Balibar is personally mild, self-deprecating almost to a fault, and does not seek out occasions for newsworthy confrontation. David Rieff observes in a nasty but not inaccurate review of Claude Lanz-mann’s recent memoir that “self-deprecation has never been much prized in French intellectual life.” Things are not so different in the US. For whatever reasons, Balibar’s putative rivals have also largely avoided on-screen collisions with him. I note that Žižek calls Balibar out in two of his books, Revolution at the Gates and The Ticklish Subject — and then, seemingly forgetting he’s thrown down the gauntlet, devotes most of his pages to Badiou. Is Badiou an easier target? If so, what makes Balibar a harder one? Consider The Idea of Communism (2010), a collection of papers delivered with much fanfare at Birkbeck College in London in 2009, a year or so into the financial crisis, and coedited by the conference organizers, Žižek and Costas Douzinas. Balibar is not included in the collection (he was invited to the conference but was stuck teaching in California) and he is not cited in the index. His omission from the index is especially curious because he is in fact argued with, at least glancingly, in two places that I noticed: on the question, What is politics? and on the question, Should the left claim human rights? In both cases the underlying issue is whether it’s hopelessly naive to engage in politics at the level of the state. Balibar is taken, rightly, as assuming that politics at the level of the state, rights, and law remains a significant obligation. It’s clear that the other speakers disagree, but they don’t feel obliged to spell out why. Badiou’s contribution to The Idea of Communism openly rejects the enterprise of “ordinary” politics. (Much might be said about the assumption that passing previously unimaginable legislation like the forty-hour workweek or the graduated income tax or the regulation of the financial industry would count as “ordinary.”) Badiou takes as his premise that “ordinary history” is “confined within the State.” By contrast, the kind of history he thinks we need, the kind that is not confined within the State, is history that is faithful to “the Idea.” Badiou takes his argument about “the Idea” from Plato, whose usefulness to the left he seems recklessly eager to promote. But there is something post-Hellenic about the idea of an Idea that floats above ordinary history and beams encouragingly down on those, wherever and whenever they are, who are distressed by life on the ground. This might be what Balibar had in mind when he called Badiou a theologian. In the same volume Bruno Bosteels describes the disagreements among Badiou, Žižek, Rancière, and Balibar as the “fights of a dysfunctional family.” He doesn’t designate parents and children, but he admits that Lenin had a point when he described the dogmatic antistatism of the holier-than-thou Communists to his left as indicative of “an infantile disorder.” Rather than thinking of the family members as squabbling over who loves Marx most or who was Althusser’s favorite, it seems more generous to imagine them deciding whether to invest their nest egg in political ventures that may or may not pay off. Many of the issues that have filled the news over the past decades — ethnic cleansing, violence against immigrants, Palestinian self-determination, European unity — have not exactly cried out for a Marxist vocabulary. What about, say, Europe? Europe is a subject that absorbed much of Balibar’s attention in the 1990s and has continued to preoccupy him since — see Politics and the Other Scene (2002) and We, the People of Europe? (2004) as well as a volume now out in France, Europe, crise et fin? His latest pronouncements have been extremely pessimistic. But they emerge against his expectation that the project of European unification, rather than a ploy of the bankers and/or a creative new version of apartheid, might become a site of bottom-up democratic zeal and give birth to a new set of transnational institutions. As Žižek notes disapprovingly, this hopefulness sets Balibar against both the antistatism of the New Left and current cynicism about an emergent transnational politics of any kind. Balibar’s line on Europe is not that we should make the best of the European institutions we have, poor as their performance has been. Those institutions have failed, he says, definitively. Where he differs from his cohort is in his passionate will to see them replaced — in other words, his refusal to give up on Europe altogether. His critique of “statism without a State”—technocratic top-down solutions to the European crisis without encouragement of broad democratic participation — assumes (against Rancière’s argument in his own essay on French solidarity with Algeria) that democracy is possible not just on a national but a transnational scale. Balibar’s call for a left populism to counter the racist, xenophobic populism that threatens to become the only populism we can recognize in Europe also assumes (here he borrows from Rancière and diverges from Žižek) that racism is not a fixed psychic quantity that cannot be diminished by any conceivable rejiggering of social arrangements. And it assumes (arguing with both Žižek and Badiou) that democracy is a good in itself, and that, stretched and intensified, it might create the sort of European institutions that the victims of European integration (many of them, like the Greeks, still theoretically committed to the European Union) will like a lot better.

### 2ac identity

#### Do Both- we can have contingent coalitions not rooted in static identity. These coalitions are *more effective*

Butler, PhD, 90

(Judith, Gender Trouble)

Some efforts have been made to formulate coalitional politics which do not assume in advance what the content of “women” will be. They propose instead a set of dialogic encounters by which variously positioned women articulate separate identities within the framework of an emergent coalition. Clearly, the value of coalitional politics is not to be underestimated, but the very form of coalition, of an emerging and unpredictable assemblage of positions, cannot be figured in advance. Despite the clearly democratizing impulse that motivates coalition building, the coalitional theorist can inadvertently reinsert herself as sovereign of the process by trying to assert an ideal form for coalitional structures in advance, one that will effectively guarantee unity as the outcome. Related efforts to determine what is and is not the true shape of a dialogue, what constitutes a subject-position, and, most importantly, when “unity” has been reached, can impede the self-shaping and self-limiting dynamics of coalition. The insistence in advance on coalitional “unity” as a goal assumes that solidarity, whatever its price, is a prerequisite for political action. But what sort of politics demands that kind of advance purchase on unity? Perhaps a coalition needs to acknowledge its contradictions and take action with those contradictions intact. Perhaps also part of what dialogic understanding entails is the acceptance of divergence, breakage, splinter, and fragmentation as part of the often tortuous process of democratization. The very notion of “dialogue” is culturally specific and historically bound, and while one speaker may feel secure that a conversation is happening, another may be sure it is not. The power relations that condition and limit dialogic possibilities need first to be interrogated. Otherwise, the model of dialogue risks relapsing into a liberal model that assumes that speaking agents occupy equal positions of power and speak with the same presuppositions about what constitutes “agreement” and “unity” and, indeed, that those are the goals to be sought. It would be wrong to assume in advance that there is a category of “women” that simply needs to be filled in with various components of race, class, age, ethnicity, and sexuality in order to become complete. The assumption of its essential incompleteness permits that category to serve as a permanently available site of contested meanings. The definitional incompleteness of the category might then serve as a normative ideal relieved of coercive force. Is “unity” necessary for effective political action? Is the premature insistence on the goal of unity precisely the cause of an ever more bitter fragmentation among the ranks? Certain forms of acknowledged fragmentation might facilitate coalitional action precisely because the “unity” of the category of women is neither presupposed nor desired. Does “unity” set up an exclusionary norm of solidarity at the level of identity that rules out the possibility of a set of actions which disrupt the very borders of identity concepts, or which seek to accomplish precisely that disruption as an explicit political aim? Without the presupposition or goal of “unity,” which is, in either case, always instituted at a conceptual level, provisional unities might emerge in the context of concrete actions that have purposes other than the articulation of identity. Without the compulsory expectation that feminist actions must be instituted from some stable, unified, and agreed-upon identity, those actions might well get a quicker start and seem more congenial to a number of “women” for whom the meaning of the category is permanently moot. This antifoundationalist approach to coalitional politics assumes neither that “identity” is a premise nor that the shape or meaning of a coalitional assemblage can be known prior to its achievement. Because the articulation of an identity within available cultural terms instates a definition that forecloses in advance the emergence of new identity concepts in and through politically engaged actions, the foundationalist tactic cannot take the transformation or expansion of existing identity concepts as a normative goal. Moreover, when agreed-upon identities or agreed-upon dialogic structures, through which already established identities are communicated, no longer constitute the theme or subject of politics, then identities can come into being and dissolve depending on the concrete practices that constitute them. Certain political practices institute identities on a contingent basis in order to accomplish whatever aims are in view. Coalitional politics requires neither an expanded category of “women” nor an internally multiplicitous self that offers its complexity at once. Gender is a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully what it is at any given juncture in time. An open coalition, then, will affirm identities that are alternately instituted and relinquished according to the purposes at hand; it will be an open assemblage that permits of multiple convergences and divergences without obedience to a normative telos of definitional closure. (this is from a bootleg epub with no page numbers but this appears to be around page 15)

### 2ac perm

#### Permutation do both – undertaking an intercommunal perspective incorporates the useful political programs of the alternative with the orientation and planning of the affirmative

**Narayan 17** -- John Narayan (2017) Department of Sociology, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK The wages of whiteness in the absence of wages: racial capitalism, reactionary intercommunalism and the rise of Trumpism, Third World Quarterly, 38:11, 2482-2500, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2017.1368012

