## 1NC

### 1NC – OFF

#### Our Interpretation is the affirmative should instrumentally defend the resolution – hold the line, CX and the 1AC prove there’s no I-meet – anything new in the 1AR is either extra-T since it includes the non-topical parts of the Aff or effects-T since it’s a future result of the advocacy which both link to our offense. They should only get offense from a government legalizing a right to strike.

#### “Resolved” means to enact by law.

Words & Phrases ’64

(Words and Phrases; 1964; Permanent Edition)

Definition of the word “resolve,” given by Webster is “to express an opinion or determination by resolution or vote; as ‘it was resolved by the legislature;” It is of similar force to the word “enact,” which is defined by Bouvier as meaning “to establish by law”.

#### Government

Oxford Lexico. Definition of government in English. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/government>

The governing body of a nation, state, or community. ‘an agency of the federal government’

#### Recognize

Oxford Lexico. Definition of recognize in English. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/recognize>

Acknowledge the existence, validity, or legality of. ‘the defense is recognized in Mexican law’

#### Resolved requires policy action

Louisiana State Legislature (<https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/Glossary.aspx>) Ngong

**Resolution**

**A legislative instrument** that generally is **used for** making declarations, **stating policies**, and making decisions where some other form is not required. A bill includes the constitutionally required enacting clause; a resolution **uses the term "resolved".** Not subject to a time limit for introduction nor to governor's veto. ( Const. Art. III, §17(B) and House Rules 8.11 , 13.1 , 6.8 , and 7.4 and Senate Rules 10.9, 13.5 and 15.1)

#### [2] Standards to Prefer:

#### First - Fairness – radically re-contextualizing the resolution lets them defend any method tangentially related to the topic exploding Limits, which erases neg ground via perms and renders research burdens untenable by eviscerating predictable limits. Procedural questions come first – debate is a game and it makes no sense to skew a competitive activity as it requires effective negation which incentivizes argument refinement, but skewed burdens deck pedagogical engagement.

#### Fairness is an impact and comes before everything else – [1] it’s an intrinsic good – some level of competitive equity is necessary to sustain the activity – if it didn’t exist, then there wouldn’t be value to the game since judges could literally vote whatever way they wanted regardless of the competing arguments made [2] probability – your ballot can’t solve their impacts but it can solve mine – debate can’t alter subjectivity, but can rectify skews [3] internal link turns every impact – a limited topic promotes in-depth research and engagement which is necessary to access all of their education [4] comes before substance – deciding any other argument in this debate cannot be disentangled from our inability to prepare for it – any argument you think they’re winning is a link, not a reason to vote for them, since it’s just as likely that they’re winning it because we weren’t able to effectively prepare to defeat it. This means they don’t get to weigh the aff.

#### Second - Clash – picking any grounds for debate precludes the only common point of engagement, which obviates preround research and incentivizes retreat from controversy by eliminating any effective clash. Only the process of negation distinguishes debate and discussion by necessitating iterative testing and effective engagement, but an absence of constant refinement dooms revolutionary potential.

#### TVA – [Affirm a right to strike to reduce the digital colonization of information to feed the World Computer] right to strike for tech workers which allows them to collapse the grid and the world computer right to strike read a whole res aff with adv about strikes being key to socialist organization

#### TVA is terminal defense – proves our models aren’t mutually exclusive - any response to the substance of the TVA is offense for us because it proves our model allows for clear contestation. Form over Content doesn’t take it out since we don’t restrict Form, just the substantive burden of the Aff.

#### Prefer Competing Interpretations – reasonability is arbitrary and causes a race to the bottom. This means reject Aff Impact Turns predicated on their theory since we weren’t able to adequately prepare for it.

### 1NC – OFF

#### The 1AC badly misidentifies the production of disability --- the “mandate for perfection” doesn’t stem from a nebulous anti-impairment prejudice --- it’s a result of the economic mantra of efficient, mechanic productivity

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Weaker, older or impaired members of pre-class societies were more likely to survive with the development of settled agricultural production and surplus crops. Feudal societies saw impairment in religious terms, as a mark of either good or evil, which meant those affected often faced persecution. However, the rural production process, and the extended nature of the feudal family, allowed many to make a genuine contribution to daily economic life. Families living and working as large groups were able to provide networks of care for children and the elderly. This way of life, typical for much of the world’s population for thousands of years, was to virtually disappear in the last three centuries. The rise of capitalism forced people off the land. In Britain production for the market began on a scale sufficiently small as to be carried out in the home, and therefore impaired people could still play a role. However: the rural population was being increasingly pressed by the new capitalist market forces, and when families could no longer cope the crippled members would have been most vulnerable and liable to turn to begging and church protection in special poor houses. Market forces soon favoured machinery which was more efficient and able to produce cheaper more plentiful woven material. Those working larger looms would more likely survive and cripples would have had greater difficulty working such equipment.[7](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_7) The Industrial Revolution accelerated the pace of change enormously. Larger-scale machinery concentrated in factory towns increasingly destroyed the old cottage industries as well as traditional family structures, with members forced to find work away from the home or patch of land. The new factory worker “could not have any impairment which would prevent [them] him or her from operating the machine. It was, therefore, the economic necessity of producing efficient machines for large-scale production that established ablebodiedness as the norm for productive (ie socially integrated) living…production for profit undermined the position of physically impaired people within the family and the community”.[8](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_8) Working lives previously shaped by the hours of daylight and the seasons were now determined by the rhythm of the factory—even more so with the invention of gaslight and round the clock working. People’s bodies were now valued according to their ability to function like machines: Factory discipline, time keeping and production norms broke with the slower, more self-determined and flexible work pattern into which many disabled people had been integrated. As work became more rationalised, requiring precise mechanical movements of the body, repeated in quicker succession, impaired persons—the deaf or blind, and those with mobility difficulties, were seen as—and without job accommodations to meet their impairments, were—less “fit” to do the tasks required of factory workers, and were increasingly excluded from paid employment. [The Industrial Revolution] removed crippled people from social intercourse and transformed them into disabled people.[9](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_9) Specialisms were developed to help maintain and reproduce the new working class. Poor Law officials and an expanding medical profession developed pseudo-scientific categories to identify those of the poor who were unfit for work—”the sick, the insane, defectives, and the aged and infirm”. Dependence on others was now identified as a social problem and impairment equated with sickness and illness. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries those identified as disabled were segregated into workhouses, asylums, prisons and special schools. This had “several advantages over domestic relief: it was efficient, it acted as a major deterrent to the able-boded malingerer, and it could instil good work habits into the inmates”.[10](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_10) Isolating disabled people in institutions—barbaric and oppressive as they were—led to the intensive study and treatment of impairments, creating the basis for clearer scientific understanding and classification. Mental impairment, for example, was seen as a single category until Langdon Down’s reports for the London Hospital in 1866. These identified, among other conditions, what later became known as Down’s Syndrome.[11](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_11) With labour power now a commodity whose components were separately identified and valued, people with mental health problems were also increasingly categorised and placed in segregated institutions. In 1826, the first year for which statistics are available, fewer than 5,000 people were confined in asylums throughout England. By 1900, this had increased to 74,000.[12](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_12) Capitalism represented a huge advance from previous societies in many ways. For the first time in history the productive capacity existed to feed, clothe and house the entire global population, while scientific and medical advances offered the prospect of understanding and curing diseases. But the new working class creating this wealth were excluded from any say over what was produced and how, suffering for their pains physical and mental impairment on an unprecedented scale. Those marginalised or excluded from production, either by injury or already existing impairments, also became marginalised or excluded from wider society. In this way capitalism created disability as a particular form of social oppression.

