### CW: nonexplicit references to suicide

### Part 1 is Racial Capitalism

#### All Capitalism is Racial Capitalism – space commercialization cannot sustain itself without disposable populations.

Burden-Stelly 20 [Bracketed for women to womxn. Footnote 14 is inserted below the paragraph it’s cited in, other footnotes excluded for readability. Charisse Burden-Stelly (Visiting Scholar in the Race and Capitalism Project at the University of Chicago. She is currently an African-American Assistant Professor of Africana Studies and Political Science at Carleton College). “Modern U.S. Racial Capitalism: Some Theoretical Insights”. The Monthly Review, Volume 72, Number 3. 7/1/20. Accessed 11/3/21. <https://monthlyreview.org/2020/07/01/modern-u-s-racial-capitalism/> //Xu]

Drawing on the intellectual production of twentieth-century Black anticapitalists, I theorize modern U.S. racial capitalism as a racially hierarchical political economy constituting war and militarism, imperialist accumulation, expropriation by domination, and labor superexploitation.14 The racial here specifically refers to Blackness, defined as African descendants’ relationship to the capitalist mode of production—their structural location—and the condition, status, and material realities emanating therefrom.15 It is out of this structural location that the irresolvable contradiction of value minus worth arises. Stated differently, Blackness is a capacious category of surplus value extraction essential to an array of political-economic functions, including accumulation, disaccumulation, debt, planned obsolescence, and absorption of the burdens of economic crises.16 At the same time, Blackness is the quintessential condition of disposability, expendability, and devalorization. [Footnote 14]: Another feature of modern U.S. racial capitalism is property by dispossession. In Theft Is Property! Dispossession and Critical Theory, Robert Nichols draws on the experience of Indigenous peoples in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand to theorize how the “system of landed property” was fundamentally predicated on violent dispossession. While the Anglo-derived legal-political regimes differed in these localities, the “intertwined and co-constitutive” material effects converged in the legalized theft of indigenous territory amounting in “approximately 6 percent of the total land on the surface of Earth.” Such dispossession, Nichols notes, is recursive: “In a standard formulation one would assume that ‘property’ is logically, chronologically, and normatively prior to ‘theft.’ However, in this (colonial) context, theft is the mechanism and means by which property is generated: hence its recursivity. Recursive dispossession is effectively a form of property-generating theft.” As such, theft and dispossession, through property regimes, are an ongoing feature of the Indigenous reality of modern U.S. racial capitalism. Robert Nichols, Theft Is Property! Dispossession and Critical Theory (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 50–51. My operationalization of capitalism follows Oliver Cromwell Cox’s explication in Capitalism and American Leadership.17 Modern U.S. racial capitalism arose in the context of the First World War, when, as Cox explains, the United States took advantage of the conflict to capture the markets of South America, Asia, and Africa for its “over-expanded capacity.”18 Cox further expounds upon this auspicious moment of ascendant modern U.S. racial capitalism thus: By 1914, the United States had brought its superb natural resources within reach of intensive exploitation. Under the stimulus of its foreign-trade outlets, the financial assistance of the older capitalist nations, and a flexible system of protective tariffs, the nation developed a magnificent work of transportation and communication so that its mines, factories, and farms became integrated into an effectively producing organism having easy access to its seaports.… [Likewise,] further internal expansion depended upon far greater emphasis on an ever widening foreign commerce.… Major entrepreneurs of the United States proceeded to step up their campaign for expansion abroad. The war accentuated this movement. It accelerated the growth of [modern] American [racial] capitalism and impressed upon its leaders as nothing had before the need for external markets.19 Relatedly, Peter James Hudson argues that the First World War fundamentally changed the terms of order of international finance, allowing New York to compete with London, Paris, and Berlin for the first time in the realm of global banking. This was not least because the Great War “drastically reordered global credit flows,” with the United States transforming from a debtor into a creditor nation.20 In addition to Latin American and Caribbean nations and businesses turning to the United States for financing and credit, domestic saving and investment patterns were altered to the benefit of imperial financial institutions like the City Bank.21 Although the United States is, to use Cox’s terminology, more a “lusty child of an already highly developed capitalism” than an exceptional capitalist power, the nation perfected its techniques of accumulation through its vast natural wealth, large domestic market, imbalance of Northern and Southern economies, and, importantly, through its lack of concern for the political and economic welfare of the overwhelming masses of its population, least of all the descendants of the enslaved.22 Modern U.S. racial capitalism is thus sustained by military expenditure, the maintenance of an extremely low standard of living in “dependent” countries, and the domestic