Conclusion: dealing with the end of the wages of whiteness This article has attempted to retrieve Huey P. Newton’s seemingly forgotten theorisation of imperialism’s transition to reactionary intercommunalism, not only to achieve some form of epistemic justice, but also because Newton’s thought speaks urgently to our present. It has taken over 40 years for the contours of a truly global capitalism to match up with Newton’s proto-theorisation of neo-liberal globalisation. But Newton’s theoretical prescience also centres on his appreciation of how such changes would be refracted through issues of race and whiteness that underpin the US state and its economy. In conclusion, I want to reflect on Newton’s thought and why we should return to his ideas to understand the era of Trumpism. It is my contention that Newton’s reflection on what the future may hold under reactionary intercommunalism may in fact be words about our present. In a 1972 discussion with sociologists Franz Schurmann and Alberto Martinelli, Newton outlined his theory of intercommunalism and the future’s likely political trajectory. Newton’s main point to Schurmann and Martinelli was that the changes associated with reactionary intercommunalism, chiefly its technological displacement of jobs and the global spread of capitalist social relations, meant that Western imperialism’s wages of whiteness, where imperial conquest led to a bargain between capital and the white working and middle classes in the metropole, were effectively over. Indeed, as Newton told an audience at Yale in 1971, he hoped white America would unite with ‘those people who are already unemployable’, but whether this did or didn’t happen that ‘material existence will have changed. The proletarian will become the lumpen proletarian’.60 Newton’s interview with Schurmann and Martinelli saw him declare that either the white US population would come to terms with this reality, and embrace the objective class relations between themselves and the vast array of humanity, or they would start on a path towards world war three: The people here have to realize that they live at the expense of the world, and this includes the workers. Either the people will oppose the reactionary circle for survival, for peace, or else they will go into the third world war. So our basic problem is educating and organizing.61 Returning to Newton’s ruminations on the impossibly of resupplying the wages of whiteness highlights how dangerous the death of the wages of whiteness may actually be for us all today. Trumpism’s attempt to resupply the wages of whiteness through racism, nationalism and xenophobia, places humanity on a likely path towards war. Despite Trump’s claim that ‘jobs will return, incomes will rise and new factories will come rushing back to our shores’,62 Trumpism is unlikely to supply any jobs and material wages to its supporters because it is not designed or capable of doing so. Just as Du Bois highlighted at the start of the twentieth century that the wages of whiteness were designed by the elite to split class unity along racial lines, Trumpism’s wages of whiteness appear designed to split class unity for elite ends at the start of the twenty-first century. Trump’s economic plans, dubbed ‘Trumponomics’, essentially repackage neo-liberal ‘trickle-down’ policies with the promise of Keynesian stimulus. Trump has proposed massive infrastructure spending combined with huge tax cuts for the rich and corporations and further deregulation in the hope of generating investment and jobs. The 30-year track record of neo-liberalism has shown that these policies are unlikely to illicit investment in the economy and such a strategy seems incapable of addressing how technology, as Newton realised, will eliminate ever more jobs.63 As such, Trumpism will likely continue the processes of enriching elites and corporations at the expense of all members of the working and middle classes.64 This failure to supply the economic wages of whiteness will in turn likely be supplemented with the overtures to trade protectionism (Border Tax), racist and xenophobic polices such as (Muslim) travel bans, illegal migrant deportations, border wall building and military actions that aim to supply the psychological aspects of the wages of whiteness. This will simply be the supplying of the wages of whiteness in the absence of wages. There thus appears more chance that we shall see a race war in the US than any potential class struggle. However, the changes brought about by reactionary intercommunalism have also changed the nature of geo-politics and made such resurgent nationalism a more likely conduit for war on the international stage. The quest to remake the world in the American image, or rather in its interests, has enriched non-Western elites and empowered nations in the Global South in ways even Newton could not have foreseen. Although the ‘neo-liberalism with southern characteristics’ of the BRICS bloc does not yet mark an ideological and geo-political alternative to US and wider Western power, it does mark a world of increasing multi-polarity.65 What chance that a trade war or imperial proxy war induced by Trumpism could lead to what Newton called the third world war? Yet, Newton’s thought also offers us a vision of an alternative approach to dealing with the end of the wages of whiteness and perhaps herein lays the true value of returning to Newton in the age of Trumpism. Newton’s discussion with Schurmann and Martinelli revealed his frustration with the Western left’s fixation with the ‘factory as a phase that does not go through transformation’.66 In Newton’s eyes the left couldn’t simply repeat the fantasy of returning to the post-war settlement between labour and capital. Not only was such a position unachievable due to the changes induced by reactionary intercommunalism, but also because such a position failed to see how the post-war era of embedded liberalism was itself a racialised imperial formation. Newton argued against nostalgic pleas for national forms of socialism, which had been used to imperially split humanity across the colour-line, and for a transnational politics he called ‘Revolutionary intercommunalism’.67 Revolutionary intercommunalism functioned off the recognition of the interconnected nature of the global economy and the need to deliver equality and justice for the entirety of the world’s communities. Above all else, revolutionary intercommunalism rejected the idea that nationalist settlements, whether Black, white or socialist, were the pathways towards liberation. In light of reactionary intercommunalism’s global dimensions, Newton argued that only a global form of justice that would equally share the productivity and resource gains of technology would now suffice: In order for a revolution to occur in the United States you would have to have a redistribution of wealth not on a national or international level, but on an intercommunal level. Because how can we say that we have accomplished revolution if we redistribute the wealth just to people here in North America when the ruling circle itself is guilty of trespass de bonis asportatis. That is, they have taken away the goods of the people of the world, transported them to America and used them as their very own.68 Revolutionary intercommunalism saw the BPP create alliances with a plethora of social movements both within and beyond the US. These included the student-led anti-Vietnam War and Peace movements, Latino groups like the Young Lords Organisation and poor white American groups like the Young Patriots Organisation and ‘peoples of world’ pursuing nationhood, such the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam (NLF), the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). 69 The aim of revolutionary intercommunalism was not only to create a united front of oppressed peoples against global capitalism, but also to create alternative forms of life to the capitalist way of life. This ethos was exemplified in the BBP’s ‘survival programmes’, community-based programmes that were set-up and run by the Panthers and wider community to provide services such as free healthcare, free breakfasts for school children and free clothing for the Black community and other communities who had been excluded from the spoils of US capitalism. As Singh has suggested, the practices of the BPP’s survival programmes not only filled these gaps in welfare but also provided a ‘projection of sovereignty’ that rivalled the ‘reality principle’ of the US state.70 This entailed a practical deconstruction of the idea of state power (policing, education, welfare) that reimagined spaces and practices along new intercommunal lines of self-determination and democracy. Through attempting to disrupt class relations, racial segregation and gender roles, the BPP’s survival programmes also attempted to offer alternative ways of life, both institutionally and ideologically, to the racially divisive, class exploitative and gendered structures of capitalist society.71 The value of returning to Newton’s thought today thus lays not only with his appreciation of how reactionary intercommunalism would be refracted through issues of race and whiteness, but also with how Newton’s vision of revolutionary intercommunalism demands us to link the project of anti-imperialist solidarity with the creation of alternative intercommunal ways of life to capitalist society. This especially pertinent given that Trumpism’s critique of neo-liberal globalisation ironically shares elements of the left’s own social democratic critique of neo-liberal globalisation.72 Although violently disagreeing on the means, both Trumpism and social democracy aim towards the end of taming global capitalism through reasserting national controls (whether this is through racist approaches to immigration or raising taxes) and alleviating economic insecurity through job creation (whether this is through deregulation and tax cuts or increased regulation and government spending). Newton’s work on intercommunalism leads us to question the very categories of labour, nation, capital and democracy that underpin both Trumpism and contemporary social democratic politics. For example, Newton’s theory of intercommunalism makes it clear that we must question the linking of wage labour and income in an environment where technology eliminates vast sways of jobs and labour markets are racially discriminatory. Moreover, we must ask this question with a global rather than solely a national inflexion. Newton’s thought thus demands that we consider a new politics that would create new institutions and ideologies that could serve and liberate communities both within and beyond the boundaries of nation states. Returning to Newton’s theorisation of reactionary intercommunalism, and his conclusion that both white supremacy and nationally bounded socialism were incapable of dealing with the contradictions of global capital, thus implores us to pursue a politics of intercommunal revolution rather than mere national reform. This may sound idealistic as we encounter the re-emergence of racist populism in the US and wider Western world.73 However, Newton’s work reminds us that the contradictions of racial capitalism under the machinations of reactionary intercommunalism also offer the possibilities of hope as well as horror. Newton saw a chance for intercommunal solidarity and the creation of alternative forms of life because he believed the effects of the dwindling wages of whiteness now meant that the white populaces in the US were ‘more ready to fight’ than ever before. The key was to answer the questions ‘who shall he fight? Who is your enemy? Who is your friend?’ Newton challenged the left in the West ‘to show [that] the other unemployables are not the enemy’.74 In our contemporary moment these words, and the anti-racist and anti-imperialist politics they commit us to, seem as urgent as the time they were first spoken.

#### The perm represents “mature marx”- their indicts will reinforce theologic interpretations at the expense of scripture- apply epistemic modesty

ROBBINS, PhD Harvard, 13

(BRUCE, Old Dominion Foundation Professor in the Humanities, https://nplusonemag.com/issue-16/reviews/balibarism/)

AS A STUDENT OF ALTHUSSER IN THE 1960S, Balibar took to heart his master’s desire to detach Marxism from Hegel. Hegel was seen (a bit tendentiously) by Althusser and his disciples as a confident oracle of the End of History; and their aim was, through a close and even reverent reading of Marx’s texts, to expose a mature Marx who had been through an “epistemological rupture,” breaking with his early Hegelian faith, and who by the time he wrote Capital had embraced a more complex and open-ended model of history. History had to be interpreted the way Freud interpreted dreams — as motivated and structured, but with a quotient of randomness and openness to reinterpretation. Seeing history as analogous to dreams risked conceding that Marxism had something in common with wishful fantasy, but Althusser thought it made Marxism more scientific. In at least one sense it did: genuine science accepts the limits of its own knowledge. Balibar, not much interested in scientificity, was clearly enticed from the beginning by modesty about the limits of knowledge. Neither he nor Althusser put it this way, but their shared project might be described as a secularizing of Marxism. After Stalin, many thinkers were ready to abandon Marxism altogether. For those who wanted to save it — that was the grand but also defensive goal that Althusser announced to his students, Balibar among them, on the first day of the 1965 seminar that was to become Reading Capital — one option was to return to the founding texts of historical materialism and read them afresh, liberated from their decades of service to Party dogma. Like the Protestants of the Reformation, Marxists would get out from under the authority of the Church by appealing to the authority of Scripture. This of course would involve a resacralizing of Marx’s texts — something of an irony for a secularizing project. The secular always seems to need more secularizing. In this sense, Balibar’s series of studies from the 1980s (some of them collected in English under the title Masses, Classes and Ideas) was indeed secular and even detheologizing, a sort of Nietzschean–Rortyan experiment in thinking Marxism without its god-terms. For example, the concept of ideology went unmentioned in Marx’s Capital, Balibar observed, and this was because Capital had no need of it: if the fetishism of the commodity is working, it will do the job, mistakenly assigned to ideology, of making exploitation look like the breaks of the game. Balibar thus gently encouraged Marxists to make better use of their time than accusing others of false consciousness. Like ideology, the concept of the proletariat, so prominent in The Communist Manifesto, could also be jettisoned. According to the predictions of the mature Marx, the only class that would come to full political selfhood under the capitalist system is the bourgeoisie. The proletariat names a political potential that could well remain unfulfilled (as it has). This argument had the fortunate result of rendering unnecessary the proletariat’s predicted emergence as a self-conscious revolutionary subject; the usefulness of Marx’s analysis of capital could be demonstrated without it (as it has). Balibar was proposing in effect that Marx offered no providential assurance that things would work out in the end. This was Marxism without a Book of Revelation.

### 2ac marxism fails

#### The worker has disappeared --- the lack of spatial proximity and continuity between workers denies the possibility of class solidarity fomenting meaningful resistance. Moreover, Marx’s economic theory understands labor as divisible into discrete units of time, but the floating, arbitrary value of money combined with the depersonalization of time means today’s cognitive worker no longer has no discrete surplus-value to be stolen

**Bifo 15** [Francesco ‘Bifo’ Berardi, Professor of Social History of Communication at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Milan, *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2015, p. 138-42]

The recombinant alliance of cognitive work and financial capital was over. The young army of free agents, selfexploiters and virtual prosumers was transformed into modernity’s horde of precarious cognitive workers: cognitarians, cognitive proletarians and internet-slaves who invest nervous energy in exchange for a precarious revenue.