#### The strategy of “Imagination of Disability” wrongly focuses on tinkering ideological systems which obscures that the only pathway to real change in the context of disability is a new economic organization of society

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[The] root of our oppression is the fact that capitalism sees everything in terms of profit and profitability—and this colours how capitalists view disabled workers. Most employers see disabled employees as a “problem”—something difficult, something different, something that will cost them more to employ. That isn’t to say that capitalists are incapable of realising that disabled people can be a source of cheap labour. So the oppression of disabled people is a reflection of the way in which capitalism reduces everything to profit—effectively, capitalism says disabled people are surplus to requirements. This is especially true in periods of economic crisis—provision for disabled people is always one of the first things to be hit.[52](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_52) Disability discrimination is a distinct but complex form of oppression, based on the (negligibly to substantially) greater expense to capital of the labour power of impaired people. This oppression was not particular to the Industrial Revolution. Disability continues to be rooted in the way the capitalist mode of production subordinates concrete labour (and the concrete labourer) to abstract, interchangeable and homogeneous labour. The very nature of work in capitalist society constantly undercuts any potential for liberation. The social model’s weakness in relation to impairment needs to be addressed. Limitations or lack of “part of a limb, organ or mechanism of the body” or mental function are the raw material on which disability discrimination works, and as such cannot be divorced from the latter. We have seen how disability is historically and socially determined. But this is also true of impairment. The “particular social and historical context…determines its nature… Where a given impairment may be prevented, eradicated or its effects significantly ameliorated, it can no longer be regarded as a simple natural phenomenon”.[53](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_53) The nature and heterogeneity of impairment distinguishes disability from other forms of oppression. Impairments may be physical or mental (or both), single or multiple, temporary or permanent, and acquired before or after birth. They may be mostly invisible, severely disfiguring or incapacitating, painful or even terminal. “The limitations which individual bodies or minds impose…vary from the trivial to the profound… The majority of disabled people do not have stable, congenital impairments…or sudden traumatic lesions (such as spinal cord injury), but instead have rheumatism or cardio-vascular disease or other chronic degenerative conditions associated with ageing”.[54](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_54) Most people don’t fit neatly into two categories of able-bodied or disabled. People with slight visual or hearing defects, for example, can render these almost irrelevant by using spectacles or hearing aids (although they may need to pay for them), but those who are completely blind or deaf face far greater obstacles to social integration. The most severely impaired people are highly dependent on able-bodied support, provided in Britian by six million carers. Finkelstein raises an associated problem.Disabled people “constantly fear that they may become associated with those that they see as less employable and more dependent. By trying to distance themselves from groups that they see as more disabled than themselves they can hope to maintain their claim to economic independence and an acceptable status in the community”.[55](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_55) A more recent study shows that “[both] disabled and non-disabled people regard those with a learning disability or a mental illness as the least desirable groups”.[56](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_56) The issue of who is “really” disabled can be highly divisive. Mike Barratt of the NLBD recalls being told that blind people are not disabled.[57](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_57) The disability movement in Britain primarily organised around a fairly narrow stratum of physical impairment and was led mainly by wheelchair users.[58](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_58) As one activist with learning difficulties complained, “We are always asked to talk about advocacy and our impairments as though our barriers aren’t disabling in the same way”.[59](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_59) Most disabled people do not actually consider themselves disabled. Department of Work and Pensions research in 2006 found this was true of “around half of those covered by the DDA”.[60](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_60)Deaf people pose a particular problem in these terms. Many whose first language is sign see themselves as a linguistic minority, and regard integration as a threat to a history and culture at least 250 years old.[61](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_61) Other disabled people may see themselves as impaired, for example, some of those identified as having behavioural or mental health problems who arguably are not, but still suffer discrimination. This highly subjective element is partly why disability, to use a cliché, means different things to different people. The extent and nature of these differences are other reasons (besides the more fundamental one of timing) why the disability movement attracted neither the opposition nor the scale of mobilisations and involvement experienced by other movements of the oppressed. Disability has no comparable equivalent to Stonewall or the great marches for black civil rights. Capitalism in general does not scapegoat disabled people in order to divide and rule in the way it does with other forms of oppression. Such discrimination plays a less central ideological role than that of homophobia, women’s oppression or racism. Neither is it generally popular. A recent UK survey, for example, found that 91 percent of people believe disabled people should have the same opportunities as everyone else.[62](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_62) Disabled people are often the victims of prejudice and ignorance, but they are rarely targeted solely because of their impairment. Even where this was true, for example, with the mass murder of disabled people in Hitler’s gas chambers, this was not central to the Nazi movement in the way that scapegoating the Jews was. Similarly, bigotry against those with AIDS remains largely linked to anti-gay prejudice. Disability is fundamentally about neglect and marginalisation. Those who defend it ultimately do so using a much more central ideology—capitalism’s need to extract the maximum profit from labour with the minimum possible expense. David Cameron’s government echoes its predecessor in its approach to “equalities” with a “corporate approach to diversity” which projects an inclusive image but in reality changes little.[63](http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-disability/" \l "129slorach_63)The DRC, before its recent demise, largely portrayed discrimination in terms of unacceptable attitudes (for example, “See the person not the disability” advertisements). Many disabled people also see individual prejudice and social barriers as the central problem. Some believe further progress depends on strategies such as cultivating “disability pride” or urging more people to “come out” as disabled. If disability is rooted in the economic organisation of society, real change must involve a new economic organisation of society. If it is not primarily a political or ideological construct, the key cannot be to change attitudes or language, important as these are. Achieving real change requires a power which disabled people alone do not possess. While the differences may be significant, the experience of other social movements has shown that the common and fundamental problem in attempting to unite an oppressed group is the issue of class. The huge struggles for black liberation turned into demands for black businesses, while the fight against sexism has been appropriated by raunch culture on the one hand and concerns about the “glass ceiling” for a minority of high-achieving women on the other. For gays and lesbians too, genuine equality, despite (as well as because of) the rise of the “pink economy”, remains elusive. Despite legislation outlawing discrimination against these oppressed groups, inequality remains deeply entrenched within the system.

#### Capitalism causes inevitable crises, inequality, and dehumanization—pedagogical spaces are the crucial staging ground for keeping socialism on the horizon