superexploitation of Black toilers and laborers. Cox notes that Black labor has been the “chief human factor” in wealth production; as such, “the dominant economic class has always been at the motivating center of the spreads of racial antagonism. This is to be expected since the economic content of the antagonism, especially at its proliferating source in the South, has been precisely that of labor-capital relations.”23 In a general sense, racial capitalism in the United States constitutes “a peculiar variant of capitalist production” in which Blackness expresses a structural location at the bottom of the labor hierarchy characterized by depressed wages, working conditions, job opportunities, and widespread exclusion from labor unions.24 Furthermore, modern U.S. racial capitalism is rooted in the imbrication of anti-Blackness and antiradicalism. Anti-Blackness describes the reduction of Blackness to a category of abjection and subjection through narrations of absolute biological or cultural difference; ruling-class monopolization of political power; negative and derogatory mass media propaganda; the ascent of discriminatory legislation that maintains and reinscribes inequality, not least various modes of segregation; and social relations in which distrust and antipathy toward those racialized as Black is normalized and in which “interracial mass behavior involving violence assumes a continuously potential danger.”25 Anti-Blackness thus conceals the inherent contradiction of Blackness—value minus worth—obscuring and distorting its structural location by, as Ralph and Singhal remark, contorting it into only a “debilitated condition.”26 Antiradicalism can be understood as the physical and discursive repression and condemnation of anticapitalist and/or left-leaning ideas, politics, practices, and modes of organizing that are construed as subversive, seditious, and otherwise threatening to capitalist society. These include, but are not limited to, internationalism, anti-imperialism, anticolonialism, peace activism, and antisexism. Anti-Blackness and antiradicalism function as the legitimating architecture of modern U.S. racial capitalism, which includes rationalizing discourses, cultural narratives, technologies of repression, legal structures, and social practices that inform and are informed by racial capitalism’s political economy.27 Throughout the twentieth century, anti-Blackness propelled the “Black Scare,” defined as the specter of racial, social, and economic domination of superior whites by inferior Black populations. Antiradicalism, in turn, was enunciated through the “Red Scare,” understood as the threat of communist takeover, infiltration, and disruption of the American way of life.28 For example, in the 1919 Justice Department Report, Radicalism and Sedition Among the Negroes, As Reflected in Their Publications, it was asserted that the radical antigovernment stance of a certain class of Negroes was manifested in their “ill-governed reaction toward race rioting,” “threat of retaliatory measures in connection with lynching,” open demand for social equality, identification with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and “outspoken advocacy of the Bolshevik or Soviet doctrine.”29 Here, anti-Blackness, articulated through the fear of the “assertion of race consciousness,” was attached to the IWW and Bolshevism—in other words, to anticapitalism—to make it appear even more subversive and dangerous. Likewise, antiradicalism, expressed through the denigration of the IWW and Soviet Doctrine, was made to seem all the more threatening and antithetical to the social order in its linkage with Black insistence on equality and self-defense against racial terrorism. In this way, “defiance and insolently race-centered condemnation of the white race” and “the Negro seeing red” came to be understood as seditious in the context of modern U.S. racial capitalism. The link between my theory of modern U.S. racial capitalism and Robinson’s catholic theory of racial capitalism, beyond his “suggest[ion] that it was there,” is vivified through the prison abolitionist and scholar Ruth Wilson Gilmore, who writes: “Capitalism…[is] never not racial.… Racial capitalism: a mode of production developed in agriculture, improved by enclosure in the Old World, and captive land and labor in the Americas, perfected in slavery’s time-motion, field factory choreography, its imperative forged on the anvils of imperial war-making monarchs.”30 Racial capitalism, she continues, “requires all kinds of scheming, including hard work by elites and their compradors in the overlapping and interlocking space-economies of the planet’s surface. They build and dismantle and reconfigure states, moving capacity into and out of the public realm. And they think very hard about money on the move.”31 Perhaps more than Gilmore, though, my approach aligns with that of Neville Alexander as described by Hudson.32 Like Alexander, who focused on South Africa, I offer a particularistic understanding of racial capitalism, mine being rooted in the political economy of Blackness and the legitimating architectures of anti-Blackness and antiradicalism in the United States. Gilmore qua Robinson offers a more universalist and transhistorical conception. Like Alexander, my theory of modern U.S. racial capitalism is primarily rooted in (Black) Marxist-Leninists and fellow travelers. This is an important epistemological distinction: whereas Robinson finds Marxism-Leninism to be, at best, inattentive to race, my theory of modern U.S. racial capitalism is rooted in the work of Black freedom fighters who, as Marxist-Leninists, were able to offer potent and enduring analyses