Precarity is the general condition of semio-workers. The essential feature of precarity in the social sphere is not the loss of regularity in the labour relation, since labour has always been more or less precarious, notwithstanding legal regulations. The essential transformation induced by the digitalization of the labour process is the fragmentation of the personal continuity of work, the fractalization and cellularization of time. The worker disappears as a person, and is replaced by abstract fragments of time. The cyberspace of global production can be viewed as an immense expanse of depersonalized human time. In the sphere of industrial production, abstract labour time was embodied in a worker of flesh and bone, with a certified and political identity. When the boss was in need of human time for capital valorization, he was obliged to hire a human being, and was obliged to deal with the physical weaknesses, maladies and rights of this human being; was obliged to face trade unions reclaims and the political demands of which the human was a bearer.

As we move into the age of info-labour, there is no longer a need to invest in the availability of a person for eight hours a day throughout the duration of his or her life. Capital no longer recruits people, but buys packets of time, separated from their interchangeable and occasional bearers. In the internet economy, flexibility has evolved into a form of fractalization of work.

Fractalization is the modular and recombinant fragmentation of the period of activity. The worker no longer exists as a person. He or she is only an interchangeable producer of micro-fragments of recombinant semiosis that enter into the continuous flux of the internet. Capital no longer pays for the availability of a worker to be exploited for a long period of time; it no longer pays a salary that covers the entire range of economic needs of a person who works.

The worker (a machine endowed with a brain that can be used for fragments of time) is paid for his or her occasional, temporary services. Work time is fragmented and cellularized. Cells of time are put up for sale online, and businesses can purchase as many of them as they want without being obligated in any way to provide any social protection to the worker. Depersonalized time has become the real agent of the process of valorization, and depersonalized time has no rights, no union organization and no political consciousness. It can only be either available or unavailable – although this latter alternative remains purely theoretical inasmuch as the physical body still has to buy food and pay rent, despite not being a legally recognized person.

The time necessary to produce the info-commodity is liquefied by the recombinant digital machine. The human machine is there, pulsating and available, like a brainsprawl in waiting. The extension of time is meticulously cellularized: cells of productive time can be mobilized in punctual, casual and fragmentary forms. The recombination of these fragments is automatically realized in the network. The mobile phone is the tool that makes possible the connection between the needs of semiocapital and the mobilization of the living labour of cyberspace. The ringtone of the mobile phone summons workers to reconnect their abstract time to the reticular flux.

In this new labour dimension, people have no right to protect or negotiate the time of which they are formally the proprietors, but are effectively expropriated. That time does not really belong to them, because it is separated from the social existence of the people who make it available to the recombinant cyber-productive circuit. The time of work is fractalized, reduced to minimal fragments that can be reassembled, and the fractalization makes it possible for capital to constantly find the conditions of the minimal salary. Fractalized work can punctually rebel, here and there, at certain points – but this does not set into motion any concerted endeavour of resistance.

Only the spatial proximity of the bodies of labourers and the continuity of the experience of working together lead to the possibility of a continuous process of solidarity. Without this proximity and this continuity, the conditions for the cellularized bodies to coalesce into community do not pertain. Individual behaviours can only come together to form a substantive collective momentum when there is a continuous proximity in time, a proximity that info-labour no longer makes possible.

Cognitive activity has always been involved in every kind of human production, even that of a more mechanical type. There is no process of human labour that does not involve an exercise of intelligence. But today, cognitive capacity is becoming the essential productive resource. In the age of industrial labour, the mind was put to work as a repetitive automatism, the neurological director of muscular effort. While industrial work was essentially repetition of physical acts, mental work is continuously changing its object and its procedures.

Thus, the subsumption of the mind in the process of capitalist valorization leads to a true mutation. The conscious and sensitive organism is subjected to a growing competitive pressure, to an acceleration of stimuli, to a constant exertion of his/her attention. As a consequence, the mental environment, the info-sphere in which the mind is formed and enters into relations with other minds, becomes a psychopathogenic environment.

To understand semiocapital’s infinite game of mirrors, we must first outline a new disciplinary field, delimited by three aspects: the critique of political economy of connective intelligence; the semiology of linguistic-economic fluxes; and the psychochemistry of the info-sphere, focused on the study of the psychopathological effects of the mental exploitation caused by the acceleration of the info-sphere.

In the connected world, the retroactive loops of general systems theory are fused with the dynamic logic of biogenetics to form a post-human vision of digital production. Human minds and flesh are integrated with digital circuits thanks to interfaces of acceleration and simplification: a model of bio-info production is emerging that produces semiotic artefacts with the capacity for the auto- replication of living systems. Once fully operative, the digital nervous system can be rapidly installed in every form of organization.

The digital network is provoking an intensification of the info-stimuli, and these are transmitted from the social brain to individual brains. This acceleration is a pathogenic factor that has wide-ranging effects in society. Since capitalism is wired into the social brain, a psychotic meme of acceleration acts as pathological agent: the organism is drawn into a spasm until collapse.

#### The bourgeoisie has disappeared: in the regime of semiocapitalism, there’s nothing to rebel against. Their replacement, the “elsewhere class,” engages in a constant reterritorialization of random financial value that makes effective resistance impossible.

**Bifo 15** [Francesco ‘Bifo’ Berardi, Professor of Social History of Communication at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Milan, *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide*, Verso: Brooklyn, NY, 2015, p. 76-80]

Semiocapital and the Ethics of Baroque

Crime used to be a secret act. In the age of repression and industriousness, when the morality of the bourgeoisie was reigning, crime wanted to be secret. Law aimed at preventing crime, and it encouraged investigations of criminals in order to punish them.

This order of things has irrevocably changed in the last turn of time, especially since the advent of the semiocapitalist regime.

Semiocapitalism occupies the sphere of randomness of value, as well as the sphere of randomness of law and of moral judgement.

The entire strategy of the system lies in this hyper-reality of floating values. It is the same for money and theory as for the unconscious. Value rules according to an ungraspable order: the generation of models, the indefinite chaining of simulation. Cybernetic operationality, the genetic code, the random order of mutations, the principle of uncertainty, and so on: all of these replace a determinist and objectivist science, a dialectical vision of history and consciousness.1

Baudrillard is talking of value in economic terms. In the post-Fordist transition, the relation between work-time and value is jeopardized, as immaterial production and cognitive work are difficult to properly gauge. But the random effect is not limited to the sphere of the economy, as it spreads both to the sphere of social relations and to that of ethics.

The current, generalized perception of widespread corruption is neither a superficial impression, nor the effect of a deterioration of the moral character of people.

It is a systemic effect of the randomization of value. When value can no longer be determined by the precise relation to work-time, its determinant factors become deception, swindle, violence. Mafia ceases to be a marginal phenomenon of lawlessness, instead becoming the prevailing force of emerging capitalist economies like Russia and Mexico. At the same time, fraud is legalized and organized in the global financial market as a systemic feature.

As it becomes increasingly institutionalized, crime loses its secrecy and demands access to the spectacle. The visibility of crime becomes part of the effectiveness and persuasiveness of power. Competition is all about subduing, cheating, predating. Blaming the victims is part of the game: you are guilty of your inability to subdue, to cheat and to plunder, therefore you will be submitted to the blackmail of debt and to the tyranny of austerity.

Nazism already enacted spectacular crime as a means to secure absolute power, but the criminal acts conducted in the name of the ‘Final Solution’ were secretly organized and performed away from the public eye. Evil was proclaimed and simultaneously denied in the name of the superior values of family, homeland and God. On the contrary, reclaiming evil has become commonplace in today’s financial markets, as the old ethics of bourgeois Protestantism is progressively cancelled by the neobaroque, post-bourgeois ethics of the deterritorialized financial class.

The bourgeoisie was a strongly territorialized class, whose power was based on the property of physical assets, and on the fact of belonging to a stable community. Protestant ethics was based on the long-lasting relationship between the religious community and the labourers and consumers who shared the same place and the same destiny.

Nowadays, the bourgeoisie has disappeared. The financial deterritorialization is generating a post-bourgeois class, which has no relation to the territory and to community.

It is a class that is not concerned with the future of any specific territorial community, because tomorrow it will move its business to a different part of the world. We might call it the ‘elsewhere class’, as it continuously displaces the stakes of its investment. But we may also call it a ‘virtual class’, for two reasons: because it is the class that gains profits from virtual activities, like net trading, and high tech immaterial production; and because it is the class that does not actually exist. Identifying those who are investing in the financial market is difficult, impossible, as everybody is obliged to depend on it.

In a sense, everybody is part of the class that is investing in the financial market. Including myself. As a teacher I am bound to wait for a pension, and I know that my pension will be paid if some investment funds will be profitable, therefore I am obliged to depend for my future revenue on the profitability of the financial market. The ‘elsewhere class’ has re-established the economic rationale of the rentier, as profit is no longer linked to the expansion of the existing wealth, but is linked to the mere possession of an invisible asset: money, or, more accurately, credit.

According to Thomas Stewart:

Money has dematerialized. Once upon a time officials of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York were loading gold bars onto trolleys and rolled them from one country’s basement to another. Today some 1.3 trillion in currency is traded every day, and never takes a tangible form.

Money has turned ethereal, volatile and electronic. Nothing more than an assemblage of ones and zeros that are piped through miles of wire, pumped over fiberoptic highways, bounced off satellites, and beamed from one microwave relay station to another. This new money is like a shadow. It has no tactile dimension, no heft or weight. Money is an image.2

The post-bourgeois class of virtual finance has no homeland, no community, no belonging, and also no money. Just faith. Faith in signs, in figures. The post-bourgeois class announces the return of the baroque.

Although defeated and marginalized during the age of bourgeois progress and the rational organization of social life, the baroque has never disappeared.

Its spirit is based on the primacy of the spectacle, on the multiplication of possible interpretations, on randomness of value and of meaning, or the potency of arbitrary and violent will. Not surprisingly, Curzio Malaparte, a writer who took part in Italian Fascism before changing his position during the Second World War, in Europa vivente, published in 1925, speaks of Italian Fascism as a return of the baroque. Northern Europeans are wrong to think that modernity is only a Protestant business, says Malaparte. Fascism is the reclaiming of the modern soul of Southern Europeans, and the political spectacle of Mussolini is the resurgence of the baroque cult of inessentiality, decoration, excess: arbitrary power.