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For well over two decades we have witnessed the jubilant liberal and conservative pronouncements of the demise of socialism. Concomitantly, history's presumed failure to defang existing capitalist relations has been read by many self-identified ‘radicals’ as an advertisement for capitalism's inevitability. As a result, the chorus refrain ‘There Is No Alternative’, sung by liberals and conservatives, has been buttressed by the symphony of post-Marxist voices recommending that we give socialism a decent burial and move on. Within this context, to speak of the promise of Marx and socialism may appear anachronistic, even naïve, especially since the post-al intellectual vanguard has presumably demonstrated the folly of doing so. Yet we stubbornly believe that the chants of T.I.N.A. must be combated for they offer as a fait accompli, something which progressive Leftists should refuse to accept—namely the triumph of capitalism and its political bedfellow neo-liberalism, which have worked together to naturalize suffering, undermine collective struggle, and obliterate hope. We concur with Amin (1998), who claims that such chants must be defied and revealed as absurd and criminal, and who puts the challenge we face in no uncertain terms: humanity may let itself be led by capitalism's logic to a fate of collective suicide or it may pave the way for an alternative humanist project of global socialism. The grosteque conditions that inspired Marx to pen his original critique of capitalism are present and flourishing. The inequalities of wealth and the gross imbalances of power that exist today are leading to abuses that exceed those encountered in Marx's day (Greider, 1998, p. 39). Global capitalism has paved the way for the obscene concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands and created a world increasingly divided between those who enjoy opulent affluence and those who languish in dehumanizing conditions and economic misery. In every corner of the globe, we are witnessing social disintegration as revealed by a rise in abject poverty and inequality. At the current historical juncture, the combined assets of the 225 richest people is roughly equal to the annual income of the poorest 47 percent of the world's population, while the combined assets of the three richest people exceed the combined GDP of the 48 poorest nations (CCPA, 2002, p. 3). Approximately 2.8 billion people—almost half of the world's population—struggle in desperation to live on less than two dollars a day (McQuaig, 2001, p. 27). As many as 250 million children are wage slaves and there are over a billion workers who are either un- or under-employed. These are the concrete realities of our time—realities that require a vigorous class analysis, an unrelenting critique of capitalism and an oppositional politics capable of confronting what Ahmad (1998, p. 2) refers to as ‘capitalist universality.’ They are realities that require something more than that which is offered by the prophets of ‘difference’ and post-Marxists who would have us relegate socialism to the scrapheap of history and mummify Marxism along with Lenin's corpse. Never before has a Marxian analysis of capitalism and class rule been so desperately needed. That is not to say that everything Marx said or anticipated has come true, for that is clearly not the case. Many critiques of Marx focus on his strategy for moving toward socialism, and with ample justification; nonetheless Marx did provide us with fundamental insights into class society that have held true to this day. Marx's enduring relevance lies in his indictment of capitalism which continues to wreak havoc in the lives of most. While capitalism's cheerleaders have attempted to hide its sordid underbelly, Marx's description of capitalism as the sorcerer's dark power is even more apt in light of contemporary historical and economic conditions. Rather than jettisoning Marx, decentering the role of capitalism, and discrediting class analysis, radical educators must continue to engage Marx's oeuvre and extrapolate from it that which is useful pedagogically, theoretically, and, most importantly, politically in light of the challenges that confront us. The urgency which animates Amin's call for a collective socialist vision necessitates, as we have argued, moving beyond the particularism and liberal pluralism that informs the ‘politics of difference.’ It also requires challenging the questionable assumptions that have come to constitute the core of contemporary ‘radical’ theory, pedagogy and politics. In terms of effecting change, what is needed is a cogent understanding of the systemic nature of exploitation and oppression based on the precepts of a radical political economy approach (outlined above) and one that incorporates Marx's notion of ‘unity in difference’ in which people share widely common material interests. Such an understanding extends far beyond the realm of theory, for the manner in which we choose to interpret and explore the social world, the concepts and frameworks we use to express our sociopolitical understandings, are more than just abstract categories. They imply intentions, organizational practices, and political agendas. Identifying class analysis as the basis for our understandings and class struggle as the basis for political transformation implies something quite different than constructing a sense of political agency around issues of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. Contrary to ‘Shakespeare's assertion that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,’ it should be clear that this is not the case in political matters. Rather, in politics ‘the essence of the flower lies in the name by which it is called’ (Bannerji, 2000, p. 41). The task for progressives today is to seize the moment and plant the seeds for a political agenda that is grounded in historical possibilities and informed by a vision committed to overcoming exploitative conditions. These seeds, we would argue, must be derived from the tree of radical political economy. For the vast majority of people today—people of all ‘racial classifications or identities, all genders and sexual orientations’—the common frame of reference arcing across ‘difference’, the ‘concerns and aspirations that are most widely shared are those that are rooted in the common experience of everyday life shaped and constrained by political economy’ (Reed, 2000, p. xxvii). While post-Marxist advocates of the politics of ‘difference’ suggest that such a stance is outdated, we would argue that the categories which they have employed to analyze ‘the social’ are now losing their usefulness, particularly in light of actual contemporary ‘social movements.’ All over the globe, there are large anti-capitalist movements afoot. In February 2002, chants of ‘Another World Is Possible’ became the theme of protests in Porto Allegre. It seems that those people struggling in the streets haven’t read about T.I.N.A., the end of grand narratives of emancipation, or the decentering of capitalism. It seems as though the struggle for basic survival and some semblance of human dignity in the mean streets of the dystopian metropoles doesn’t permit much time or opportunity to read the heady proclamations emanating from seminar rooms. As E. P. Thompson (1978, p. 11) once remarked, sometimes ‘experience walks in without knocking at the door, and announces deaths, crises of subsistence, trench warfare, unemployment, inflation, genocide.’ This, of course, does not mean that socialism will inevitably come about, yet a sense of its nascent promise animates current social movements. Indeed, noted historian Howard Zinn (2000, p. 20) recently pointed out that after years of single-issue organizing (i.e. the politics of difference), the WTO and other anti-corporate capitalist protests signaled a turning point in the ‘history of movements of recent decades,’ for it was the issue of ‘class’ that more than anything ‘bound everyone together.’ History, to paraphrase Thompson (1978, p. 25) doesn’t seem to be following Theory's script. Our vision is informed by Marx's historical materialism and his revolutionary socialist humanism, which must not be conflated with liberal humanism. For left politics and pedagogy, a socialist humanist vision remains crucial, whose fundamental features include the creative potential of people to challenge collectively the circumstances that they inherit. This variant of humanism seeks to give expression to the pain, sorrow and degradation of the oppressed, those who labor under the ominous and ghastly cloak of ‘globalized’ capital. It calls for the transformation of those conditions that have prevented the bulk of humankind from fulfilling its potential. It vests its hope for change in the development of critical consciousness and social agents who make history, although not always in conditions of their choosing. The political goal of socialist humanism is, however, ‘not a resting in difference’ but rather ‘the emancipation of difference at the level of human mutuality and reciprocity.’ This would be a step forward for the ‘discovery or creation of our real differences which can only in the end be explored in reciprocal ways’ (Eagleton, 1996, p. 120). Above all else, the enduring relevance of a radical socialist pedagogy and politics is the centrality it accords to the interrogation of capitalism. We can no longer afford to remain indifferent to the horror and savagery committed by capitalist's barbaric machinations. We need to recognize that capitalist democracy is unrescuably contradictory in its own self-constitution. Capitalism and democracy cannot be translated into one another without profound efforts at manufacturing empty idealism. Committed Leftists must unrelentingly cultivate a democratic socialist vision that refuses to forget the ‘wretched of the earth,’ the children of the damned and the victims of the culture of silence—a task which requires more than abstruse convolutions and striking ironic poses in the agnostic arena of signifying practices. Leftists must illuminate the little shops of horror that lurk beneath ‘globalization’s’ shiny façade; they must challenge the true ‘evils’ that are manifest in the tentacles of global capitalism's reach. And, more than this, Leftists must search for the cracks in the edifice of globalized capitalism and shine light on those fissures that give birth to alternatives. Socialism today, undoubtedly, runs against the grain of received wisdom, but its vision of a vastly improved and freer arrangement of social relations beckons on the horizon. Its unwritten text is nascent in the present even as it exists among the fragments of history and the shards of distant memories. Its potential remains untapped and its promise needs to be redeemed.

#### Their foregrounding of disability turns class into culture --- oversaturation of difference is the mechanism used to divert attention from capitalist antagonism. The alternative is a decolonizing, anticapitalist pedagogy that unmasks capital’s strategies for control

McLaren et al 9 (Peter McLaren, Prof @ Chapman in Critical Studies . Prof @ UCLA, Urban Studies, Honorary Director of Center for Critical Studies in Education in Northeast Normal University, Changchun, China. Sheila Macrine, Dave Hill. “Revolutionizing Pedagogy: Education for Social Justice Within and Beyond Global Neo-Liberalism” \*Interview with Peter McLaren in book) //JHorn