and critiques of the conjunctural entanglements of racialism, white supremacy, and anti-Blackness, on the one hand, and capitalist exploitation and class antagonism on the other hand.33 Although Robinson draws on scholars like Fernand Braudel, Henri Pirenne, David Brion Davis, and Eli Heckscher to understand European history, socialist theory, and the European working class, the work of Black Marxists like James Ford, Walter Rodney, Amílcar Cabral, and Paul Robeson offer me those same intellectual, historical, and theoretical resources. Finally, I agree with Alexander that the resolution to racial capitalism is antiracist socialism, not a cultural-metaphysical Black radical tradition. In what remains of this essay, I will draw on the work of Black Marxist-Leninists and anticapitalists to explicate the defining features of modern U.S. racial capitalism—war and militarism, imperialist accumulation, expropriation by domination, labor superexploitation, and property by dispossession. In this, I demonstrate that their critiques and analyses offer a blueprint for theorizing modern U.S. racial capitalism. War and militarism facilitate the endless drive for profit. Military conflicts between imperial powers result in the reapportioning of boundaries, possessions, and spheres of influence that often exacerbate racial and spatial economic subjection. War and militarism also perpetuate the endless construction of “threats,” primarily in racialized and socialist states, against which to defend progress, prosperity, freedom, and security. The manufacturing of conflict legitimates the mobilization of extraordinary violence to expropriate untold resources that produce relations of underdevelopment, dependency, extraversion, and disarticulation in the Global South. Moreover, the ruling elite and labor aristocracy in imperialist countries, not least the United States, wage perpetual war to defend their way of life and standard of living against the racialized majority who, because they would benefit most from the redistribution of the world’s wealth and resources, represent a perpetual threat. Here, Du Bois’s 1915 essay, “The African Roots of War,” is instructive.34 Though he does not directly analyze the United States, he nonetheless demonstrates how racism, white supremacy, and the plunder of Africa underpinned the capitalist imperialist war that engulfed the world from July 1914 to November 1918—a war that catapulted the United States into the center of the capitalist world system. Using Du Bois’s own words, Hubert Harrison, the father of Harlem radicalism, makes the direct link: But since every industrial nation is seeking the same outlet for its products, clashes are inevitable and in these clashes beaks and claws—armies and navies—must come into play. Hence beaks and claws must be provided beforehand against the day of conflict, and hence the exploitation of white men in Europe and America becomes the reason for the exploitation of black and brown and yellow men in African and Asia. And, therefore, it is hypocritical and absurd to pretend that the capitalist nations can ever intend to abolish wars.… For white folk to insist upon the right to manage their own ancestral lands, free from the domination of tyrants, domestic and foreign, is variously described as “democracy” and “self-determination.” For Negroes, Egyptians and Hindus to seek the same thing is impudence.… Truly has it been said that “the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the ‘Color Line.'” And wars are not likely to end; in fact, they are likely to be wider and more terrible—so long as this theory of white domination seeks to hold down the majority of the world’s people under the iron heel of racial oppression.35 For Du Bois, the imperialist rivalry for the booty on offer in Africa drove Berlin’s efforts to consolidate its place in the sun by displacing London in particular. While Vladimir Lenin understood that “the war [was] a product of half a century of development of world capitalism and of billions of threads and connections,” Du Bois expanded this analysis by providing a critique of the racial foundations of capitalist expansion.36 He held that the struggle to the death during the Great War for African resources and labor had begun to “pay dividends” centuries earlier through the enslavement of African peoples, the subsequent conflation of color and inferiority, and the reduction of what was routinely referred to as the “Dark Continent” to a space of backwardness ideally suited for dispossession. He further noted that “with the waning possibility of Big Fortune…at home, arose more magnificently the dream of exploitation abroad,” especially in Africa—a dream shared by white labor and the ruling class.37 In other words, this “democratic despotism” allowed for the white working class to “share the spoil of exploiting ‘chinks and niggers,'” and facilitated the creation of “a new democratic nation composed of united capital and labor” that perpetuated racial capitalism across class lines.38 Moreover, this national unity was strengthened through the disrespect and dehumanization of the racialized toilers and peasants in the plundered colonies that mitigated the exploitation and impoverishment of the white working class in imperial countries. This superexploitation allowed white workers to get a share, however pitiful, of “wealth, power, and luxury…on a scale the world never saw before” and to benefit from the “new wealth” accumulated from the “darker nations of the world” through cross-class consent “for governance by white folk and economic subjection to them”—a consensus solidified through the doctrine of “the natural inferiority of