But arbitrariness is not only a defining feature of Fascism, it is also the quintessential character of the semio capitalist form of accumulation. The power of the resurgent baroque is fully exposed by the transformation of the economy into semioproduction. When language, imagination, information and immaterial flows become the force of production and the general space of exchange, when property is deterritorialized and becomes immaterial, the baroque spirit becomes the all-encompassing form, both of the economy and of ethical discourse.

### 2ac anti-blackness turns

#### The freedom of the anti-capitalist worker is premised upon a denial of blackness because it remains on the terrain of beings. Their claim to produce freedom for blackness relies on a vicious ruse of analogy that re-elaborates on the conditions of slavery.

**Barber** (Daniel Colucciello, Department Member ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry) **2016** (The Creation of Non-Being, Rhizome, Issue 29, <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html>, C.A.)

[28] This is to name the essential limit of Lazzarato's account as the failure to analyze the ways in which the domination of **capitalism is constituted by** the domination of **anti-blackness**. In making this claim, I am following Wilderson's argument that "the privileged subject of Marxist discourse is a subaltern who is approached by variable capital—a wage. In other words, Marxism assumes a subaltern structured by capital, not by white supremacy" (Wilderson 2003: 225). The essential limit of Marxism, he argues, is its theorization of capitalism in terms of "exploitation (rather than accumulation and death)" (Wilderson 2003: 234). **Marxism** thus begins from and **stays within the being of whiteness**, a being whose coherence is premised on the denial of the fact that capital "was **kick-started by approaching a** particular body (a **Black body**) **with direct relations of force, not by approaching a White body with variable capital"** (Wilderson 2003: 230). [29] The position of the worker, in virtue of its raced difference from the position of the slave, asserts a capacity for analogical relation—even amidst exploitation—with the exploiter. The exploited and the exploiter, despite their asymmetry, share a being that is made through the denial of blackness, which is positioned as the slave; the worker possesses an analogical relation to the owner that the slave does not. **To presume that the slave** position **can be analogized with the worker** position **is thus** to attribute the latter's analogical capacity to the former, which is without analogy. It is to presume an analogy between what is capable of being analogous with what is not: **"the ruse of analogy"** (Wilderson 2010: 37). [30] This means, as well, that **there can be no question of an intersection** between separate but equal spheres of class and anti-black racism, much less of an account that takes up anti-blackness as a means of proceeding toward a supposedly essential antagonism of class. Against such accounts, Wilderson remarks that, within them, "racism is read off the base, as it were, as being derivative of political economy" (Wilderson 2003: 225). On the contrary, what is essential is anti-black racism, or the incommensurability between non-being and being: class division concerns relations between analogizable terms (owner and worker) that, however conflictual or exploitative, presume a common being, a being whose making—and being made coherent—is premised on (the denial of) the real non-being of the slave. [31] All this is to say that anti-black racial ontology is the condition of possibility for the Marxist demand—central to Lazzarato's own version of autonomist Marxism—for being free from exploitation. As Christina Sharpe remarks: "The legal captivity of Africans and their descendants was central to the codification of rights and freedoms for those legally constituted as white and their legally white descendants. That is, freedoms for those people constituted as white were and are produced through an other's body legally and otherwise being made to wear unfreedom and to serve as a placeholder for access to the freedoms that are denied the black subject" (Sharpe 2010: 15). The being of freedom, or the articulation of a free being – that is, **the very link between being and freedom—is premised upon a denial of blackness**, or non-being. This is the case even (or especially) when freedom is expressed as a possibility, for such possibility—pertaining only to that which has already emerged as being—cannot articulate that which this emergence denies. As Saidiya V. Hartman remarks, **the "language of freedom** no longer **becomes** that which rescues the slave from his or her former condition, but **the site of the re-elaboration of that condition**" (Hartman and Wilderson 2003: 185). [32] **Freedom names the modulative, mutational possibilities of being(s**). Marxist discourse, however innovative, addresses free beings, or the being of freedom. It leaves unthought non-being, the reality of which is logically prior to all being, and thus to all possibilities of being. It is for this reason that Lazzarato's account of capitalism in terms of debt, while an extremely innovative form of contemporary Marxism, still fails to articulate the essential antagonism of non-being.[[17]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html#footnote-17) When Lazzarato speaks of the indebted man, of the "we" of debt inheritance, he is speaking of the position that Marxism ascribes to the worker—instead of a capital-work relation we have, in Lazzarato, a credit-debt relation.[[18]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html#footnote-18) Debt innovatively re-defines the meaning of work, but it does not change the positionality of the worker, which remains as the position of the debtor.[[19]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html#footnote-19) His critique proceeds in virtue of a link—foreclosed by debt—between being and freedom, without ever articulating that the very possibility of this link is premised on the denial of non-being, on the making of blackness as that which is without the possibility of being free. Lazzarato thereby fails to address how the being of the worker, now the indebted man, is rendered visible by standing out against the background of (black) flesh.[[20]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html#footnote-20)

#### The focus on exploitation of the worker cannot grapple with black non-being because exploitation occurs through the inheritance of debt which presumes a being which has the capacity to inherit. It is precisely through this capacity that the worker can still identify with the “we” of humanity.

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[17] **A central feature of control is debt**. As Deleuze remarks, "A man is no longer a man confined but a man in debt" (Deleuze 1997: 179). The experience of the indebted man is one of endless postponement, for the creditor-debtor relation sets the terms, in the present, for the future of this relation. Otherwise put, the relation between present and future is circumscribed within the relation between creditor and debtor: to have credit is to have the future as a present creditor; to have debt is to have the future as a present debtor. The future is given credit by the present, or the future is what one is given to pay off the debt of the present. In such a relation, **the future is endlessly postponed while the present remains, endures, as credit and debt. Any negativity toward the present is foreclosed**, and so the future is never created. [18] Yet Deleuze's analysis of control, and thereby of debt, is inchoate. For this reason, it will be useful to turn to the arguments set forth in Lazzarato's recent text, The Making of the Indebted Man, which offers a thoroughgoing development of the insights of Deleuze's analysis. The usefulness of this text arises, additionally, from the fact that Lazzarato—unlike many who work in a Deleuzian vein—tends to avoid dependence on an ineliminable excess of being that is presumed to overcome the limits of the present. Rather than treat Deleuze's thought as the index of an indefatigable, constitutive power of being that guarantees political possibility, **Lazzarato attends to the ways in which control has foreclosed such possibility**. As such, Lazzarato is perhaps the best available candidate for **exemplifying Deleuzian thought without the presumption of affirmation**. [19] Lazzarato presents the indebted man as the subjective terrain of communicative capitalism's apparatus of control, and in doing so develops some of Deleuze's central claims. For instance, he observes how debt "preempts non-chronological time, each person's future as well as the future of society as a whole," and contends that debt is the "principal explanation for the strange sensation of living in a society without time, without possibility, without foreseeable rupture" (Lazzarato 2012: 46-47). Furthermore, he confirms that debt marks the appearance of capitalism's capacity to make being as such, and thus to make the future: "The power of capitalism, like the world it aims to appropriate and control, is always in the process of being made" (Lazzarato 2012: 107). [20] **Lazzarato offers a key advance on Deleuze with his emphasis on the aforementioned being-making capacity of capitalism**. Specifically, he insists that **debt is not a scientific necessity**—something that stems from autonomous economic laws—**but rather a product of power**. Debt belongs to the exercise of power, and as such it is a making of beings that are logically prior to—and thus do not gain their coherence through—any science of economy. "Measure, evaluation, and appraisal"—the means by which debt expresses and constructs itself—"all arise from the question of power, before there is any question of economics" (Lazzarato 2012: 80). It is in virtue of the centrality of power within his analysis that Lazzarato offers an additional advance: the claim that attention to the debt-relation is inseparable from attention to the Christian relation. The power at issue, Lazzarato argues, is one in which the "origin of valuation and measure is both religious and political" (Lazzarato 2012: 81). [21] Lazzarato's theorization of **capitalism as a power to make the debt-relation**—and not as a secular science regulating this relation—**leads him to introduce and emphasize the Christian valence of "debt obligations**" (Lazzarato 2012: 40-41). He argues that what makes the debt-relation hold (as its necessary, if not sufficient, condition) is obligation, and that the theorization of this obligation requires attending to the Christian character of debt. Being is made through the establishment of a creditor-debtor relation, yet **essential to this relation is the establishment of obligation**, and obligation, Lazzarato argues, is **established by Christianity** (from which capitalism inherits it). Simply put, the making of beings through debt is made through obligation, which is made through Christianity. It is along these lines that he claims **we are now "indebted to the 'god' Capital"** (Lazzarato 2012: 32). Lazzarato's analysis of the debt-relation thereby demonstrates that the power by which capitalism makes being is bound up with a power named by Christianity. Capitalist power must then be analyzed in its undividedness from Christian power, and in a way that attends to the negativity of non-being against being. Asymmetry as Analogy [22] One way of addressing this task is to think debt as inheritance—that is, to think the inheritance of Christian debt by capitalism, and in doing so to think how **a capacity of being is inherited by capitalism from Christianity**. We inherit debt, and debt requires that our future be inherited—ahead of time—as the debt enacted in the present. But it is not just that debt is inherited, it is also that **debt constitutes its inheritors as** something, as beings analogically **belonging to a "we."** Note, for instance, the collective first-person of Lazzarato's claim: "We are no longer the inheritors of original sin but rather of the debt of preceding generations" (Lazzarato 2012: 32). Who is "we"? [23] It is by way of this question that one begins to encounter a limit of Lazzarato's analysis, which I will address in a logical register before returning to the explicitly historical marks of the inheritance that he tracks. **This limit**, logically speaking, **is Lazzarato's focus on asymmetry**. He clearly observes the injustice of the debt-relation by articulating the deep asymmetry between creditor and debtor.[[11]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html#footnote-11)While this observation is not incorrect, the approach to which it belongs ignores the ways in which **asymmetry remains within being**. In order for one thing to be communicated as asymmetrical with or disproportionate to another thing, these things must be analogical to one another, possessing a minimal degree of likeness or commonality. Therefore creditor and debtor, despite the extremity of their asymmetry, remain analogous to each other as beings. [24] This is to say that the debt-relation operates as a domain of analogous being, and that **Lazzarato**—by presupposing and leaving in place this domain—**fails to encounter the negativity of non-being**.[[12]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html#footnote-12)Whereas asymmetry presupposes the commonality and analogical relation of beings, non-being names that which is without being, and thus without analogical relation to being(s): **something and nothing are not asymmetrical but incommensurable**. Lazzarato's critique of debt, by focusing on asymmetry, ignores this absence of analogy between being (whether positive or negative, creditor or debtor) and non-being, and so it can only amount to a modulation of being—that is, a modulation ofwe. [25] Returning to Lazzarato's history of Christian-capitalist inheritance, I contend that this modulation is evident as an apparent transmutation within the "we": we were **once the inheritors of original sin**, whereas we are **now the inheritors of debt.** Yet a deeper continuity remains, for while we are different, it is we who have undergone—and survived—discontinuity: **we are still we**. Previously we inherited original sin, whereas now we inherit debt, but we are still those who inherit—and, in virtue of this being-inherited or inheriting-being, we are something. We are we, and we remain we, across any apparent discontinuity of Christianity and capitalism, **because what remains**, what is constant, **is the capacity to inherit**. Such inheritance is not so happy, of course, for to inherit sin, or to inherit debt, is to be exploited by God or capital. Yet this structure of exploitation maintains an analogy between exploiter and exploited: we are exploited, but **precisely through this exploitation**, this inheritance of debt, we still know ourselves as we. [26] In this sense, "we" names the inherited capacity to be-something, or the capacity to inherit being. What is ultimately inherited is not debt so much as this capacity: the debt that exploits is the debt that gives being, that gives the capacity to be in analogy with other beings, and thus to participate in or communicate as we. To frame the inheritance of debt primarily in terms of its asymmetry or exploitation is thus to obscure the fact that inheritability, or the ability to inherit, is the common or communicable being underlying all asymmetry. This is to say that **Lazzarato focuses** his analysis **on the conflictual relation between beings of the anti-black world and thereby fails to address the more essential antagonism between blackness and the world**. Lazzarato remains within the being of inheritance, or within the we that underlies and guarantees the "coherence"[[13]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html#footnote-13) (Hartman and Wilderson 2003: 187) of asymmetrical relation, whereas **any break with the present** must be articulated according to blackness, which is without relation. [27] The break, then, **must be articulated according to the uninheritability of blackness**. For Lazzarato, however, blackness remains in "the position of the unthought" (Hartman and Wilderson 2003: 185), and this is precisely because he adheres to the universalizable horizon of the we. "Everyone is a 'debtor,' accountable to and guilty before. Capital has become the Great Creditor, the Universal Creditor" (Lazzarato 2012: 11).[[14]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html#footnote-14) Yet it is clear that there are those who do not participate in the we of the indebted man.[[15]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html#footnote-15) Logically prior to the domination articulated via asymmetrical relations of we (inheritance of debt), there is domination articulated as non-being: "the damned of the earth"[[16]](http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/barber.html#footnote-16) do not inherit.