I have been part of a movement to build a radical humanistic socialism—in part by de-writing socialism as a thing of the past and rewriting critical pedagogy as a struggle for a postcapitalist alternative—and in doing so I have taken the position that socialism and socialist principles are not dead letters, but open pages in the book of social and economic justice yet to be written or rewritten by people struggling to transform our capitalist prehistory, and to build a truly egalitarian social order where, as Marx put it, the real history of humanity can begin. We can do this in a number of ways but I have been concentrating mainly but not exclusively on ideology critique, de-naturalizing what is assumed to be unchangeable, de-reifying human agency, and de-objectifying the commodity culture of contemporary capitalism. I have been trying to discourage progressive educators from a sole reliance on a politics of human rights antiseptically cleaved from the issue of economic rights and have been trying to unburden cultural studies of its textuality of the negative, what Marxist professor Teresa Ebert calls a "site of meaningfulness with- out meaning and thoughtful unthoughtfulness" that presumably arrived on the wings of the Angel of History to save us from the old bearded devil: Karl Marx. With the advent of the linguistic turn in the arts and social sciences—a time regrettably, where class struggle was rewritten in the aerosol terminology of the politics of difference, and difference were treated as difference within itself (how difference is different from itself)—Marxism was a popular target among progressive academics. But replacing class struggle with the politics of "difference" and "diversity" flattens out and empties the whole structure of antagonism or ensemble of relations of opposition within the structured hierarchy of capitalist social relations. Social relations of oppression are, in this case, dissolved into difference within or between two differences—into relations of supplementarity—rather than highlighting labor relations or struggles between workers and the capitalist class. Ebert has written in great detail on this in a white heat but also with an attempt at clarity. And yes, of course, I have at the same time been challenging what Quijano calls "the coloniality of power" (I very much admire the work of Quijano, Mignolo, and Grosfoguel although I have some difficulty with some aspects of their critique of Marxism). Educators, especially, need to get beyond the manufactured fear and the hysterical rhetoric, peddled by what we call the corporate-state-military- media complex (or simply, the "power complex"), and instead seek a deeper means of challenging repressive and violent social structures. In some instances, we might slow down and reverse the current trend among legislative and policy-making bodies and political leaders who contribute mightily to the dreck and the moral refuse that has come to define the current war against the poor within the United States and the struggle against the working class by the transnationalist capitalist class. Since 1987,1 have been visiting rauicai cuucaiors, student groups, workers, philosophers, counterculturalists, contrarians, culture brokers, and pedagogical tastemakers internationally (most recently in Finland, Portugal, Greece, Venezuela, Brazil, and Cuba), attempting to conscript their messages into a larger, transnational drumbeat that will help to entrain an activist movement toward a postcapitalist alternative. What has been different about my work over the last decade is that it delves deeper into the terrain of Marxist theory and with more exigency and urgency, in an attempt to create spaces/places in different scales and registers where students can apprise themselves of the opportunity to resist more fully the geopolitics of imperialism and comprehend how new social relationships can be wrought that can supercede those given birth by the United States' underbelly of violence—a poisonous underbelly festering inside a hypocritical miasma of couth that floats everywhere and penetrates the very structure of our consciousness through electronic orifices that make up the neoliberal sensoria of propaganda—propaganda that is imbibed at last partially by a mystified duped citizenry under the aroma of "democracy." All of this is part and parcel of the geopolitics of imperialism that largely defines U.S. foreign and domestic policy—all of which, of course, impacts how we both view and develop our role as educated citizens (in my case, a citizen of the world as I am against most forms of nationalism) and critical cosmopolites. The gangrene-ridden wound in the soul of the country won't be healed by Obama or McCain (certainly not McCain who is a total nutcase). The issue goes beyond the United States itself. It has to do with the transnational capitalist class. But the United States certainly plays a major role. In light of the Bush administration's "humanitarian" invasion of Iraq, and other U.S. war crimes too numerous to mention, its current war on the poor, its savage repression of twelve million immigrant workers, and its involvement in overthrowing democratically elected regimes worldwide, we must detach from the term democracy the connotations of equality before the law, free speech, right of association, universal suffrage, and self-rule with which it has been saddled over the decades and recognize it as a vile condition that ensures the involuntary servitude of wage labor, the racial and gendered division of labor, and the plundering of natural resources by the imperial powers. The once grand refusal of critical pedagogy to reproduce dominant ideologies and practices inherent in capitalist schooling and the wider context of globalized capitalism and instead to embrace the possibility of decolonizing the conceptual, philosophical, epistemological and cultural dimensions of learning has been expurgated by the flat-lined antipolitics of postmodernism. My work has set itself up in opposition to this fashionable apostasy undertaken by what I once termed the avant-garde "hellions of the seminar room." Gore Vidal once prcscicntly noted that the U.S. government prefers that "public money go not to the people but to big business. The result is a unique society in which we have free enterprise for the poor and socialism for the rich" and the truth of this statement is no more evident than in the recent nationalization of Fannie and Freddie where you can see clearly that the United States is a country where there exists socialism for the rich and privatization for the poor, all basking in what Nouriel Roubini calls "the glory of unfettered Wild West laissez-faire jungle capitalism" that has allowed the biggest debt bubble in history to fester without any control, causing the biggest financial cri- sis since the Great Depression. Indeed, socialism is only condemned when it profits the poor and the powerless and threatens the rich. But capitalists are quick to embrace a socialism for the rich—which really is what neoliberal capitalism is all about. But of course, it's not real socialism but a form of state capitalism. Which is why today we have democracy for the rich while the poor are cast into quasi-feudal steam- punk landscapes of dog-eat-dog despair. Those whose labor is exploited in the production of social wealth—that is, the wage and salaried class—are now bearing most of the burden of the current economic crisis in the United States. S.L.: In the interview "Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire" (also the title of one of your books) published in the fall of 2007 you argue that revolutionary critical pedagogy operates from an under- standing that the basis of education is political and that we have to create a space where students can be given resources to imagine a dif- ferent world outside the capitalism's law of value. Could you describe what space in particular you have in mind? Can you define the moment of the revolutionary in critical pedagogy? P.M.: The moment of the revolutionary. I like that term. I suppose that there are as many revolutionary moments as there are critical educators. Let me wind up to your answer by providing some theoretical context. As I expressed this dilemma and challenge in an article recently, while it is certainly true, as many post-structuralists unguardedly claim, that we are semiotically situated in hermeneutic horizons, in gendered and racialized positionalities riven by power-sensitive and power-expansive relations of symmetrical privilege, and in social space aligned and vectored geopolitically and cross-hatched sociocuIturally, it is also true that the totalizing power of capital has created an over- arching matrix of exploitation in which all of these antagonisms have been accorded value in relation to the sale of human labor power in the global marketplace where, like force-fed swine who are made blind and crippled in preparation for mass consumption, men and women are led to the slaughterhouse of capital hoisted on hooks of poverty and debt. By this I meant that we certainly should not refrain from exploring and celebrating our ethnic heterogeneity and heterodox temporalities that power our subjectivity. I am not against this, or related issues such as building border identities that escape the lineaments of Eurocentric epistemes. This is all fine and good. But let's not forget that the totalizing power of capital creates constitutive limitations in which subjectivities are formed. This, I have argued, can be seen as a form of controlled consent made possible by the production of social amnesia both produced and enforced by the corporate media, and the deep psychology that turns the engines of mass propaganda disguised as a free marketplace of ideas (where the only free cheese available is in the mousetrap). Democracy has become synonymous with profit-making, requiring a rollback of trade union power and a generalized hollowing out of social democracy, not by military dictatorship but by an endless stream of maledictions and execrations against leftist movements and Marxist analyses that deal with the totality of capitalist social relations and address questions of universality. We are immersed in a popular culture unswervingly saturated by endless spectacles meant to divert attention from substantive political issues and debates, and geared toward proselytizing in order to create silent accomplices in the ravages of corporate expansionism and imperialism. In the name of the most holy acts of consumption, the state media apparatuses, not only fail to resist the complete takeover of the public sphere by the logic of capital, but actively promote capitalist logic. In other words, under the guise of defanging the alienation produced by the social labor of capital, and making us more critically informed citizens, the media actively promote such alienation. In order to address these issues and other related issues, critical pedagogy needs to be renewed—yes, it needs to bring itself face-to-face with the moment of the revolutionary. This time it has to be concerned with the problem of reasserting human action, and of finding forms of organization that facilitate human development. The depredations of progressive (i.e., left liberal) pedagogues have often subordinated praxis to the realm of ideas, theory, and the regime of the episteme. But critical socialist pedagogy recognizes the pivotal role of public political action, what has been called "public pedagogy." It's a pedagogy of revolutionary praxis. And here I would argue for a decolonizing, anticapitalist pedagogy. I have talked already about an anticapitalist pedagogy so let me explain what I mean by a decolonizing pedagogy. As I have written elsewhere, decolonizing pedagogical approach supports progressive initiatives such as smaller class sizes, improved low environ- mental impact school buildings, an end to school tracking, schools created on a human scale within or as local to communities as possible, cooperation between schools and local authorities rather than competition within the marketplace, vastly increased funding for education, increased powers for local governments to redistribute resources and participate in the development of antiracist, antisexist, and anti-homophobic policies and practices, and egalitarian policies designed to assist in more equal educational outcomes, irrespective of social class, gender, race, sexuality, or disability, and a curriculum geared toward socialist cooperation and ecological justice. But it also goes well beyond these initiatives. Decolonizing pedagogy in this instance does not only mean developing classroom strategies designed to contest neoliberal policies and practices, imperialism and militarism; it refers as well to developing a language of critique in which the concentration of corporate and state power is fundamentally challenged transnationally as well as locally. It is designed to understand society as a totality. Decolonizing educators realize that the concept of globalization alone is inadequate for understanding political and economic imperialism, wars of con- quest and the pursuit of empire. The decolonizing pedagogy that is being advocated here recognizes that as we exercise our neocolonial means of exploiting other countries (as the United States and other foreign capital have exploited the labor power of local populations, drawing them into the world- wide labor market), the mass media and culture in general constitute the central means by which the consent of the popular majorities are secured by the transnational capitalist class in pursuit of the consolidation of their profit-making practices. An important condition of possibility for economic exploitation is the subjective subordination of the popular majorities through education, entertainment, literature, and art. Such strategies of subordination are made more trans- parent within a decolonizing pedagogy that employs critical media literacy in the manner suggested by philosophers such as Douglas Keliner. Decolonizing pedagogical practices are fundamentally activities rather than a contemplation of abstract concepts; they are designed to undermine empire by creating connections between the subjective feelings of alienation experienced by students and an understanding of their objective location within the social division of labor. In other words, the project of decolonization involves a concrete historical struggle and not a struggle for an abstract Utopia. It involves providing students with opportunities for learning some of the basic quantitative and qualitative tools of urban sociologists and activists, for undertaking analyses and projects in their neighborhoods and com- munities, and within the schools themselves. More fundamentally, decolonizing pedagogy is the creation of an historical identity through understanding the origins of the system that produces the alienation and estrangement experienced by students. In helping students analyze how the symptoms of their alienation are connected to the objective conditions of class society, teachers contribute to opening up a relationship between students and the historical present. The overall purpose is to undermine the established social relationship between classes, individuals and groups as well as the state's overdetermined systems of meaning such that it is possible to redefine what it means to be human outside of the repressive restrictions of the state. What is at stake here is more than following a methodology but developing the historical character of our social being. For instance, some radical educators such as Jeff Duncan Andrade and Ernest Morrell are teaching high school students to become radical sociologists that can analyze their own schools as institutions of domination, colonization, and social control. They call their approach, "thug life pedagogy" after the late hip-hop artist Tupac Shakur. Here critical pedagogy constitutes the building blocks for a relation with other people. In doing so, critical teaching helps hope resume its odyssey of struggle against the obstacles of fear, ignorance, and self-doubt. Tupac Shakur died at age twenty-five. His theory of humanization was called THUG LIFE (The Hate U Gave Little Infants Fucks Everyone). Tupac used to call youth fighting against oppression as the "roses that grow from con- crete." According to Duncan-Andrade, "they are the ones who prove society's rule wrong by keeping the dream of a better society alive, growing despite the cold, uncaring, un-nurturing environment of the concrete." Andrade's students create block-umentaries where groups of students organized by neighborhood document how the historical, sociological, psychological, and educational tools of oppression are being used on their blocks to keep them and their families down. I think that's one way to utilize critical pedagogy. Of course, in doing all of this, it is also important to try to imagine what a postcapitalist project might look like on the ground, in the streets—how would it look at the level of the system and structure, the state apparatuses and the lifeworld. These are challenges that as educators we need to face.

