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#### The ROB is to vote for the debater who provides the best form of engagement with the fantasy---The embrace of the lack is the key to finding genuine enjoyment in the fantasy through trauma and providing an end to the quest of policymakers to find the perfect society so the K precludes the aff.

McGowan ‘13 (Todd, Assoc. Prof. of Film and Television Studies @ U. of Vermont, Enjoying What We Don’t Have: The Political Project of Psychoanalysis, pp. 220-222)

Le Guin’s novel The Dispossessed shows us what this idea of politics might look like. It is a novel of political activity. The novel’s hero, Shevek, comes from a peaceful world of anarchists (on a moon named Anarres) that retains its way of life through isolation from other worlds. Shevek’s political activity consists in reaching out to the rest of the universe and specifically to the moon’s mother planet (Urras) with a revolutionary egalitarian philosophy. What is distinctive about Shevek is the motivation for his political activity. He doesn’t act out of a desire to eliminate loss by constructing a better world in the future; instead, he acts out of an embrace of loss. Unlike most revolutionary political figures, Shevek adopts a completely pessimistic view of existence. He is convinced of the utter hopelessness of the human condition. This sense of the necessity of loss animates Shevek as a political being. Shevek thus advances a political program that does not hold out the image of a future complete enjoyment. But if Shevek begins with the acceptance of loss and suffering, this doesn’t lead him to deny the possibility of enjoyment altogether. In fact, Shevek aims to convince others that the secret of enjoyment lies in the embrace of loss, not in the promise of overcoming it. According to Shevek (and psychoanalysis), loss doesn’t represent the end of enjoyment but the beginning. Throughout *The Dispossessed*, Shevek works toward a more egalitarian society both on his home world of Anarres and on the mother planet, Urras, that he travels to. But he recognizes that they cannot achieve an egalitarian society through the idea of overcoming loss and achieving wholeness. This image of a complete enjoyment that we might attain in the future (in, say, a future socialist society) is necessarily illusory because it depends on some kind of exclusion in order to sustain it. The only way to break out of this exclusionary logic is through abandoning the image of a future completeness. Instead of holding out this image, Shevek offers the ideal of a shared embrace of loss. Th rough the fantasy that Le Guin constructs in *The Dispossessed*, we can see the link between enjoyment and the loss of the privileged object, and through recognizing this link, we can rethink politics. Fantasy has the ability to foster a distinctive kind of politics, and psychoanalysis provides the key through which we can unlock fantasy’s emancipatory potential. Psychoanalysis allows us to understand both sides of fantasy and its relation to politics. On the one hand, fantasy does hide our subjection to the signifier, but on the other, because of the way it hides our subjection, it allows us to militate against our very subjected status itself in ways unthinkable outside of fantasy. Th rough its revaluation of the status of fantasy, psychoanalysis enables us to see fantasy’s fundamental political value in a way that neither philosophy nor Marxism can. Both the philosopher and the Marxist, because of their shared attitude toward fantasy, tend to remain stuck in attacks on the proliferation of false consciousness. Psychoanalysis allows us to rethink the way in which we conceive political activity: not as the triumph of the proper consciousness over the experience of enjoyment but as the embrace of the trauma inherent in real enjoyment. The political task as it might be envisioned by psychoanalytic thought entails not attempting to eliminate fantasy but transforming our relationship to it. Fantasy functions in an ideological way when it works to cover over the structural necessity of absence within the social order, but fantasy appeals to us because it also conveys an experience of loss or absence that we can access nowhere else. One could say that we are never more inauthentic than when we fantasize but never more authentic at the same time. In order to provide the pleasure that comes from overcoming absence, fantasy must introduce and narrate loss. As it does so, it allows the fantasizing subject to experience the impossible loss that founds subjectivity itself. In every fantasy, this loss is enacted, whether implicitly or explicitly. The political task involves fostering the recognition that we enjoy our fantasies for their depiction of loss rather than for the illusion of return. Accomplishing this task demands orienting ourselves and our societies around the enjoyment that fantasy provides. Rather than remaining a marginalized activity indulged in during sleep or while surfing for lewd Internet sites, fantasy must become central, the avowed basis of our social organization. We must count fantasy as worth more than our social reality because we already do. Though it always has a social and psychic centrality, we fail to recognize it, and the political project of psychoanalysis demands the recognition of fantasy’s primacy and a consequent devotion to fantasy. Without this, we cannot grasp the possibilities for enjoyment that inhere in the trauma of the lost object.

#### To be a subject requires conformity with the meanings, norms, and traditions of the Symbolic. The illusive nature of the signifier induces Lack, a sense of loss which cannot be overcome by the subject. This dooms political projects, as the failure to overcome lack becomes our object of desire.

McGowan ’16 Todd McGowan (Associate Professor of Film and Television Studies at the University of Vermont). “Capitalism and Desire: The Psychic Cost of Free Markets, Columbia University Press, 2016, pgs. 28-32.