#### Their move to call us individualistic masks the whites as the collective and demonize people who challenge racial and sexual violence – that allows that violence to continue and reifies neoliberalism

**Ahmed in 14** <Sara. Professor of Race and Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths College, University of London. “Selfcare as welfare” August 25, 2014. http://feministkilljoys.com/2014/08/25/selfcare-as-warfare/>

Audre Lorde writes persuasively about how self-care can become an obscurant, how caring for oneself can lead you away from engaging in certain kinds of political struggle. And yet, in A Burst of Light, she defends self-care as not about self-indulgence, but self-preservation. Self-care becomes warfare. This kind of self-care is not about one’s own happiness. It is about finding ways to exist in a world that is diminishing. Already: we have been given some tools to sharpen our understanding of how neo-liberalism can be used as a tool. There are differences that matter, differences that matter relating to differences of power. Neoliberalism sweeps up too much when all forms of self-care become symptoms of neo-liberalism. When feminist, queer and anti-racist work that involves sharing our feelings, our hurt and grief, recognising that power gets right to the bone, is called neo-liberalism, we have to hear what is not being heard. When feminism involves recognising the suffering of say, an individual woman of colour at the hands of a sexist, heterosexist, and racist system that is indifferent to the suffering it causes and that is called neoliberalism, you would be repeating rather than challenging this structural indifference. And you also negate other “other histories” that are at stake in her struggle for her suffering to matter. Those who do not have to struggle for their own survival can very easily and rather quickly dismiss those who have to struggle for survival as “indulging themselves.” As feminism teaches us: talking about personal feelings is not necessarily about deflecting attention from structures. If anything, I would argue the opposite: not addressing certain histories that hurt, histories that get to the bone, how we are affected by what we come up against, is one way of deflecting attention from structures (as if our concern with our own pain or suffering is what stops certain things from just “going away”). Not the only way, but one way. If you have got a model that says an individual woman who is trying to survive an experience of rape by focusing on her own wellbeing and safety, by trying to work out ways she can keep on going or ways she can participate in something without having to experience more trauma (by asking for trigger warnings in a classroom, for instance) is participating in the same politics as a woman who is concerned with getting up “the ladder” in a company then I think there is something wrong with your model. Sometimes, “coping with” or “getting by” or “making do” might appear as a way of not attending to structural inequalities, as benefiting from a system by adapting to it, even if you are not privileged by that system, even if you are damaged by that system. Perhaps we need to ask: who has enough resources not to have to become resourceful? When you have less resources you might have to become more resourceful. Of course: the requirement to become more resourceful is part of the the injustice of a system that distributes resources unequally. Of course: becoming resourceful is not system changing even if it can be life changing (although maybe, just maybe, a collective refusal not to not exist can be system changing). But to assume people’s ordinary ways of coping with injustices implies some sort of failure on their part – or even an identification with the system – is another injustice they have to cope with. The more resources you have the easier it is to make such a critique of those whose response to injustice is to become more resourceful. You might not be trying to move up, to project yourself forward; you might simply be trying not to be brought down. Heavy, heavy histories. Wearing, worn down. Even if it’s system change we need, that we fight for, when the system does not change, when the walls come up, those hardenings of history into physical barriers in the present, you have to manage; to cope. Your choices are compromised when a world is compromised. It is not surprising: some recent anti-feminist, anti-queer and anti-intersectionality (intersectionality as code for people of colour) statements from the “white male left” rest on charging us with being individualistic, as indulging ourselves, as being concerned with ourselves and our own damaged “identities.” I wonder if Audre Lorde might have had to insist that self-care was not self-indulgence because she had heard this charge. I wonder. I have read recently some critiques of feminists for calling out individuals for sexism and racism because those critiques neglect (we neglect) structures. Really? Or is that when we talk about sexism and racism you hear us as talking about individuals? Are you suddenly concerned with structures because you do not want to hear how you as an individual might be implicated in the power relations we critique? I noted in my book, On Being Included (2012) how there can be a certain safety in terms like “institutional racism” in a context where individuals have disidentified from institutions they can see themselves as not “in it” at all. And how interesting: the individual disappears at the very moment he is called to account. He will probably reappear as the saviour of the left. You can hear, no doubt, my tiredness and cynicism. I do not apologise for it. I am tired of it. Some of the glib dismissals of “call out culture” make my blood boil. I say glib because they imply it is easy to call people out, or even that it has become a new social norm. I know, for instance, how hard it is to get sexual harassment taken seriously. Individuals get away with it all the time. They get away with it because of the system. It is normalised and understood as the way things are. Individual women have to speak out, and testify over and over again; and still there is a system in place, a system that is working, that stops women from being heard. In a case when a woman is harassed by an individual man, she has to work hard to call him out. She often has to keep saying it because he keeps doing it. Calling out an individual matters, even when the system is also what is bruising: the violence directed against you by somebody is a violence that leaves a trace upon you whether that trace is visible or not. And: there is a system which creates him, supports him, and gives him a sense that he has a right to do what he does. To challenge him is to challenge a system. I read one anti-feminist article that implied feminists are being individualistic, when they call out individual men, because that calling out is what stops us working more collectively for radical transformation. Collectivity: can work for some individuals as a means for disguising their own interest as collective interest. When collectivity requires you to bracket your experience of oppression it is not a collectivity worth fighting for. And I have watched this happen with feminist despair: when women speak out about sexual harassment and sexual violence they are heard as compromising the whole thing: a project, a centre, a revolution. And the individuals they speak of are then presented as the ones who have to suffer the consequences of feminist complaint, the one’s whose damage is generalised (if “he” is damaged “we” are damaged). When her testimony is heard as damaging the possibility of revolting against a system, a system is reproduced. I will say it again: the individual seems to disappear at the moment he is called to account. We are the ones who then appear as individuals, who are assumed to be acting as individuals or even as being individualistic, while he disappears into a collective. From my study of will and willfulness, I learnt how those who challenge power are often judged as promoting themselves, as putting themselves first, as self-promotional. And maybe: the judgment does find us somewhere. We might have to promote ourselves when we are not promoted by virtue of our membership of a group. We might have to become assertive just to appear. For others, you appear and you are attended to right away. A world is waiting for you to appear. The one who can quickly disappear when called to account can then quickly re-appear when on the receiving end of an action that is welcomed or desired. I think of these differences as how we become assembled over and by tables. Two women seated together at a table, let’s say. Sometimes you might have to wave your arm, your willful arm, just to be noticed. Without a man at the table you tend not to appear. For others, to be seated is not only to be seen, but to be seen to. You can take up a place at the table when you have already been given a place. You do not have to become self-willed if your will is accomplished by the general will. This is why the general dismissal of feminism as identity politics (and there is a history to how identity politics becomes a dismissal) needs to be treated as a form of conservatism: it is an attempt to conserve power by assuming those who challenge power are just concerned with or about themselves. An individual is one who is not dividable into parts. In Willful Subjects (2014), I tied the history of the individual as the one who does not have to divide himself to a patriarchal, colonial and capitalist history. He can be an individual, not divided into parts, because others become his parts: they become his arms, his feet, his hands, limbs that are intended to give support to his body. When a secretary becomes his right hand, his right hand is freed. Your labour as support for his freedom. This is how the question of support returns us to bodies, to how bodies are supported. Willful parts are those who are unwilling to provide this support. So how quickly those who resist their subordination are judged as being individualistic as well as willful. In refusing to support him, by becoming his parts, we have become self-willed; in refusing to care for him, we are judged as caring for ourselves, where this “for” is assumed as only and lonely. Self-care: that can be an act of political warfare. In directing our care towards ourselves we are redirecting care away from its proper objects, we are not caring for those we are supposed to care for; we are not caring for the bodies deemed worth caring about. And that is why in queer, feminist and anti-racist work self-care is about the creation of community, fragile communities, assembled out of the experiences of being shattered. We reassemble ourselves through the ordinary, everyday and often painstaking work of looking after ourselves; looking after each other. This is why when we have to insist, I matter, we matter, we are transforming what matters. Women’s lives matter; black lives matter; queer lives matter; disabled lives matter; trans lives matter; the poor; the elderly; the incarcerated, matter. For those who have to insist they matter to matter: selfcare is warfare.