### 1NC – OFF

Debaters must disclose the affirmative.

Vote negative to preserve education quality – if your aff is demolished with 30 minutes of prep, then it doesn’t deserve to win – 30 minutes is key to update generics to apply to the aff, test the affs inherency, or at least learn something about the aff—that’s a voter for advocacy skills – otherwise debate is useless

Drop the debater – round was skewed from the beginning and there’s no argument to drop. Competing interps since we should debate over and select the best interpretation of how we debate our advocacies—reasonability also begs the subjective question of what people think is reasonable.

## Case

Don’t auto vote aff – it excludes clash and prevents in depth engagement over disability

Don’t eval after the 1ac since it lets the 1ac auto win

Yes we get theory that’s dtd – a im also disabled so all these tricks go both ways plus it’s the only way to check infinite aff abuse

Don’t affirm even if you think we won that’s all the offense

#### 1] Presume neg – it’s the affs job to prove a desirable change from the squo. statements are false till proven true that’s why we don’t believe conspiracy theories

#### 2] Reject framing arguments that parameterize content – debate should be an open forum to attack ideas from different directions – anything else brackets out certain modes of knowledge production which their ev would obviously disagree w/.

#### ROB is to vote for the better debater. Only evaluating the consequences of the plan allows us to determine the practical impacts of politics and preserves the predictability that fosters engagement. Rigorous contestation and third and fourth-line testing are key to generate the self-reflexivity that creates ethical subjects.

#### Prefer –

#### 1. Competition- The competitive nature of debate wrecks the interactive nature of debate – the judge must decide between two competing speech acts and the debaters are trying to beat each other – this is the wrong forum for interaction

#### 2. Spillover- How does educational orientations spill over beyond this space? Empirically denied – judges vote on this shit on this time and nothing ever happens.

#### 3. Prescription- certain interactions are prescripted – eg subjectivity– can’t be reformulated so easily

#### Policy debate over a governmental proposition fosters advocacy skills that empower students and benefit all forms of potential political engagement – information literacy is a common good that fosters an ethic of engagement, the litmus test for breaking through in our information soaked economy.

**Leek 16.** Danielle R. Leek, professor of communications at Grand Valley State University, “Policy debate pedagogy: a complementary strategy for civic and political engagement through service-learning,” Communication Education, 65:4, 399-405