When he writes Beyond the Pleasure Principle in 1920, Freud begins to define the subject through its constitutive loss. From this point on in his thinking, he conceives of the subject as completely determined by loss, as driven toward its own destruction—a process that he misleadingly labels "death drive.” Though there are hints of this breakthrough in earlier works, the radicality of the 1920 revolution should not be understated. In fact, even Freud himself did not fully grasp its radicality, as evidenced by his failed attempt to reduce the subject's repetition of failure and loss to a tendency to return to an inorganic state. Death drive connotes a desire to die, which is why it leads readers of Freud (and even Freud himself) astray. What he is really onto with this concept is that the subject finds satisfaction in repeating loss, that the subject's satisfaction is inextricable from failure. No one sets out consciously to fail, and, even if one did, the act of making failure a goal would immediately transform it into a different form of success. Within consciousness the subject cannot give failure primacy. Consciousness is oriented around projects in which the subject aims at succeeding, and the failures of these projects, from the perspective of consciousness, are only contingent failures the subject can attempt to remedy by trying again or trying harder. Unconsciously, however, the subject depends on failure to satisfy itself. Failure and loss produce the object as absent, and it is only the absence of the object that renders it satisfying. Absence animates the subject, driving it to act, in a way that presence cannot. If we think about who marches in the street, it is those who lack, not those who have, and when those who have do march, it is because the threat of loss manifests itself. Even though they march for the elimination of this lack, it is absence that motivates them to march in the first place. It is also absence or the threat of it that enables us to get out of bed in the morning and go to work. The subject that had no absence in its existence would be unable to act and would lack the impetus even to kill itself. After seeing numerous patients display their attachment to absence and loss, Freud concludes that it holds the key to the subject's form of satisfaction. We can see this play out in sports fandom. Though we consciously root for our favorite team to win, we find more unconscious satisfaction in the persistent struggles of the sports team that we root for than in its unqualified successes. The close game is infinitely more interesting than the blowout because it enables the fan to experience loss while not having loss enter into consciousness. No one wants to root for a team that wins all its games, and if fans flock to the games of teams that win all the time, they go to see the loss (or potential loss) that will disrupt the winning, just like auto racing fans go to see cars crashing (or potentially crashing), though this desire remains unconscious. Even when our favorite team wins a championship, we begin almost immediately to consider how they might fare the next year. This is a way of leaving the terrain of success for that of potential failure. When we achieve the pinnacle of success, we seek out a way to return loss into our existence by imagining a new challenge or embarking on a new project. Loss injects value into the subject's existence and gives it an object that provides satisfaction. Freud's conception of the priority of loss and its repetition troubles other psychoanalysts (like Fairbairn, for instance) because it highlights the impossibility of any satisfaction associated with obtaining the object. After this point, for Freud, one simply cannot have the satisfying object. Any notion of success becomes unthinkable, and one must reconceive satisfaction in terms of how one fails. Failure becomes the only option. On the basis of privileging failure, Freud reimagines the object in a way that challenges both much of the history of philosophy and the psychic demands of capitalism. The object is not an object that the subject hopes to obtain but a limit that the subject encounters. The subject cannot overcome the limit but constitutes itself and its satisfaction through the limit. That is to say, the object that thwarts the subject's efforts at obtaining it retroactively creates the subject around the recalcitrance. The subject seeks out what it cannot obtain and latches itself onto these objects. Its failure with regard to them provides a satisfaction that completely defies the capitalist image of reality. Freud's conception of the object enables us to rethink the famous slogan from May 1968 in France. The mantra of this movement—jouir sans entraves (enjoy without hindrances)—expresses the critique of capitalism’s repressiveness, the critique that dominated much of the twentieth century. The problem with this slogan is that eliminating the barriers to enjoyment would eliminate the source of enjoyment. By slightly changing it to jouir les entraves (enjoy the hindrances), we capture the constitutive importance of the obstacle. Satisfaction exists in the obstacle that the object erects in the face of the subject's efforts to obtain it rather than in the eradication of all obstacles. But this is what the capitalist imperative to accumulate enables us to avoid confronting. The speaking subject satisfies itself through its process of failing to obtain its object, even if this goes unrecognized by the subject itself. The relationship between subjectivity and loss leads the subject to flee this recognition and find asylum in the framework of capitalist accumulation. The subject repeats a constitutive loss because loss is the only way that the speaking subject has to relate to objects, even though capitalism provides the image of an alternative. The signifier confronts the subject with an absence that forms subjectivity and that the subject can never overcome. But the loss that haunts the subject also constitutes the subject, which is why it seeks to repeat this loss. The signifier creates the subject through the act of removing what is most essential for the subject, even though this essential object doesn't exist prior to its removal. From this point on, the subject will remain unable to divorce satisfaction from loss. One might say that through the signifier the subject loses the object into existence. Loss generates the object at the same time that it marks its disappearance, which has a determinative effect on how the subject satisfies itself. The subject may find fleeting pleasure in success and achievement, but its only satisfaction will take the form of the repetition of loss. Subjects undermine themselves and self-sabotage not because they are stubborn or stupid but because this is their path to satisfaction. For the speaking subject, winning is only a detour on the way to losing. Even the winners in the world of the signifier are ultimately on the side of defeat, but just take a longer time to get there than others. When we understand the difference between instinctual beings and speaking subjects, the appeal of thinking about ourselves in terms of instinct rather than subjectivity becomes self-evident. Instinctual beings have the capacity to overcome loss and obtain satisfaction through the object they seek. Instinctual beings can become winners that suffer only contingent failures rather than remaining ensconced in perpetual failure. Instinct holds within it the promise of a satisfaction untainted by loss, a full satiation that, even if it soon disappears, can often be replicated. The being envisions a goal that would provide satisfaction and then either attains the goal or not. Success may be difficult and may not endure, but it's not impossible. But the subject attains satisfaction through the repetition of its inability to obtain its object. Failure is the subject's mode of success. Lacan describes this in one of his most lucid explanations of the structure of subjectivity. In Seminar XI, he separates the subject's goal from its aim and uses a metaphor to explain the aim. He claims, "When you entrust someone with a mission, the aim is not what he brings back, but the itinerary he must take. The aim is the way taken.” The satisfaction of the subject derives from the path that it takes. But what Lacan fails to add here is that this path necessarily involves an encounter with loss: rather than seeking out its object, the subject finds ways to miss it and to ensure that it remains lost. The lost object is constitutively lost, and the satisfaction that it offers depends on it remaining so. The subject has no hope that it might attain its lost object, which is why psychoanalysis must refrain from describing the infant's satisfying relationship with the mother's breast prohibited by the father. It is only in retrospect (or from the perspective of an observer) that this relationship appears perfectly satisfying. Freud first conceives of the appeal of loss in response to his observation of self-destructive actions that appear to violate the pleasure principle. It is the penchant for self-sabotage and self-destruction that leads Freud to speculate about the existence of a death drive that aims at a return to an inorganic state. But we don't have to indulge in this type of hypothesis if we recognize the constitutive role that loss plays in the subject's satisfaction. Without the lost object, the subject would lose what animates it and the source of its enjoyment. The act of self-sabotage, even though it detracts from the subject's pleasure, enables the subject to continue to satisfy itself. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud theorizes that the negative therapeutic reaction that subverts the psychoanalytic cure is not just the product of resistances. The subject does not want to be cured because it associates healing with the loss of its foundational loss, a prospect much more horrifying that the pain of the neurosis. With the recognition of the constitutive role of loss in the psychic economy, psychoanalysis must alter its conception of the cure. Rather than simply ending repression or even overcoming loss, the cure has to involve changing the subject's relation to its lost object, experiencing the intimate connection between loss and satisfaction.