#### It also means the alt fails because reading racist and sexist violence as extrinsic effects of capital alienates people from the proletariat movement against capitalism

**Belkhir in 1** <Jean Ait. “Marxism Without Apologies: Integrating Race, Gender, Class; A Working Class Approach” Race, Gender & Class8.2 (Apr 30, 2001): 142.>

More than ever there is a need for the continued struggle against historical social inequalities based on race, class and gender. We need to integrate racism, sexism and classism into the Marxist analysis of capitalism in which race or gender or class serves as a point of entry through which the varied forms of social inequality can and must be understood. Thus, in recognizing the centrality of race, gender and class issues in the struggle against economic inequality and exploitation and cultural subordination and domination, we will be able to avoid the dramatic mistakes of the past that considered racism, sexism and classism as divisive issues.¶ Marxism and the "Woman Question"¶ In their article Marxist Theory and the Oppression of Women, Morrissey & Stoecker (1994) argue "those who follow Marx and Engels are left with a Marxist theory that is ambiguous on whether the source of women's oppression might be independent of the source of capitalism and whether this oppression could be ended by ending capitalism alone." Feminism often suggests that Marxism produced virtually nothing of real usefulness about gender inequality and the liberation of women. For Vogel (1983): "Marx and his collaborator Engels had little to say about the emancipation of women.... For them it was a marginal problem." As a result, the sexist bias in Marxism contributed to the growth of distortions in their analysis of capitalism. In her famous article entitled: The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union, Hartman (1981) argued that: "The marriage of Marxism and feminism has been like the marriage of husband and wife depicted in English common law: Marxism and feminism are one, and that one is Marxism." As such feminists argued (e.g., Hartman, 1981), since capital and private property do not cause the inequality of women, their abolition alone will not result in the end of gender inequality. Only specifically feminist analysis revealed the systemic character of the patriarchal relations between men and women necessary to understand gender inequality.¶ Most women writing on feminism began with the central notion that there was a distinction between sex and gender and argued that "women" were not born, but made: the problem was culture, not nature that were at the center of women's so-called inferiority. Other feminist writers also argued that the end of capitalism or patriarchy would not necessarily end the objectification and "subordination" of women because the control was within culture and the unconscious. Some feminist theorists believe that the gender hierarchical system is more deeply embedded in the male ego and thus, the various changes in the social order have remained male dominated, whether capitalist, socialist, fascist, communist, authoritarian, or liberal. Central to the reproduction of the "inferiorisation of women" is the socialization process of children outside and inside the home where "the patriarchal ideology, that men are superior to women," are taught and, where the inferior position of women is reinforced by the churches, unions, armies, factories, offices, media, publicity, schools, etc. The extensive list of practices, such as clitoridectomy, infibulation, prostitution, pornography, rape, foot-banding, body-veiling, involuntary sterilization, and sex-object advertising, illustrate the unequal power relationship of women to men, and finally, modern Asia's anomaly; the girls who do not get born.¶ MARXISM AND THE "RACE PROBLEM."¶ Although much contemporary sociological writing concerns itself with analyses of race, theories of racial ethnic inequality have never been a priority in Marxist social science. As Geschwender & Levine (1994) reminds us: "Classical social theorists, such as Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, were not concerned with the race problem...The authors conclude their reviews of Classical and Recent Theoretical Developments in the Marxist Analysis of Race and Ethnicity in regretting that certain Marxist theorists make the error of denying the race problem in the U.S. For instance, Bonacich (1980) reduced racism to an ideological adjunct to class exploitation. Wallerstein (1972) came very close to eliminating the concept together by stripping it of any meaning independent of the exploitation process.¶ As consequence, Manning Marable (1996) argues that racism has blunted the critical faculties of white progressives from the colonial period to the present Blacks have seen an endless series of prominent white liberal and progressive allies betray their trust and embrace the politics of white supremacy. Marxists have always insisted that the flow of social history is determined by the relationship between subjective and objective factors -- the superstructure or ideological, cultural, and political apparatuses and the base, or forces of production. But what most American progressives and Marxists adhered to was a philosophy not of Marxism -- which also suggests that the relations between superstructure and base are reciprocal, each affecting the other -- but of economic determinism. Racism was, therefore, only part of the larger class question. Small wonder, then, that until today, no progressive or Marxist white organizations, Old Left or New, had won over any significant number of black and people of color activists, intellectuals, or workers.

### 2ac left melancholy turn

#### The negative’s nostalgia for an anti-capitalism before post structuralism is left melancholy -- causes more political inaction

**Dean 14** [*Contemporary Political Theory*, 4 November 2014, “Radicalism restored? Communism and the end of left melancholia,” Jonathan, School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds]

- The left likes to blame capitalism on everything and then we don’t know how to come up with effective resistances outside of cap (fem, queer, etc.) leads to clogging because we can only think in terms of capitalism

The use of melancholia as an analytical category has its roots in Freudian psychoanalysis, and is to be distinguished from the related concept of mourning. For Freud, the latter refers to the (non-pathological) process of working through an acknowledged ‘loss of a loved person, or of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one’s country, liberty, an ideal, and so on’ (Freud, 2001, p. 243). Crucially, after a period of mourning is completed ‘the ego becomes free and uninhibited again’ (2001, p. 243) but melancholia, by contrast, is ‘related to an object loss that is withdrawn from consciousness’ (2001, p. 245), and as such it remains unacknowledged, enduring and intransigent. A number of authors have argued that Freud’s distinction between mourning and melancholia can help capture something specific about the affects and dispositions of the academic left. Wendy Brown’s 1999 essay ‘Resisting Left Melancholy’ remains the standard-bearer. Drawing on Freud, Walter Benjamin and Stuart Hall, Brown argues that the left-wing melancholic is ‘attached more to a particular political analysis or ideal – even to the failure of that ideal – than to seizing possibilities for radical change in the present’ (Brown, 1999, p. 20). Left-wing melancholy, says Brown, ‘signifies a certain narcissism with regard to one’s past political attachments and identity that exceeds any contemporary investment in political mobilization, alliance or transformation’ (1999, p. 20). But what precisely is it that has brought about this pervasive left-wing melancholy? Brown’s answer is twofold. First, she argues that the discourse of the left-wing melancholic frequently cites the turn to so-called ‘cultural politics’ or ‘identity politics’ – in which struggles around gender, race and sexuality are seen to have displaced the traditional focus on class – as having caused a crisis and loss of focus (1999, p. 23). The second alleged culprit – in the eyes of the left-wing melancholic – is the turn to ‘poststructuralism, discourse analysis, postmodernism, trendy literary theory got up as political analysis’ (1999, p. 23). Brown argues that this pervasive structure of left-wing melancholy, despite being based on an ostensible commitment to radical transformation, in fact engenders a conservative refusal to engage critically and constructively with the world. Instead, the left-wing melancholic takes refuge in his or her attachments to a lost ideal of traditional left theory and politics. The crucial point for Brown is that the problems affecting the academic left do not – as the left-wing melancholic would have it – arise from the left’s abandonment of its radical principles. Rather, this melancholia arises from many leftists’ continued (often unacknowledged) attachments to a historically specific model of anti-capitalist revolutionary social change, whose privileged status is now called into question. Left-wing melancholia, for Brown, is therefore bound up with a generalised refusal or inability to respond to the challenges engendered by the changing nature of capitalism, and the emergence of various forms of radical politics – feminism, queer politics, anti-racism and so on – irreducible to historical materialist models of political transformation.3 Brown’s text is notable for its lack of proper names, and as such melancholia is implicitly understood to refer to a collective, widely shared set of investments and orientations. This aspect of left melancholia is tackled in some detail in J.K. Gibson-Graham’s (2006) analysis of the affects and emotions of the academic left. One of Gibson-Graham’s central aims is to contest an entrenched mindset in which ‘the accepted or correct ‘political’ stance is one in which the emotional and affective dispositions of paranoia, melancholia, and moralism intermingle and self-reinforce’ (2006, p. 4). Crucially, these negative affects are not located in particular individuals, but are a ‘structure of feeling’ (2006, p. 1) ‘widely present if not fully manifest in any person or pronouncement’ (2006, p. 6). Gibson-Graham suggests that these structures of feeling reduce the academic left to political [clogging] ~~paralysis~~, and also curtail our analytical capacities: left melancholia, they argue, reflects and reinforces rather crude, totalising renditions of capitalism as a pervasive and largely uncontestable socio-economic formation. Consequently, complexities within capitalism, and socio-economic practices that diverge from – or indeed actively resist – capitalism, are downplayed, overlooked and cast to the margins, precluding the production of more nuanced framings of contemporary economic practices and social formations. The thrust of Brown and Gibson-Graham’s critical analyses of various aspects of left melancholia is not to suggest that those on the academic left should simply cheer up, or foster more positive affective orientations for the sake of it. Rather, their point is that melancholia – conceived as a specific kind of psychic formation different to, say, disappointment or sadness – hampers the academic left’s ability to intervene politically, or to engage in fruitful socio-political analysis. Consequently, Gibson-Graham and others make a persuasive argument that an urgent task for the left is to explore how we might weaken the hold of melancholia.

#### This articulates itself in ways that are racist, sexist, and destroy alt solvency

**Ross 2k** [Marlon B., Professor, Department of English and Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies, “Commentary: Pleasuring Identity, or the Delicious Politics of Belonging,” New Literary History, Vol. 31, No. 4, pages 840-841]

Although in his contribution Eric Lott targets Professor Michaels's comments and his own recent feud with Timothy Brennan (who unfortunately is not included in this volume) rather than Ken's argument, what Eric says about “left and liberal fundamentalists” who “simply and somewhat penitently” urge us to “‘go back to class’” could also be directed at Ken's conclusion. Ken writes, “Crafting a political left that does not merely reflect existing racial divisions starts with the relatively mundane proposition that it is possible to make a persuasive appeal to the given interests of working and unemployed women and men, regardless of race, in support of a program for economic justice.” On this one, I side with Eric, rather than Tim and Ken. Standing on the left depends on whose left side we're talking about. My left might be your right and vice versa, because it depends on what direction we're facing, and what direction depends on which identities we're assuming and affirming. Eric adds, "Even in less dismissive [than Tim's] accounts of new social movements based not on class but on identities formed by histories of injustice, there is a striking a priori sense of voluntarism about the investment in this cause or that movement or the other issue—as though determining the most fundamental issue were a matter of the writer's strength of feeling rather than a studied or analytical sense of the ever-unstable balance of forces in a hegemonic bloc at a given moment." I agree, but I'll risk mangling what Eric says by putting it more crassly.Touting class or "economic justice"as the fundamental stance for left identity is just another way of telling everybody else to shut up so I can be heard above the fray. Because of the force of "identity politics," a leftist white person would be leery of claiming to lead Blacks toward the promised land, a leftist straight man leery of claiming to lead women or queers, but, for a number of complex rationalizations, we in the middle class (where all of us writing here currently reside) still have few qualms about volunteering to lead, at least theoretically, the working class toward "economic justice." What Eric calls here "left fundamentalism," I'd call, at the risk of sounding harsh, left paternalism. **Of the big identity groups articulated through "identity politics," economic class remains the only identity where a straight white middle-class man can still feel comfortable claiming himself a leading political voice, and** thus he**may sometimes overcompensate by screaming that** this is the only identity that really matters**—which is the same as claiming that class is beyond identity**. Partly this is because**Marxist theory**and Marx himself (a bourgeois intellectual creating the theoretical practice for the workers' revolution) **stage the model for working-class identity as a sort of trans-identification, a magical identity that is transferable to those outside the group who commit themselves to it wholeheartedly enough**. If we look back, we realize even this magical quality is not special to a history of class struggle, as whites during the New Negro movements of the early twentieth century felt that they were vanguard race leaders because they had putatively imbibed some essential qualities of Negroness by cross-identifying with the folk and their culture.