Service-learning, however, is not without its critics. Eby (1998), for example, argues that the type of reflection done in service-learning promotes too simplistic an understanding of social issues. Often students are asked about their personal feelings towards their service experience and then called upon to abstract that experience to broader social policy when instructors have spent little to no time in class exploring the relevant political dimensions of an issue. This type of reflection serves to make the material reality of social problems a function of a student’s personal experience. A student who volunteers at an animal shelter, but has little information about regulations covering stray animals in the community, for example, is unlikely to offer a sophisticated response if asked about whether or not the local police should be involved in investigating animal abuse complaints. The prevalence of shallow knowledge development in service-learning compels Eby to call for student reflection that also includes “critical analysis and understanding of the theoretical issues, service strategies, social change, agency policies, social policies, and community structure” involved in a service-learning experience (p. 7). Students should be able to call on a range of knowledge and information in their reflections. Only then can they gain the full benefits of service-learning. Colby (2008), Senior Scholar at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, similarly challenges service-learning educators to attend to the two dimensions of engagement necessary for democratic practice. “Political and apolitical civic engagement,” Colby argues, are both valuable to democratic communities. Service-learning often favors civic engagement by encouraging voluntarism and a philanthropic mindset. This type of activity can, but seldom does, lead students to “draw connections” to systemic issues or practices. Students who do service work “generally encounter very little encouragement to get involved in politics, even broadly defined.” This leaves many students con- fident about the need to volunteer, but uncertain “about how they might be politically engaged, and what that might involve.” Moreover, Colby contends, **civic participation through service “can lead to the development of politically relevant skills” such as writing memos or making persuasive public appeals, but often it does not**. Activities such as cleaning up a river, or tutoring children, do not place students in roles where political skills are developed. To get the most out of service-learning, **students need concurrent attention to political learning, which encourages engagement with public policy and electoral issues, while fostering opportunities to build skills needed for political activities** (Colby, 2008). Helping students gain knowledge about politics and political processes is a first-step towards accomplishing this goal (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). But political learning should be more than acquiring a list of facts. **It is what takes place as students discover the connection between policy, institutional practice, and the status quo**. Political learning is happening when students come to understand that public policy and practice can and do change, and that they influence how policy-making happens, even as an ordinary member of the public. **Political engagement happens when students develop the skills necessary to help make political change possible**. As Colby (2008) explains: **Teaching for political understanding and engagement involves helping students find political issues they can be passionate about while also staying open to opposing views**. It involves teaching students to be sensitive to others’ feelings about hot-button issues while also encouraging them to be tough and slow to take offense themselves. Students also need to develop a thoughtful, reasoned approach to politics without becoming immobilized by doubt. Such attention to the dual roles of civic and political engagement may also address another common criticism of service-learning programs in higher education. By challenging students to engage the system-level ideology and praxis relevant to social experience, educators can help mitigate against service-learning experiences that promote power inequalities by situating students as charity providers to needy others. **We also must do more to reward community partners for the substantial time they invest in student participants**. Because com- munity organizations often serve vulnerable populations such as immigrants and children, it is imperative that service-learning experiences lead participants to engage politically and ethi- cally in and beyond the classroom in order to justify the short-term disruptions and costs associated with bringing a group of students into a civic space (Tryon et al., 2008). **One way to address these criticisms is to incorporate policy debate into service-learning programs**. In the remainder of this essay, I show how **integrating policy debate into the pedagogy of service-learning deepens political learning and promotes the acquisition of skills essential to political engagement.** Policy debate in the service-learning classroom In policy debate, students are asked to consider whether a particular course of action should be taken, generally by state institutions such as the United States federal government, or its respective branches, such as the Supreme Court or the Congress (Snider & Schnurer, 2002). A policy debate can involve any institutional actor or agent such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and so on. Questions of policy can address broad global issues, such as “Should the United States federal government sign a new nuclear treaty with Iran?” Or they might consider narrow rules for legal action, such as “Should the Michigan Department of Treasury require individ- uals to pay taxes online?” When connected to a service-learning experience, educators might set aside time for students to debate a relevant policy question. **Using previous examples, stu- dents working on the health campaign might also be asked to debate the question, “Should the City of Grand Rapids provide mobile health clinics in the downtown area?**” Chemistry students could debate, “Should the federal government require a universal science curricu- lum in all high schools?” **No matter the topic, students should have the opportunity to engage multiple perspectives on the question, including speaking on the affirmative to support a new policy and on the negative in opposition to a change in the status quo**. Students may be asked to work with one or more partners to research and develop materials that can be used in their speeches or in question-and-answer periods related to their arguments. Especially for readers familiar with extracurricular policy debate competitions in high schools or college, this depiction of what policy debate entails may seem overly simplistic. Yet, even basic consideration of policy issues related to a service-learning experience can improve a student’s odds of political learning. **Through policy debate, students can develop information literacy and learn how to make critical arguments of fact. This experience is politically empowering for students who will also build confidence for political engagement.** Information literacy **While there are many definitions of information literacy, the term generally is understood to mean that a student is “able to recognize when information is needed, and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the information needed” for problem- solving and decision-making** (Spitzer, Eisenberg, & Lowe, 1998, p. 19). Information exists in a variety of forms, in visual data, computer graphics, sound-recordings, film, and photographs. Information is also constructed and disseminated through a wide range of sources and mediums. Therefore, “information literacy” functions as a blanket term which covers a wide range of more specific literacies. Critiques of service-learning’s knowl- edge-building power, such as those articulated by Eby (1998) and Colby (2008), are chal- lenging both the emphasis the pedagogy places on information gained through experience and the limited scope of political information students are exposed to in the process. **Policy debate can augment a student’s civic and political learning by fostering extended information literacies**. Snider and Schnurer (2002) identify policy debate as an especially research intensive form of oral discussion which requires extensive time and commitment to learn the dimensions of a topic. **Understanding policy issues calls for contemplating a range of materials, from traditional news media publications to court proceedings, research data, and institutional propaganda**. Moreover, **the nature of policy debate, which involves public presentation of arguments on two competing sides of a question, motivates students to go beyond basic information to achieve a more advanced level of expertise and credibility on a topic** (Dybvig & Iverson, n.d.). This type of work differs from traditional research projects where students gather only the materials needed to support their argument while **neglecting contrary evidence**. Instead, the “debate research process encourages a kind of holistic approach, where students need to pay attention to the critics of their argument because they will have to respond to those attacks” (Snider & Schnurer, 2002, p. 32). **In today’s attention economy, cultivating a sensibility for well- rounded information gathering can also aid students in recognizing when and how the knowledge produced in their social environments can be effectively translated to specific contexts**. The “cultural shift in the production of data” which has followed the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies means that all students are likely “prosumers”—that is, they consume, produce, and coproduce information online all at the same time (Scoble, 2011). Coupling service- learning with policy debate calls on students to apply information across registers of public engagement, including their own service efforts and their own public argumentation, in and outside of their debates. **Information is used in the service experience, which in turn, informs the use of information in debates, where students then produce new information through their argumentation**. The process is what Bruce (2008) refers to “informed learning,” or “using information in order to learn.” **When individuals move from learning how to gather materials for a task to a cognitive awareness and understanding of how the information-seeking process shapes their learning, they are engaged in informed learning**. Through this process, students can come to recognize that information management and credibility is deeply disciplinary and historically con- textual (Bruce & Hughes, 2010). This understanding, combined with practical experience in locating information, is a critical missing element in contemporary political engage- ment. Over 20 years ago, Graber (1994) argued that one of the biggest obstacles to political engagement was not apathy, but a gap between the way news media presents information during elections, and the type of information voters need and will listen to during electoral campaigns. The challenge extends beyond elections into policy-making, especially as younger generations continue to revise their notions of citizenship away from institutional politics towards more social forms of activism (Bennett, Wells, & Freelon, 2011). For stu- dents to effectively practice more expressive forms of citizenship they need experience managing the breadth of information available about issues they care about. As past research indicates a strong correlation between service-learning experience and the motiv- ation and desire for post-graduation service, it seems likely that students who debate about policy issues related to service areas will continue their informed learning practices after they have left the classroom (Soria & Thomas-Card, 2014). Arguing facts In addition to building information literacies, students who combine policy debate with service-learning can practice “politically relevant skills,” which will help them have confidence for political engagement in the future. As Colby (2008) explains, this confidence should be tempered by tolerance for difference and differing opinions. **On the surface, debating about institutional politics might seem counterintuitive to this goal. Politicians and the press have a credibility problem among college-aged students, and this leaves younger generations less inclined to feel obligated to the state or to look to traditional modes of policy- making for social change** (Bennett et al., 2011; Manning & Edwards, 2014). **This lack of faith in government and media outlets also makes political argument more difficult** (Klumpp, 2006). **Whereas these institutions once served as authoritative and trustworthy sources of information, the credibility of legislators and journalists has decreased** over the last 40 years or so. **Today, politicians and pundits are viewed as political actors interested in spectacle, power, and profit rather than truth-seeking or the common good.** While some political controversies are rooted in competing values, Klumpp (2006) explains that **arguments about policy are more often based in fact**. Indeed, **when engaged in public arguments over questions of policy, people tend to “invoke the authority of facts to support their positions**.” Likewise, “**the governmental sphere has developed elaborate legal and deliberative processes in recognition of the power of facts as the basis for a decision**.” **Yet, while shared values are often quickly agreed upon, differences over fact are more difficult to resolve.** **Without credible institutions of authority that can disseminate facts, public deliberation requires more time, information-gathering, evaluation, and reasoning**. **The Bush administration’s decision to take military action in Iraq, for example, was presumably based on the “fact” that Saddam Hussein had acquired weapons of mass destruction. This has now become a classic example of poor policy-making grounded in faulty factual evidence. This shortcoming is precisely why policy debate is a valuable complement to service- learning activities**. **Not only can students use their developing literacies to better understand social problems, they can also learn to access a broader range of knowledge sources, thereby mitigating the absence of fact-finding from traditional institutions**. Fur- thermore, policy advocacy gives students experience testing the reasoning underlying claims of fact. Issues of source credibility, analogic comparisons, and data analysis are three examples of the type of critical thinking skills that students may need to apply in order to engage a question of policy (Allen, Berkowitz, Hunt, & Louden, 1999). While the effect may be to undermine government action in some instances, in others students will gain a better understanding of when and where institutional activities can work to make change. As students gain knowledge about the relationship between institutional structures and the communities they serve, they grow confidence in their ability to engage in future conversations about policy issues. Zwarensteyn’s (2012) research high- lights these sorts of effects in high school students who engage in competitive policy debate. Zwarensteyn theorizes that even minimal increases in technical knowledge about politics can translate to significant increases in a student’s sense of self-efficacy. Many students start off feeling very insecure when it comes to their mastery of insti- tutional politics; policy debate helps overcome that insecurity. Moreover, because training in policy debate encourages students to address issues as arguments rather than partisan positions, it encourages them to engage policy-making without the hostility and incivility that often characterizes today’s political scene. Indeed, it is precisely that perceived hostility and incivility that prompts many young people to avoid politics in the first place. I do not mean to imply that students who debate about their service-learning experi- ences will draw homogenous conclusions about policies. Quite the contrary. Students who engage in service-learning still bring their personal visions and history to bear on their debates. As a result, students will often have very different opinions after engaging in a shared debate experience. More importantly, the practice of debating should operate to particularize students’ knowledge of community partners and clients, working against the destructive generalizations and power dynamics that can result when students feel privileged to serve less fortunate “others.” For civic and political engagement through service-learning to be meaningful and productive, it must do more to challenge students’ concepts of the homogenous “we” who helps “them.” Seligman (2013) argues that this civic spirit can be cultivated through the core pedagogical principle of a “shared practice,” which emphasizes the application of knowledge to purpose (p. 60). Policy debate achieves this outcome by calling on students to consider and reconsider their understanding of themselves, institutions, community, and policy every time the question “should” may arise. As Seligman writes: ... the orientation of thought to purpose (having an explanation rest at a place, a purpose) is of extreme importance. We must recognize that the orientation of thought to purpose is to recognize moving from providing a knowledge of, to providing a knowledge for. This means that in the context of encountering difference it is not sufficient to learn about (have an idea of) the other, rather it means to have ideas for certain joint purposes—for a set of “to-does.” A purpose becomes the goal towards which our explanations should be oriented. (p. 61) Put another way, policy debate challenges students “to maintain a sense of doubt and to carry on a systematic and protracted inquiry” in the process of service-learning itself (Seligman, 2013, p. 60). This is precisely the type of complex, ongoing, reflective inquiry that John Dewey had in mind. Political engagement through policy debate This essay began with a discussion of the growing attention to civic engagement programs in higher education. The national trend is to accomplish higher levels of student civic responsibility during and after their time in college through service-learning experiences tied to curricular learning objectives. A challenge for service-learning scholars and teachers is to recognize a distinction between civic activities that are accomplished by helping others and political activities that require engagement with the collective institutional structures and processes that govern social life. Both are necessary for democracy to thrive. Policy debate pedagogy can help service-learning educators accomplish these dual objectives. To call policy debate a pedagogy rather than just a style of debate is purposeful. A pedagogy is a praxis for cultivating learning in others. The pedagogy of service-learning helps students to know and engage social conditions through physical engagement with their environments and communities. Policy debate pedagogy leads students to know and engage these same social conditions while also challenging them to apply their knowledge for the purpose of political advocacy. These pedagogies are natural compliments for cul- tivating student learning. Therefore, future studies should explore how well service-learn- ing combined with policy debate can resolve concerns that policy debate alone does not go far enough to invest students with political agency (Mitchell, 1998). The present analysis suggests the potential for such an outcome is likely. Moreover, research is clear that the civic effects of service-learning as an instructional method are improved simply by increasing the amount of time spent on in-class discus- sion about the service work students do (Levesque-Bristol, Knapp, & Fisher, 2010). Policy debates related to students’ service can accomplish this goal and more. Policy debates can also facilitate the political learning students need to build their political efficacy and capacity for political engagement. Through informed learning about the political process—especially in the context of service practice—students develop literacies that will extend beyond the classroom. Using this knowledge in reasoned public argument about policy challenges invites students to move beyond cynical disengagement towards a productive recognition of their own potential voice in the political world. Policy debate pedagogy brings unique elements to the process of political learning. By emphasizing the conditional and dynamic nature of political arguments and processes, debates can work to relieve students of the misconception that there is a single “right answer” for questions about policy-making and politics, especially during election time. The communication perspective on policy debates also highlights students’ collective involvement in the ever-changing field of political terms, symbols, and meanings that constitute interpretations of our social world. In fact, the historical roots of the term “communication” seem to demand that speech and debate educators call for such emphasis on political learning. “To make common,” the Latin interpretation of communicare, situ- ates our discipline as the heart of public political affairs (Peters, 1999). Connecting policy debate to service-learning helps highlight the common purpose of these approaches in efforts to promote civic engagement in higher education.