**At the level of form, radical demands are an affective investment which robs agency, cede the political, and reaffirms state authority.**

Lundberg ’12 (Chris, comm studies prof at UNC, Lacan in Public)

The demands of student revolutionaries and antiglobalization protestors provide a set of opportunities for interrogating hysteria as a po liti cal practice. For the antiglobalization protestors cited earlier, demands to be added to a list of dangerous globophobes uncannily condense a dynamic inherent to all demands for recognition. But the demands of the Mexico Solidarity Network and the Seattle Independent Media project demand more than recognition: they also demand danger as a specific mode of representation. “Danger” functions as a sign of something more than inclusion, a way of reaffirming the protestors’ imaginary agency over processes of globalization. If danger represents an assertion of agency, and the assertion of agency is proportional to the deferral of desire to the master upon whom the demand is placed, then demands to be recognized as dangerous are doubly hysterical. Such demands are also demands for a certain kind of love, namely, the state might extend its love by recognizing the dangerousness of the one who makes the demand. At the level of the demand’s rhetorical function, dangerousness is metonymically connected with the idea that average citizens can effect change in the prevailing order, or that they might be recognized as agents who, in the instance of the list of globalophobic leaders, can command the Mexican state to reaffirm their agency by recognizing their dangerousness. The rhetorical structure of danger implies the continuing existence of the state or governing apparatus’s interests, and these interests become a nodal point at which the hysterical demand is discharged. This structure generates enjoyment of the existence of oppressive state policies as a point for the articulation of identity. The addiction to the state and the demands for the state’s love is also bound up with a fundamental dependency on the oppression of the state: otherwise the identity would collapse. Such demands constitute a reaffirmation of a hysterical subject position: they reaffirm not only the subject’s marginality in the global system but the danger that protestors present to the global system. There are three practical implications for this formation. First, for the hysteric the simple discharge of the demand is both the beginning and satisfaction of the political project. Although there is always a nascent political potential in performance, in this case the performance of demand comes to fully eclipse the desires that animate content of the demand. Second, demand allows institutions that stand in for the global order to dictate the direction of politics. This is not to say that engaging such institutions is a bad thing; rather, it is to say that when antagonistic engagement with certain institutions is read as the end point of politics, the field of political options is relatively constrained. Demands to be recognized as dangerous by the Mexican government or as a powerful antiglobalization force by the WTO often function at the cost of addressing how practices of globalization are reaffirmed at the level of consumption, of identity, and so on or in thinking through alternative political strategies for engaging globalization that do not hinge on the state and the state’s actions. Paradoxically, the third danger is that an addiction to the refusal of demands creates a paralyzing disposition toward institutional politics. Grossberg has identified a tendency in left politics **to retreat from the “politics of policy** and public **debate**.”45 Although Grossberg identifies the problem as a specific coordination of “theory” and its relation to left politics, perhaps a hysterical commitment to marginality informs the impulse in some sectors to eschew engagements with institutions and institutional debate. An addiction to the state’s refusal of ten makes the perfect the enemy of the good, implying a stifling commitment to po liti cal purity as a pretext for sustaining a structure of enjoyment dependent on refusal, dependent on a kind of paternal “no.” Instead of seeing institutions and policy making as one part of the political field that might be pressured for contingent or relative goods, a hysterical politics is in the incredibly difficult position of taking an addressee (such as the state) that it assumes represents the totality of the political field; simultaneously it understands its addressee as constitutively and necessarily only a locus of prohibition. These paradoxes become nearly insufferable when one makes an analytical cut between the content of a demand and its rhetorical functionality. At the level of the **content** of the demand, the state or institutions that represent globalization are figured as illegitimate, as morally and politically compromised because of their misdeeds. Here there is an assertion of agency, but because the assertion of agency is simultaneously a deferral of desire, the identity produced in the hysterical demand is not only intimately tied to but is ultimately dependent on the continuing existence of the state, hegemonic order, or institution. At the level of affective investment, the state or institution is automatically figured as the legitimate authority over its domain. As Lacan puts it: “demand in itself . . . is demand of a presence or of an absence . . . pregnant with that Other to be situated within the needs that it can satisfy. Demand constitutes the Other as already possessing the ‘privilege’ of satisfying needs, that it is to say, the power of depriving them of that alone by which they are satisfied.”46