### Cap Good

#### Markets solve sustainability and are the only way to solve warming

Adler 22, Jonathan H. Adler is the Johan Verheij Memorial Professor of Law and Director of the Coleman Burke Center for Environmental Law at the Case Western Reserve University School of Law; "How Markets Make Economic Growth Sustainable," Reason, 3-30-2022, https://reason.com/volokh/2022/03/30/how-markets-make-economic-growth-sustainable/, Accessed 7-4-2022, LASA-SC

Fifty years ago, researchers at MIT produced The Limits to Growth, a report on how existing economic trends foretold environmental ruin. Left unchecked, the authors predicted, expanding populations and economic growth would exhaust global resources and ultimately prompt civilizational collapse. The models upon which Limits was based suggested that global reserves of copper, silver, lead, tin, zinc, and petroleum would have all run out by now, and the world would be struggling to find enough arable land to feed a population of over 7 billion people. Without governmental efforts to change global trends, "[t]he most probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity," the authors warned. As should be obvious, the predictions offered in The Limits to Growth (and other contemporary doomsayers) were wildly off the mark. Among other things, they failed to account for how markets respond to scarcity, producing incentives for efficiency and innovation, so that we may do more with less. In short, the authors failed to understand why markets encourage sustainability. Those predicting imminent depletion of global resources and exhaustion of the earth's carrying capacity also failed to predict what is arguably the most important -- and under-appreciated -- positive environmental trend of the 21st century: Dematerialization of modern economies. The same economic incentives which forestalled resource exhaustion have actually enabled people to do more with less throughout the developed world. This dramatic development is chronicled in Andrew McAfee's book, More from Less: The Surprising Story of How We Learned to Prosper Using Fewer Resources — and What Happens Next, which I reviewed for Regulation. Here is an excerpt from my review: Dematerialization may be the most important, yet unsung, example of environmental progress in the 21st century. It is commonplace to observe that the relentless drive to do more with less has led to more efficient resource use, so that a soda can today is made with a fraction of the metal required 50 years ago. But dematerialization is not merely a story about increased efficiency or per‐​capita reductions. What is now being observed represents a fundamental decoupling of resource consumption from economic growth, such that as mature economies grow, they not only use fewer resources per unit of output, but they also consume fewer resources overall. In short, economic growth in the most developed nations increasingly coincides with a net reduction in resource consumption. Let that sink in. It is not merely that we are using resources more efficiently in countries like the United States. It's also that we are actually using fewer total resources year-over-year. The United States uses less gold, steel, aluminum, copper, stone, cement, and even paper than it did at the start of this century, despite the continued increase in gross domestic product. Annual consumption of all but six of the 72 resources tracked by the U.S. Geological Service are "post peak." We also use less fertilizer and water while growing more crops. Plastic consumption is up, as is energy use, but these two appear to have been decoupled from population and economic growth as well. How does this dematerialization occur? Some examples may be useful. The dematerialization of soda cans is relatively easy to grasp, particularly for those of us who can remember the heavier cans of the 20th century. Aluminum cans weighed 85 grams when introduced in the 1950s. By 2011, the average can was under 13 grams. Cans today are not only thinner and lighter, they are produced more efficiently, with fewer separate sheets of metal. Substitution can be an even more powerful source of dematerialization. Consider telecommunications. A single fiber optic cable made from less than 150 pounds of silica can carry the same volume of information as multiple 1‑ton copper cables. And were that not enough, satellite and wireless technologies enable us to bypass the use of physical cables altogether. We can communicate more and yet use vastly less material to do so. This not only saves copper, but other resources too. Think of all the paper saved by e‑mail, e‑banking, and e‑readers. Not only did neo-Malthusians not predict these developments, they failed to recognize that such trends would be driven by private markets, and not governmental regulation. We do more with less not because of government regulation or administrative direction, but because of capitalism and technology. These are the dominant forces driving dematerialization in the most developed countries and they could unleash similar gains in the rest of the world. We "want more all the time, but not more resources," McAfee notes. We want more of what resources can provide, and one way to get more is to do more with less. Market capitalism both facilitates and enhances the underlying incentives that drive efficiency gains and technological advance. This not only leads to dematerialization but also promotes "critical aspects of well‐​being," including health and prosperity. Unfortunately, these trends are not universal. While we consume fewer resources in developed nations, these trends have not (yet) taken hold in many developing countries, which often lack well-functioning market economies. We have also not observed equivalent trends in many forms of pollution, largely because emissions are not priced the way consumption is. An entrepreneur who figures out how to produce widgets while using less copper gains an economic advantage, as the copper must be paid for. An entrepreneur who figures out how to emit fewer particulates or nitrogen oxides does not, as emitting such pollutants is not meaningfully priced and contemporary regulations rarely create meaningful incentives for emission reductions on the margin. Understanding what has encouraged and allowed for dematerialization at the same time that populations have expanded and economies have grown is essential if these trends are to be replicated in developing countries and if we are to meet contemporary environmental challenges, including climate change. A suite of policies designed to replicate the same market dynamics that have led dematerialization could spur meaningful decarbonization. Ill-conceived policies, on the other hand, could actually do more harm than good. This is but one more reason policymakers should be more interested in fiscal instruments than regulatory mandates to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Another article in the same issue of Regulation as my More from Less review notes that greenhouse gas emissions in the United States may have peaked in 2005, and that GHG emissions appear to initially increase, but then decline, with economic growth. Such trends are not observed, however, in less-developed and less-market-oriented economies, such as China. The authors, Bruce Yandle and Jody Lipford, think this indicates that domestic GHGs could continue to decline going forward, even without new government policies. This may be so, but the reductions are nowhere near what would be achieved if carbon emissions were priced and there were more powerful market incentives for market decarbonization. Greater market incentives for decarbonization could also lead to the development and deployment of low-carbon technologies that could facilitate emission reductions in other countries as well, and given that climate change is a global concern, such measures will be necessary if atmospheric stabilization is to be achieved. The bottom line is that competitive markets create powerful incentives for efficient and sustainable resource use. Market-driven innovation has made it possible to provide for more people using fewer resources. Such environmental successes are often ignored because there is no policymaker or program than can take credit for them. They are the result of market processes, not governmental direction or design.

#### Capitalism causes dematerialization which solves sustainability questions

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Some people claim that we need to cut our consumption or there will be no hope for the planet. Such claims are based on the thesis that continued growth increases the rate at which the earth’s finite resources are consumed and, moreover, leads to irreversible climate change. And such warnings are by no means new. In 1970, for instance, the Club of Rome attracted a great deal of attention with the publication of The Limits to Growth. A Report for the Club of Rome’s Project on the Predicament of Mankind, which has to date sold more than thirty million copies in thirty languages. The book warned people to change their ways and had a clear message: the world’s raw materials, and in particular, oil would soon be used up. In twenty years, the scientists predicted, we would have used the very last drop of oil. Of course, the Club of Rome’s models for the depletion of oil—and almost all other major raw materials—were wrong. According to the scenarios presented in The Limits to Growth, we should now be living on a planet that has been devoid of natural gas, copper, lead, aluminum and tungsten for decades. And we were supposed to have run out of silver in 1985. Despite the bleak forecasts, as of January 2020, the United States Geological Survey estimated silver reserves worldwide at 560,000 tons. Employing an extensive array of data, the American scientist Andrew McAfee proves in his book More from Less that economic growth is no longer coupled to the consumption of raw materials. Data for the United States, for example, show that of seventy-two resources, from aluminum to zinc, only six are not yet post-peak. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the U.S. economy has grown strongly in recent years, consumption of many commodities is actually decreasing. Back in 2015, the American environmental scientist Jesse Ausubel wrote an essay, “The Return of Nature: How Technology Liberates the Environment,” showing that Americans are consuming fewer and fewer raw materials per capita. Total consumption of steel, copper, fertilizer, wood and paper, which had previously always risen in line with economic growth, had plateaued and was now in constant decline. Such across-the-board reductions in natural resource consumption are only possible because of much-maligned capitalism: companies are constantly developing more efficient production methods and reducing the amount of raw materials they consume. Of course, they are not doing this primarily to protect the environment but to cut costs. What's more, a constant stream of innovations has promoted the trend of miniaturization or dematerialization. Just think of your smartphone. How many devices has your smartphone replaced and how many raw materials did they use to consume? Nowadays, many people no longer have a fax machine or street atlas because they have everything they need on their smartphone. Some even use their phones instead of a wristwatch. You used to need four separate microphones in your telephone, cassette recorder, Dictaphone and video camera, today you just need one—in your smartphone. The finite nature of the world’s natural resources is one argument against growth, climate change is another. Let’s take China as an example: China currently emits more CO2 than any other country in the world and is building a number of new nuclear power plants in order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. With the new build program well underway, China’s first new-generation nuclear power plant recently went into operation. In the very near future, China intends to start exporting power plants. The latest generation of nuclear power plants is much safer than earlier models—and can play a pivotal role in the fight against climate change. In the United States, Joe Biden is already evaluating the advantages of small modular reactor (SMR) nuclear power plants. As the name suggests, SMRs are smaller than traditional nuclear fission reactors and offer a maximum capacity of three hundred megawatts. In the United Kingdom, for example, a consortium led by Rolls-Royce has announced plans to build up to sixteen SMR power plants. So far, two reactors of this type are in operation, both onboard the floating nuclear power plant “Akademik Lomonosov, which supplies heat and electricity to the Siberian city of Pevec and its one hundred thousand inhabitants. Anticapitalists blame capitalism for resource consumption and climate change. But political decisions—such as Germany’s decision to phase out nuclear energy—frequently have a negative impact on climate change. Telling people to cut their consumption must seem like pure mockery to the hundreds of millions of people around the world who are still living in extreme poverty. What they need is more capitalism and economic growth. Just like in China, where the number of people living in extreme poverty has fallen from 88 percent in 1981 to less than 1 percent today. Andrew McAfee’s book has an optimistic message about how we don't have to turn back the clocks and cut our consumption: capitalism and technological progress are allowing us to steward the world’s resources, rather than stripping them bare.