#### Abstract critique keeps us from forefronting political reform to create material change for disability.

Ruckelshaus 17 [Jay, Rhodes Scholar and graduate student in political theory at the University of Oxford, and the founder and president of Ramp Less Traveled, a nonprofit organization that helps students with spinal cord injuries pursue higher education. 01/18/17 "The Non-Politics of Disability.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/opinion/denouncing-trump-wont-help-disability-rights.html>] JCH-PF

Disability rights enjoy a seemingly ironclad moral consensus, an ostensible unanimity that is striking given America’s entrenched polarization and the antagonism surrounding other identity movements. Many are wary of L.G.B.T. rights or the Black Lives Matter movement, but it seems beyond the pale — almost cruel — to oppose disability rights. Nobody wants to be anti-disability. Initially, this harmony would seem helpful. Free from partisan discord, advancements for the approximately 57 million Americans with disabilities should be easier to achieve, borne aloft by the wings of certain progress. Why, then, do rampant unemployment and educational disparities endure, and why does success remain the exception? I think part of the reason is the insulation of our pro-disabled political consensus. Its logic is rooted not in any deep belief in the equal worth of citizens with disabilities, but rather in a general aversion to disability. This is related to the charity impulse that has always surrounded disability — and has constrained liberation efforts by assuming that inequities are unfortunate but natural realities to be mitigated through compassion, rather than politically structured injustices. There is also a profound lack of disabled people in the public sphere, meaning any substantive discussion that does occur is extremely rare. I suspect many people I talk to about disability maintain an implicit hope that, if they nod as vigorously as possible, the issue will simply go away. In this way, support for disability rights is similar to the act of expressing perfunctory thanks to military veterans. It temporarily absolves us of the responsibility to address the heart of the matter. Moreover, the apparent moral consensus may be mostly superficial. In trying to enact accessibility, disability advocates encounter increasing resistance as the effort and costs involved in proposals come closer to being realized. (Consider the neighborhood store that decides it’s just too costly to install a ramp, or the community lecture that excludes deaf attendees by refusing to hire a sign-language interpreter.) Instead of facilitating change, false unity actually restrains change. It stifles the more substantive conversations true progress requires. And our inability to speak honestly — and contentiously — about disability shows how the politics of disability is in this sense non-political. We are the worse for it. In addition to greater participation in the public sphere, true progress for citizens with disabilities will require a willingness to confront the issues head-on, even when — especially when — citizens disagree on competing solutions. We must politicize disability — not in the cable-news, grandstanding kind of way, but in the term’s more formal sense. The work of the Belgian political theorist Chantal Mouffe can help illuminate what’s at stake. Mouffe begins with the premise that human relations are inherently antagonistic: Political change always requires controversial transfers in power or prestige, and it is an illusion to imagine politics without confrontation. Per this “agonistic” conception of democracy, a healthy political order is one that prefers vigorous, good-faith argumentation to complacent consensus. Until we publicly recognize real disagreements surrounding disability and accessibility, Mouffe would insist, we are doomed to a vacuous, empty debate that is neither political nor productive. Recall the Kovaleski incident. I’m not suggesting that the abhorrence of Mr. Trump’s actions is open to legitimate questioning. But in their forcefully reassuring comments and messages, my friends prevented any serious discussion of disability at the level where reasonable disagreement does exist. Where will the money come from to fund disability employment schemes? How do we even define “disability”? Despite — and, I would argue, partly because of — the broad condemnation of Mr. Trump for his insensitivity, there was no substantive public discussion of such issues. You may be thinking, haven’t we had enough politics lately? Maybe it’s a blessing that disability isn’t as political as it might be; it avoids the drama and messiness that now seem to define our common life. Avoiding politics might be possible if disability were an exclusively private affair. But it is fundamentally a public concern, affecting everyone directly or indirectly and revealing our obligations to one another as members of a democratic society. Issues of accessibility can be fully addressed only through public institutions and collective effort. For the disability community, there is no answer but politics. But politics need not be repulsive. That’s the beauty of Mouffe’s agonism: By legitimating clashing arguments and welcoming them into the political fold, unproductive antagonism becomes constructive, and compromises emerge.

#### Disability must be politically directed---disengagement causes catastrophic backsliding in basic rights.

McGreevy 20 [Nora McGreevy is a daily correspondent for Smithsonian. She is also a freelance journalist based in Chicago whose work has appeared in Wired, Washingtonian, the Boston Globe, South Bend Tribune, the New York Times and more. "The ADA Was a Monumental Achievement 30 Years Ago, but the Fight for Equal Rights Continues." https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/history-30-years-since-signing-americans-disabilities-act-180975409/]

For disability rights leader [Judy Heumann](https://twitter.com/judithheumann), the tumult of 2020—first the COVID-19 pandemic, then a reignited movement against racial injustice—underscores just how much work remains to be done.