#### Fantasy productions are not neutral models of risk but collusions between capital and state that prevent the change they’ll talk about. The neg rejects this model of beautifying space policy.

**Ormrod 11 -** “Beyond world risk society? A critique of Ulrich Beck’s world risk society thesis as a framework for understanding risk associated with human activity in outer space” by James S Ormrod School of Applied Social Science, University of Brighton, Falmer BN1 9PH, Sussex, England; e-mail: j.s.ormrod@brighton.ac.uk Received 17 August 2011; in revised form 19 September 2012 [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1068/d16511] // ahs emi

I have highlighted throughout that, where risks are not directly confronted and are uncertain, the operation of economic power becomes more important. One dimension to how power operates under these circumstances has recurred throughout the paper: the ability to create and manage fantasies about catastrophe. The more sophisticated the technologies used to rationalise risk become, the more significant what it cannot model becomes. Various approaches to psychoanalysis have examined how fantasy creates both what is feared (its ‘horrific’ dimension) and the pacifying solution that relieves this fear (its ‘beautific’ dimension). This is true of Kleinian psychoanalysis (eg, Klein, 1946, page 6), but particularly of contemporary Lacanian psychoanalysis, which has dealt with images of catastrophe specifically. This provides tools to explore in more depth Beck’s category of ‘things we are unwilling to know’. The Lacanian social theorist Slavoj Žižek (2008, page xii), for example, adds another category—‘unknown knowns’—to Donald Rumsfeld’s typology of knowledge. Žižek argues that when gaps appear in the symbolic order (in this case rationalising risk discourses) fantasy operates to conceal the true horror of the Lacanian Real; that which cannot be articulated. Žižek (2008, pages 5–6) provides the example of safety demonstrations on aeroplanes. These demonstrations do not serve to pacify our true fears about a crash landing, but to construct the horrific scenario. The true horror remains our inability to know how the crash scenario will play out. Precisely the same is true of NASA’s Environmental Impact Statements, which are known to be fabrications but are still preferred to uncertainty (the UN demands an impossible risk assessment that is probabilistic and geographically limited). Beyond world risk society? 741 The image of a collision cascade in orbit taking out global communications is also a fantasy, as are Haynes’s and McKay’s mutant bacteria. These fantasies each allow us to contemplate uncertainty. But each has a different effect, engineered and selected to function in the interests of those in power. Environmental Impact Assessments provide scenarios that legitimate State acquiescence to capital. They cover over not only science’s failings, but also those of the State and capital in turn. They function to draw activists into what Beck (1995, page 42) describes as “orgies of mathematics and science” that work to prevent a truly reflexive discussion of risk. Whilst informed activists engage with these scenarios as though they were rationalities (and, for example, demand to see more of the information on which they are based), less informed members of the public leave them to it. Collision cascade fantasies and solutions for them in the form of fantastic technologies also sustain a relationship between capital and the State in which disaster and solution must be conceived within the existing regime governing space activities. Not many people have direct economic interests in planetary engineering as yet, bar a marginal group of scientists. Desiring an impossible knowledge, these fantasies give scientists recourse to seek further funding (though more advanced modelling will make the unknown more, not less, terrifying), whilst at the same time making any politicisation of their work seem absurd. Meanwhile, the notion of planetary engineering itself functions as a fantasy sustaining our unsustainable relationship with the Earthly environment. Such fantasies are especially effective in immobilising public concern because of their remote setting in outer space. Space colonisation advocate Kraaft Ehricke (1972) referred to the development of outer space as the ‘benign industrial revolution’ precisely because it removed the negative consequences of industrial activity to a place where they no longer mattered. The same principle underpinned proposals to dump nuclear waste in outer space. Such a manoeuvre is a form of Beck’s “symbolic detoxification”, and the relationship between purity, exclusion, and avoidance has been tackled in the literature on risk (eg, Douglas, 1992; Joffe, 1999).