#### Privatization is necessary for space colonization – disruptions kill that potential

Thiessen ‘20 – writes a twice-weekly column for The Post on foreign and domestic policy. He is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and the former chief speechwriter for President George W. Bush. (Marc A., "SpaceX’s success is one small step for man, one giant leap for capitalism," Washington Post, 6-1-2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/06/01/spacexs-success-is-one-small-step-man-one-giant-leap-capitalism/, Accessed 7-4-2022, LASA-SC)

It was one small step for man, one giant leap for capitalism. Only three countries have ever launched human beings into orbit. This past weekend, SpaceX became the first private company ever to do so, when it sent its Crew Dragon capsule into space aboard its Falcon 9 rocket and docked with the International Space Station. This was accomplished by a company Elon Musk started in 2002 in a California strip mall warehouse with just a dozen employees and a mariachi band. At a time when our nation is debating the merits of socialism, SpaceX has given us an incredible testament to the power of American free enterprise. While the left is advocating unprecedented government intervention in almost every sector of the U.S. economy, from health care to energy, today Americans are celebrating the successful privatization of space travel. If you want to see the difference between what government and private enterprise can do, consider: It took a private company to give us the first space vehicle with touch-screen controls instead of antiquated knobs and buttons. It took a private company to give us a capsule that can fly entirely autonomously from launch to landing — including docking — without any participation by its human crew. It also took a private company to invent a reusable rocket that can not only take off but land as well. When the Apollo 11 crew reached the moon on July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong declared “the Eagle has landed.” On Saturday, SpaceX was able to declare that the Falcon had landed when its rocket settled down on a barge in the Atlantic Ocean — ready to be used again. That last development will save the taxpayers incredible amounts of money. The cost to NASA for launching a man into space on the space shuttle orbiter was $170 million per seat, compared with just $60 million to $67 million on the Dragon capsule. The cost for the space shuttle to send a kilogram of cargo into to space was $54,500; with the Falcon rocket, the cost is just $2,720 — a decrease of 95 percent. And while the space shuttle cost $27.4 billion to develop, the Crew Dragon was designed and built for just $1.7 billion — making it the lowest-cost spacecraft developed in six decades. SpaceX did it in six years — far faster than the time it took to develop the space shuttle. The private sector does it better, cheaper, faster and more efficiently than government. Why? Competition. Today, SpaceX has to compete with a constellation of private companies — including legacy aerospace firms such as Orbital ATK and United Launch Alliance and innovative start-ups such as Blue Origin (which is designing a Mars lander and whose owner, Jeff Bezos, also owns The Post) and Virgin Orbit (which is developing rockets than can launch satellites into space from the underside of a 747, avoiding the kinds of weather that delayed the Dragon launch). In the race to put the first privately launched man into orbit, upstart SpaceX had to beat aerospace behemoth Boeing and its Starliner capsule to the punch. It did so — for more than $1 billion less than its competitor. That spirit of competition and innovation will revolutionize space travel in the years ahead. Indeed, Musk has his sights set far beyond Earth orbit. Already, SpaceX is working on a much larger version of the Falcon 9 reusable rocket called Super Heavy that will carry a deep-space capsule named Starship capable of carrying up to 100 people to the moon and eventually to Mars. Musk’s goal — the reason he founded SpaceX — is to colonize Mars and make humanity a multiplanetary species. He has set a goal of founding a million-person city on Mars by 2050 complete with iron foundries and pizza joints. Can it be done? Who knows. But this much is certain: Private-sector innovation is opening the door to a new era of space exploration. Wouldn’t it be ironic if, just as capitalism is allowing us to explore the farthest reaches of our solar system, Americans decided to embrace socialism back here on Earth?

#### Space col is possible.

Mack '20 – Contributing editor Eric Mack covers space, science, climate change and all things futuristic. (Eric, "It's time we talked about how we could actually live on Mars, and maybe even survive there," CNET, 3-7-2020, https://www.cnet.com/features/the-terrifying-reality-of-actually-living-on-mars/, Accessed 7-4-2022, LASA-SC)

Elon Musk hopes to have a metropolis a million earthlings strong on Mars by mid-century, complete with everything from factories to breweries. But before anyone can swill down a Martian IPA, we'll first have to deal with the myriad ways the red planet can kill a person. If you were teleported to Mars with just basic camping gear, you'd eventually die of radiation poisoning or cancer. But you'd freeze to death long before then, most likely on the first night when temperatures dip to Antarctic levels. Before that, you'd suffocate trying to breathe the atmosphere made up of mostly carbon dioxide. But before even that, the very low atmospheric pressure on Mars would cause your blood to literally boil, regardless of the outside temperature. In short, camping out there will require much more than pitching a tent. Fortunately for aspiring Martians, humans have spent a lot of time thinking about how to live on a relatively inhospitable planet millions of miles away from Earth. Ideas have ranged from big bubble cities to underground bases -- one of NASA's latest concepts even involves Martian homes made of fungi. While Mars may be preferable to closer options like Venus with its boiling heat and toxic atmosphere, or the moon with zero atmosphere and space stations lacking gravity, it's still a problematic environment. "You would fizz to death," the SETI Institute's Pascal Lee explains in the video below. On Earth we never worry about going full soda, thanks to our very friendly atmosphere and helpful magnetic field. But on Mars we'll need to create infrastructure to solve the problems our planet handles automatically. And of course, we also have to develop ways to extract the water and oxygen we need to survive from a Martian landscape that has hidden them away in pockets of ice, soil, rock and extremely thin air. Easy peasy. However, Lee and others who have cataloged the many ways to die on Mars do not see them as insurmountable hurdles. In fact, there might be one ready-made solution for living on Mars that's viable from the moment humans arrive for the very first time. Just stay on the ship. Living in the parking lot This futuristic render shows a collection of Starships hanging out on the surface of Mars. Elon Musk and Space envision astronauts initially living out of the spaceships while constructing a more permanent human settlement on the Red Planet. SpaceX The first people to arrive via a SpaceX Starship will likely live and work out of the landed spacecraft in the beginning. "[Starships] are very valuable on the surface of Mars," said Paul Wooster, the company's principal Mars development engineer, in 2018 at a Mars Society convention. "You'd actually be having most of the ships stay and you'd be operating using the various systems on them to support the activities there." Living in the ship after arrival isn't just a SpaceX idea, though. The Mars Society, founded in 1998 to advocate for exploring and setting up a human presence on Mars, has its own "Mars Direct" plan. It also suggests traveling to Mars in habitats or "habs" that could then be used to set up a base on the surface once the earthlings arrive. The habs could be connected together, in much the same way that modular buildings are trucked around on Earth and quickly hooked together on site. "We could have people on Mars by 2030 and a permanent manned base by 2040," Zubrin told me in 2018. Besides bringing their own shelter to start, Martian pioneers must also pack the right tools to harvest materials from the rugged landscape in order to build a more permanent crib. "Very little that pertains to living on Mars in the early years will involve off-the-shelf equipment and supplies from Earth," writes Stephen Petranek in his book How We'll Live on Mars. "Almost every tool or device in use on Mars will need to have been carefully thought out." Building from scratch For the long term, a basic modular camp like the one Matt Damon struggles with in 2015's The Martian may not offer sufficient protection from radiation and other dangers, especially in the case of a powerful solar flare aimed directly at Mars. Radiation shielding doesn't need to be high-tech. A barrier made up of water or certain plastics can work, as can simply going underground. Former NASA physician Jim Logan estimates putting our fragile, fleshy bodies behind or beneath about 9 feet (2.7 meters) of Martian soil should suffice. Zubrin has also suggested using thick bricks made from Martian regolith to construct shelter, adding a uniquely medieval castle vibe to the more traditionally sleek and futuristic vision of a Mars outpost. Old lava tubes and underground caves are also ideal places to shelter, both early on and in the case of emergencies like major dust and solar storms that can sometimes spread across the entire planet. In the absence of other options, 3D printing technology offers another alternative for creating custom structures. NASA held a 3D printed habitat challenge in 2019, with New York's AI SpaceFactory (which bills itself as a "multi-planetary architectural and technology design agency") winning the top prize for a system that built a lightweight but strong structure using autonomous robots requiring almost no human guidance. Going underground or behind thick walls isn't exactly great for the agriculture that's going to be essential to sustain any presence on Mars, however. Mechanical engineer Andrew Geiszler suggested at the 2015 Mars Society convention that geodesic glass domes could be the answer. Mars provides all the raw materials needed to create glass, plastic and metals that can then be turned into dome homes. "Ultimately we're going to need to use native materials. It's very feasible. They're there for the taking." The glass dome structure has been popular in visions of Mars settlements going back decades, including in some recent renderings from HP's Mars Home Planet concept challenge that asked designers to draw up plans for a city on Mars. This leaves the question of exactly where on Mars is best to establish a presence. None of the above is possible without access to water, which we need to create oxygen, grow food and produce fuel and other raw materials. So finding precious H2O will be a top priority along with shelter from the elements when choosing a site. Water has been found in Martian soil, in trace amounts in the air, and in significant amounts near and below ice deposits. Moving to the edge of a Martian ice cap would likely be too cold and windy, but the planet also offers intriguing craters and canyons that provide a certain amount of shelter, building materials and water from deposits of ice or possibly even springs. The remarkable Valles Marineris, a massive gorge eight times longer and four times deeper than the Grand Canyon, is one place often suggested as a dramatic second home for hardy humans. Time to Terraform Maintaining all of the necessary life support systems on Mars will be quite an undertaking, which is why Musk and others have a long, long term vision of expanding the habitable bubble we construct on Mars to eventually encompass the entire planet. The concept is often referred to as terraforming, and would involve changing the planet's environment to be more earth-like. Musk notably proposed nuking Mars' poles to release massive amounts of greenhouse gases to warm the planet, although he's also amenable to massive solar mirrors.