“Everything’s kind of being thrown into the pot right now, right?” she says.

Heumann has been at the forefront of the fight for equality for disabled Americans. She relishes the hard-won successes but has no misconceptions about how looking back at 30 years since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed on July 26, 1990, much progress still has to be made.

That day, the United States became the first country to pass comprehensive protections for the basic civil rights of people with disabilities, outlawing discrimination against individuals with disabilities in schools, employment, transportation and other key parts of public life. The ADA would also remake the physical environment of the country by mandating accessibility in public spaces—entry ramps, Braille on signs, automatic doors, curb cuts and lifts on city buses and other measures that make it easier for the more than [61 million Americans](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/p0816-disability.html) living with disabilities to participate fully in society.

Heumann, who contracted polio as a baby and has used a wheelchair most of her life, grew up in Brooklyn, where the local public school refused to let her attend because of her disability. Protections for the civil rights of people with disabilities in those days were limited—neither the 1964 Civil Rights Act nor the 1965 Voting Rights Act had included people with disabilities as a protected class.

Her first foray into activism came in 1970, when Heumann sued the Board of Education of the City of New York to become the city’s first teacher who uses a wheelchair. She later moved to Berkeley, California, where she worked alongside activist [Ed Roberts](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/ed-roberts-wheelchair-records-story-obstacles-overcome-180954531/) at the Center for Independent Living, a pioneering home for people with disabilities founded on the principles of community and self-empowerment.

In 1977, she, fellow activists Kitty Cone, Brad Lomax and others led a grueling sit-in at a federal building in San Francisco to demand that the government enforce Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which stated that federally funded organizations could not discriminate against people with disabilities. (The new Netflix documentary Crip Camp, produced by Barack and Michelle Obama, includes inspiring documentary footage of the protest.)

The 504 sit-in united Americans with different kinds of disabilities—people who were hearing or visually impared, or who used wheelchairs or had mental disabilities—in an unprecedented way, Heumann says. “It empowered us,” she recalls. “Simply put, we were slowly moving from being a rag-tag, unorganized group of disabled people … to a cross-disability movement. We were really recognizing that it was possible for us to envision a day when barriers of discrimination could be torn down… Without the voices of disabled individuals, we would not have gotten 504, the way it ultimately came out, nor would we have been able to get the ADA.”

When President George H.W. Bush finally signed the ADA in 1990, he was flanked by some of the key people who helped its passage, including Justin Dart Jr., the vice chair of the National Council on Disability, who had embarked on an epic nationwide tour to advocate for the legislation just years earlier.

“When it was passed and signed, there was a huge ceremony because it was seen as this amazing national moment, even though the law was imperfect,” says Katherine Ott, the curator in the division of science and medicine at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. “At the moment, it was one of the happiest days in the 20th century for people with disabilities.”

In the three decades that followed, a new generation of Americans with disabilities, known as the “ADA generation,” grew up in a world where their basic rights were protected by the law. But the ADA has its limits.

Thirty years later, experts say that many of the ADA’s promises of universal accessibility have not come to pass—in part because laws like Section 504 and the ADA are predicated on someone litigating, explains Beth Ziebarth, who directs Access Smithsonian, the branch of the Smithsonian Institution that works to make its museums, zoo and research centers accessible to all.

“The mechanism for actually implementing the ADA, in many respects, is the process of somebody with a disability filing a complaint about the lack of accessibility,” Ziebarth says. “That leads to spotty compliance across the country.”

For instance, Heumann notes that air travel—an industry not covered by the ADA—has become “worse and worse” for people with disabilities over the years, particularly when it comes to getting motorized wheelchairs in and out of cargo pits. Technology companies, too, often lag behind in providing accessibility measures for users with disabilities—contributing to what’s known as the “digital divide,” she says.

“The ADA is a very important piece of legislation. But even if it were being implemented as effectively as possible, it still doesn’t address other issues that disabled people are facing,” Heumann says.

Issues of representation for all people with disabilities—and particularly people of color—are now more a part of the conversation than ever. When protests against racial injustice erupted across the country in May after the killing of George Floyd, many disability activists were quick to point out how issues of disability rights and civil rights for African Americans are interconnected, and sometimes overlooked. Studies estimate that one-third to one-half of black Americans killed by the police are experiencing episodes of mental illness or have a disability, although no national database exists to track those statistics, as reporter Abigail Abrams reported for Time last month.

In June, South Carolina-based disability rights activist Vilissa Thompson watched snapshots of the Black Disabled Lives Matter marches in Washington D.C. flood her timeline. “It was really incredible to see,” Thompson says.

At 34 years old, Thompson, who is black and uses a wheelchair, feels lucky to have grown up with the ADA. But the disability movement must also reckon with racism, inclusivity and an intersectional understanding of race and disability, she says.

“If you’re going to talk about black liberation or freedom, disability rights have to be involved in the story, and vice versa,” Thompson says.

On her website, Ramp Your Voice, Thompson has written extensively about black leaders in the Disability Rights Movement whose stories are often left out of the historical narrative, activists like Brad Lomax, who played a pivotal role in the 504 Sit-In by connecting activists with the Black Panther Party, which provided hot meals to the people stuck in the federal building.

In 2016, Thompson started the hashtag #DisabilityTooWhite to draw attention to media stories that center white disabled people, which continues to be used to this day: “We have to understand that black disabled folks have always been a part of both movements, the disability rights movement and the civil rights movement, whether they get acknowledgement or not,” she says.

Apart from the noteworthy anniversary, the ADA made news over a conflation of who and what the ADA specifically protects. A fake badge appropriating the ADA as an excuse to avoid wearing face masks—a claim that the Department of Justice disavowed—has blossomed on Facebook and Twitter during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Inappropriate use of the ADA is not uncommon,” Thompson says. “It’s upsetting that people are using the ADA in this way to avoid responsibility and what they can do during this time. It’s a grotesque misuse of the mandate.”

Individuals with disabilities who also have underlying chronic illness are likely at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, and those living in nursing homes or institutions face higher risks of transmission, Heumann points out. Workers with disabilities have also been disproportionately affected by the financial fallout of the national shutdown, according to initial studies.

The pandemic also brought deep-rooted disparities in medical care against people with disabilities to the fore: in March, for instance, disability rights groups in Washington and Alabama filed complaints against state ventilator rationing plans, as Minyvonne Burke reported for NBC News at the time. These plans suggested that medical professionals could chose to not use ventilators on patients with disabilities in the case of a shortage.

“It was shades of the eugenics issue all over again,” Ziebarth says, referring to the long history of forced sterilization and euthanasia that Americans with disabilities endured, particularly in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. “That’s kind of a scary reality: we’re not far away from everything going back to where it was in the early 1900s.”

For Ziebarth, it reveals how fragile hard-won progress can be. “We realize that it’s really important for the younger generations to understand that your rights can be taken away from you,” Ziebarth says. “We need to be vigilant. Otherwise we can lose everything that people fought so hard for.”

#### Their skepticism gets coopted by fascism and ensures planetary immiseration—technocracy is the solution to violent individuation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reza Negarestani: Among computer scientists, there is this joke: when computer scientists go into a room full of political theorists, philosophers, cultural critics and linguists, they say to each other, “get rid of all of them and replace them with engineers.” Well, perhaps this joke is a bit too much but it has a grain of truth. Neither philosophers nor political theorists are able to design proper methods adequate to actualize possibilities, imagined or not. We need politically and philosophically informed engineers and designers. Engineers are indeed not mindless technicians, they are people who have one foot in the domain of thinking and one in the realm of an external reality or worldly affairs. They do not see action as a form of hubristic mastery

to the extent that they know whatever we do at any level of reality—be it natural, social or cultural—will meet the resistance of that reality. To use a Sellarsian metaphor, reality in the broadest possible sense is not a block of wax ready to be imprinted. Engineers truly know that. They also never see reality in any sense as a flat universe, they see it as vast and deeply multi-scaled structure. In order to concretely intervene at any level of reality we must not only have a multi-level view of the reality but also know which methods, models or tools should be implemented, and at which level. To cut at the joints without splintering the bones is a description of what engineers—as Plato’s good butchers—do.

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

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

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

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

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

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