#### The aff’s valorization of progress participates in a politics of nostalgia. They are on an unachievable quest to return to the state before loss – thus destroying the freedom of the subject itself as it desires fantasies never effectuated by the state.

McGowan ‘13 (Todd, Assoc. Prof. of Film and Television Studies @ U. of Vermont, Enjoying What We Don’t Have: The Political Project of Psychoanalysis, pp. 42-44//recut bxnk)

**At this earlier historical moment**, **subjects enjoyed** a **direct relation with their privileged object and** achieved a **perfect satisfaction. We exist in the aftermath of a fall**, and from the perspective of the fall, **we** can **see** the **possibilities for complete satisfaction in the world we** have **lost.** Similarly, eliminating the threat of gay marriage allows conservatives to imagine a time when marriage itself was a pure institution, a bond that permitted a direct link to one’s object. Within the nostalgia framework that conservatism offers, loss has a place only as a limit to overcome through the return to a nonlacking past. Conservatism cannot admit the notion of a constitutive or necessary loss. Though right-wing political activity is unthinkable without nostalgia, **emancipatory politics** often **succumbs** to its power **as well.** Within certain forms of **environmentalism,** the **alternative medicine campaign**, and the **antiglobalization movement**, we can see **prominent examples of this**. In each case, **the leftist political goal** **— protecting the environment, providing people more health options, countering global capitalism** **— becomes intertwined with the idea of** a **return to an earlier epoch** and **to a less alienated way of relating to the world**. Implicit in this idea is the image of a nonlacking subjectivity, and this image stains the political goal with the tint of nostalgia. **Those who argue for a return** to harmony with nature, for privileging non-Western and homeopathic forms of medicine, **and for forsaking global capitalism** **by supporting only local producers** all **take up a politics of nostalgia. The idea** that we might return to a stable relation with the natural world **posits a prior time in which** this **stability existed**, a time **lost with** the onset of **subjectivity.** **By appealing to the inherent nostalgia of subjects, the forces of emancipation undoubtedly gain adherents**. Many people drawn to the idea of “buying local” would not otherwise find common cause with emancipatory projects, for instance. But the long-term cost of this strategy is not worth the supporters that it wins for the emancipatory politics. Though conservatism doesn’t have a monopoly on nostalgia, nostalgia does have an inherently conservative structure to it. **Nostalgia** is fundamentally conservative insofar as it **works to obscure the gap within the social order**. It posits the possibility of an order that works without interruption and thus leaves no room for subjectivity itself. **The freedom of the subject depends on** the **imperfection** of the social order, its inability to achieve completion or harmony. **A political philosophy that represses this failure also inherently represses the opening through which freedom emerges**. In effect, the nostalgic subject longs to access a past prior to its subjectivization. To retreat into nostalgia is to flee one’s own freedom. In order to accomplish this and to close the gap within the social order, **nostalgic projects** necessarily **rely on a** strong **authority figure who promises to reinvigorate the lost past rather than** on the **freedom of the subject**.34 **The emancipatory goal placed in a nostalgic appeal loses touch with the overall emancipatory project of freeing the subject from its submission to authority figures.** What’s more, **nostalgia works only in theory, not in practice.** Nostalgic appeals always create disappointment in the last instance. We long for a time before loss, but this time only comes into existence with its loss: the birth of subjectivity retroactively creates the object that it loses. **The politics of nostalgia involves never actually following through on the nostalgic promise,** as contemporary conservatism’s social politics makes evident. In contrast to their vigorous pursuit of a conservative economic program, Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush (the two great proponents of a politics of nostalgia in the last fift y years) did not actively try to enact their social agenda. **For Reagan and Bush, the dream of a return has a political effectiveness that an actual return could not have. If school prayer again became the norm in public classrooms, the nonexistence of the former wholeness would be revealed**. **If the threat of the gay lifestyle were really eliminated, the banality of heterosexual marriage would once again show itself.** **Nostalgia remains** a **useful** political tool only **insofar as one doesn’t effectuate it**. This is the limit of its power.

#### Anticapitalist struggles attempt to remove the limits of capitalism to reach a utopian society in which the forces of production experience no constraints - the impact is lashouts and it just reproduces capitalism.

McGowan 16 - Todd McGowan is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Vermont, 2016 [“Capitalism and Desire: The Psychic Cost of Free Markets”, Columbia Press New York, pages 19-34] rpg

When Marx discusses the contradictions of capitalism, he is really describing the system as one of true infinitude. This becomes evident in the middle of the third volume of Capital, where he makes a famous proclamation about the limits of capitalism. He says, “The true barrier to capitalist production is capital itself.” The project of infinitely expanding the forces of production encounters the barrier of capital’s need to become profitable. A bit later, Marx contrasts capitalist means with the capitalist end, noting that “the means—the unrestricted development of the social forces of production—comes into persistent conflict with the restricted end, the valorization of the existing capital.” The limit is not external to capitalism but the product of its own striving to transcend every limit. In the capitalist universe the logic of the bad infinite leads the system directly to the true infinite, and this infinite spells its failure. Marx is able to see this but then goes awry when he tries to imagine communism in response to this contradiction. The problem with Marx’s conception of communist society derives from his investment in the capitalist bad infinite. In other words, Marx would have been a better revolutionary if he had remained a Hegelian. The revolution, as Marx sees it, would unleash the forces of production without any restriction at all from the mode of production, from capital’s need for self-valorization. This image of a future of unrestricted production jettisons the limit altogether. Instead of continually surpassing their limit (which is what occurs under capitalism), the forces of production would experience no limit at all. They would continue to grow unabated in concert with the growth of desire. Marx’s image of a society without a limit errs not just due to its fantasmatic nature, as many critics claim. The problem with this vision of the future is that it is not fantasmatic enough. In an actual fantasy the subject does not just envision the complete evanescence of the limit and untrammeled access to the object. Instead, the fantasy introduces an external limit where none exists, thereby enabling the subject to enjoy the object through this barrier. Fantasy focuses on the loss of the object and then shows its reacquisition, but the loss has primacy, which is why only the last few minutes of Hollywood fantasies are devoted to the object’s reacquisition. By completely eliminating the barrier when it comes to imagining the economy of the future, Marx betrays his own critique of capitalism and the communist fantasy of escaping it. Here Marx’s analysis undergoes a shocking change: he compellingly identifies how capitalism stumbles on the true infinite while pursuing the bad infinite of endless progress, but then he theorizes communism as the perfect realization of the bad infinite when he proclaims that communism will remove all restraints on the forces of production. It is commonplace to laud Marx as a critic of capitalism and criticize him as a prophet of communism, but in this passage from the third volume of Capital the reason for this discrepancy becomes clear. The true infinite simply drops out of the analysis. This departure from Hegel right at the point of Hegel’s key insight creates a chasm between Marx’s analysis of capitalism and his image of the communist future. The one benefits from the conception of the true infinite while the other is handicapped by its absence. The failure to sustain the idea of the true infinite leads Marx to misrepresent the nature of the dialectical shift that would occur with the transition from capitalism to communism. For Marx, communism will solve the contradiction between the forces of production and the means of production in capitalism—and thus allow for unfettered productivity. Hegel never conceives of dialectical transitions in this way. The transition or Aufhebung does not involve an elimination of the limit that haunts the prior structure, as it does for Marx. Instead, it involves a recognition that the limit is internal to the structure rather than external. Aufhebung requires, in other words, a recognition that the limit is not a contingent barrier but a necessary obstacle constituted through the structure’s own logical requirements. To take an example from The Phenomenology of Spirit, Hegel insists that stoicism as a philosophy runs aground on its own internal obstacle. Stoicism preaches a retreat from the external world into the serenity of the self, but at the same time, it requires the hostile external world from which the stoic can execute a retreat. Th e unconscious focus of the stoic is on the external world that the stoic claims to disdain. The dialectical move out of stoicism, for Hegel, involves making the unconscious focus on the external world qua obstacle into the basis of a new philosophy— skepticism. The skeptic doesn’t retreat from the external world but calls its reality into question. In this way, the obstacle undergoes a dramatic transformation and becomes the center of the new philosophy. If we follow Hegel’s line of thought about change, then we must rethink the relationship to the obstacle or limit that capitalism establishes. It cannot simply be a question of dispensing with this limit altogether. To try to do so is to fall into the capitalist trap, as Marx himself does, despite—or perhaps because of—his fervent anticapitalism. Capitalism demands the notion of the natural world as an external limit that it will constantly work to overcome, but it cannot integrate any limit as internal to its own functioning. This is what Hegel’s dialectic would demand. His version of communism or socialism would thus be significantly different from Marx’s. Marx, as everyone who reads him knows, offers very little description of the nature of communist society. The most famous of these moments occurs in The German Ideology, when he and Engels pause during their opening diatribe against Ludwig Feuerbach to offer their vision of the postrevolutionary future. In their brief account of communist society, they portray a world in which limits do not exist. They claim that one will be able “to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.” Marx and Engels provide a description of how socialist society would strip away fixed social identity. The problem with this image of the future is its resemblance to the capitalist present. Today, economic necessity forces many workers to be newspaper carriers in the morning, convenience store clerks in the afternoon, and janitors in the evening. Though this is a parody of what Marx imagines, it does suggest that the overcoming of fixed identity is not necessarily an anticapitalist development. Fixed identity is yet another limit that capitalism itself aims to overcome and does.

#### Thus, the alternative is to traverse the fantasy – this spills up to tangible political change, shifting politics away from one focused on escaping loss to one embracing it.

McGowan ‘13 (Todd, Assoc. Prof. of Film and Television Studies @ U. of Vermont, Enjoying What We Don’t Have: The Political Project of Psychoanalysis, pp. 208-210)

Like philosophy and Marxism, psychoanalysis also has a history of opposing itself to fantasy. Its basic trajectory appears to involve curing the patient of an excessive investment in fantasy life. It seems as if neurotics come to psychoanalysts suffering from their fantasies and that the sessions allow the neurotics to gain some distance from these fantasies and thereby see them for what they are. Gaining purchase on one’s fantasy life — or simply **becoming aware that one is fantasizing** — **is one** predominant **image of the psychoanalytic process**. My own therapy, for instance, consisted in gaining awareness of the nonexistence of normal people. The analyst’s unremitting silence in response to my questions about how everyone else would react in similar situations ultimately allowed me to recognize the obvious fact that there was no such thing as a normal reaction or normal person**. I was invested in the fantasy of normality without realizing that it was a fantasy**, and **analysis laid this fantasy bare and** thus **facilitated a disinvestment in it.** In this way, like so many patients I felt as if I was able to move beyond a barrier that I did not even know existed. Many theorists who recognize the political importance of psychoanalysis do so because of its ability to combat fantasy. For example, **this dimension** of psychoanalysis **leads** Yannis Stavrakakis, in *Lacan and the Political*, to see **the contemporary** **political task of psychoanalysis as one of “traversing the fantasy of utopian thought**.”25 In the vein of the philosopher or the Marxist, Stavrakakis sees a danger in the way that **fantasy hides the gap that haunts the symbolic order**. As he notes, “**Fantasy negates the real by promising to ‘realise’ it,** by promising **to close the gap between the real and reality**, by repressing the discursive nature of reality’s production.”26 Here, Stavrakakis sees the ideological dimension of fantasy, and **psychoanalysis** for him **facilitates** this **recognition and** provides **a way to dissolve fantasy’s power**. This kind of psychoanalytic politics evinces the attitude toward fantasy that both modern philosophy and Marxism take up, and this attitude certainly seems faithful to psychoanalytic practice and its attempt to assist the subject in “traversing the fantasy.”27 But despite the seeming antipathy directed toward fantasy in its very practice, for psychoanalysis the political valence of fantasy is not so unambiguous as it is for philosophy and Marxism. To unlock fully the political potential of psychoanalysis, we must turn our attention to the positive significance that psychoanalysis bestows on fantasy. Both philosophy and Marxism are, of course, right about the role that fantasy has in disguising our social situatedness. But the problem with this conception of politics is that, by focusing on what fantasy conceals, it fails to consider what fantasy reveals. It is at this point — the point of what fantasy reveals to us — that we can see the political significance of psychoanalysis. The value of psychoanalysis in relation to philosophy lies in the ability of psychoanalysis to grasp the political importance of fantasy in a way that philosophy and Marxism have been unable to do. At the same time that **fantasy disguises our subjection to the signifier and makes it difficult for us to experience** this **subjection, it also has the effect of making otherwise impossible experiences possible**.28 Fantasy **offers the subject a transcendent experience**, and this transcendence, despite its illusory quality, has a political content. It represents **a moment at which the subject is no longer bound by the limitations of the symbolic structure** that ordinarily constrain it. As such, this moment of **fantasmatic transcendence poses for the subject a** fundamental **challenge to the authority of that symbolic structure**. In fact, the radical import of fantasy is located in precisely the same feature that causes fantasy to further ideology: the illusions of **fantasy keep subjects content with the** ruling **symbolic structure, but** they also **provide a venue for thinking beyond**

# Case

### Framing

#### Subjectivity is constituted fundamentally by loss –

#### [1] Alienation – our introduction into the world and the field of knowledge requires mediation through language. The submission to language pushes us into an indirect relationship. It deprives the subject of immediate contact with the object world, which creates a constitutive distinction between non-alienated and post-linguistic experience.

#### [2] The recognition of the knowledge gap is not active but rather unconscious – knowledge is infinite which means it can’t be acquired or processed by the subject which creates a fundamental lack between the real and the symbolic. And a search for knowledge is damaging to the self because the subject has a fetishization of the external paranoia- a simultaneous desire for it and rejection.

#### [3] Fluidity- A) Differentiation - signifiers refer to other signifiers without having a final signified to relate to which produces a constitutive lack from the inability to reach true meaning. This instability forces us to form a world in pursuit of the lost gaps to fulfill the subject’s desires. B) Language is constantly changing- it’s contextually produced with respect to temporality and cultures because every individual indexes to language differently.

### Contention

#### Their idea that by hacking the resolution and debate they can challenge capitalist capture is false. Capitalism thrives on that narrative of “escape”. Disrupting a logic or social system cannot solve, boring analysis of structures is necessary.

Bluhdorn 07 – (May 2007, Ingolfur, PhD, Reader in Politics/Political Sociology, University of Bath, “Self-description, Self-deception, Simulation: A Systems-theoretical Perspective on Contemporary Discourses of Radical Change,” Social Movement Studies, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1–20, May 2007, google scholar)

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

#### [1] Sustainability: Capitalist growth is good for the environment, sustainable, and resolves inequality

Harry Saunders 16, Managing Director, Decision Processes Incorporated, “Does Capitalism Require Endless Growth?” Summer, https://thebreakthrough.org/index.php/journal/issue-6/does-capitalism-require-endless-growth

The modern notion that capitalism harbors the seeds of its own ecological destruction owes its provenance to a most unlikely duo of canonical economic thinkers. The Reverend Thomas Malthus claimed in the eighteenth century that a collision between the growing number of mouths to feed and the capacity to add productive agricultural land was inevitable. Karl Marx argued in the nineteenth century that technological change would bring with it falling wages, declining profits, and hence, ultimately, the collapse of capital formation. The argument of Malthus was famously resurrected in the early 1970s in the Club of Rome report The Limits to Growth.1 Around the same time, ecological economists Nicholas Georgescu-Rosen, Herman Daly, Robert Costanza, Robert Ayres, and others advanced the idea that all human economic activity fundamentally relies on a limited planetary endowment of what they call “natural capital.” On the other side, Marxist scholars like Paul Sweezy2, Fred Magdoff, and John Foster3 have extended Marx’s insight, directing our attention to what they call the “growth imperative of capitalism,” by which they mean the indispensable necessity of capitalism to continually accumulate capital and generate a reserve of unemployed workers if it is to remain viable. Without continual economic growth, they argue, capitalism will collapse. Or, as Giorgos Kallis recently so succinctly put it, “Growth is what capitalism needs, knows, and does.”4 Taken together, the dilemma is evident: An economic system that requires perpetual economic growth on a spherical planet with finite resources simply cannot last. Merging Marx and Malthus in this way has made Malthusian arguments accessible to elements of the global left that had historically rejected them. Capitalism and environmental sustainability simply could not be reconciled. Constraining the economy to keep it within a safe margin of ecological limits would only hasten capitalism’s collapse, while allowing capitalism to grow unconstrained would result in ecological collapse. Either way, the choice was clear: abandon capitalism or risk the end of the human project. But Marx and Malthus are not so easily reconciled. Marx’s central insight was that capitalism would collapse of its own contradictions, including rising inequality and immiseration of labor that would ultimately destroy the market for the goods that capitalists produced. As it turns out, the mechanism by which this would occur, technological change driving greater economic productivity, was precisely the mechanism that Malthus failed to anticipate when he predicted that food production would fail to keep up with population growth. In Marx’s crisis lay precisely the mechanism that would prevent Malthus’ prophecy. We see much evidence for this today. Improving technologies have driven a major expansion in food availability, along with continuing production efficiencies across the global economy more generally. The world faces no shortage of ecological challenges — species extinctions, collapsing fisheries, depleted aquifers, poisoned land, and, of course, the inexorable rise of global temperatures as atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases increase. And economists today concern themselves with the threat of “secular stagnation,” chronically low growth rates that threaten long-term prosperity. But it is important to distinguish these challenges from the sweeping claims made originally by Sweezy, Magdoff, and Foster and repeated today by prominent intellectuals and activists such as Naomi Klein and Bill McKibben. In the pages that follow, I will demonstrate that both neoclassical growth theory and empirical evidence suggest that capitalist economies do not require endless growth but are rather much more likely to evolve toward a steady state once consumption demands of the global population have been satisfied. Those demands demonstrably saturate once economies achieve a certain level of affluence. For these reasons, a capitalist economy is as likely as any other to see stable and declining demands on natural resources and ecological services