most men to the few.”39 Given the entanglement of racialization and capitalist exploitation, Du Bois averred, “Racial slander must go. Racial prejudice will follow…the domination of one people by another without the other’s consent, be the subject people black or white, must stop. The doctrine of forcible economic expansion over subject people must go.” Insofar as this admonishment applied as much to the United States as to European imperialists, beyond the international proletariat, it was the darker peoples and nations of the world who would challenge racial capitalism, not least “the twenty-five million grandchildren of the European slave trade…and first of all the ten million black folk in the United States.”40 Imperialist accumulation denotes the rapacious conscription of resources and labor for the purpose of superprofits through violent means that are generally reserved for populations deemed racially inferior. On the precipice of the Great Depression, the prominent Black communist James Ford beautifully explicated imperialist accumulation. In his 1929 report on the Second World Congress of the League Against Imperialism, he explained that the extant political economy constituted the consolidation of Africa’s partition and the “complete enslavement of its people”; the arresting of its industrialization, which hindered the development of the “toiling masses”; and the relegation of the continent to a source of raw material, a market for European goods, and a dumping ground for accumulated surplus capital. In the U.S. South, the Black poor were dehumanized by Wall Street, “white big business,” and the “rising Negro bourgeoisie” whose condition of possibility was the subjection of the Black working class. This oppression was exacerbated by rigid racial barriers, disenfranchisement, and lynching. Ford further argued that the West Indies, subjected to U.S. militarism and occupation on behalf of Wall Street, were largely transformed into a marketplace for U.S. goods. Moreover, throughout Africa, the U.S. South, and the Caribbean, Black workers were impressed into forced labor, laying railroads, building roads and bridges, and working in mines; were entrapped on plantations through peonage; and were subjected to convict leasing. In addition, they suffered intolerable working conditions and routinized violence.41 Expropriation by domination designates the seizure and confiscation of land, assets, property, bodies, and other sources of material wealth set to work by relations of economic dependence. This relationship exists both between nations and between groups. A quintessential enunciation of expropriation by domination between groups is We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government Against the Negro People, edited by the Black Communist William Patterson (with significant help from his wife and comrade Louise Thompson Patterson) and submitted to the United Nations by the Civil Rights Congress in 1951.42 The petition meticulously documented the past and present expropriation of Black people by the ruling class of modern U.S. racial capitalism through consistent and persistent discrimination in employment, unfair wages, forced ghettoization, inequitable and inferior accommodation and services, and the denial of justice in the courts. It further argued that this process was sustained by genocidal terror, white supremacist law, and the drive of monopoly capitalists for superprofits. Importantly, We Charge Genocide noted that, for primarily economic reasons, the historical and geographical locus of anti-Black genocide was the “Black Belt” of the Southern United States, a region expropriated by the Northern industrial capitalists and by Southern landowners alike. This was due in large part to plantation systems of sharecropping and peonage—legacies of slavery—in which Black political and economic rights were virtually nonexistent, Black laborers were inexorably tied to the land through debt, and the threat of violence and death precluded demands for justice. For Patterson, such expropriation by domination was the basis of “racist contamination that has spread throughout the United States.”43 We Charge Genocide further conveyed that expropriation by domination, a central element of modern U.S. racial capitalism, was more than a domestic concern because such practices “at home must inevitably create racist commodities for export abroad—must inevitably tend toward war.”44 Labor superexploitation can be understood as an economic relationship in which the intensity, form, and racial basis of exploitation differs little from slavery. Its effects are so extreme that it pushes racialized, particularly Black, labor effectively below the level of sheer physical subsistence. As Harrison explained, in the context of modern U.S. racial capitalism, Black workers “form a group that is more essentially proletarian than any other American group” because enslaved Africans were brought to the “new world” to be ruthlessly exploited. This reality fixed their social status as the most despised group, which in turn intensified their subjection.45 Likewise, organizations like the American Negro Labor Congress and the Anti-Imperialist League analyzed that the racial capitalist superexploitation of Black nations like Haiti in the first quarter of the twentieth century for the purposes of consolidating Wall Street control over land, commercial relations, and production was accompanied by the brutalization of Black labor, the export of Jim Crow practices, military occupation, and political repression.46 In effect, superexploitation results from the conjuncture of white supremacy, racialization, and the “badge of slavery,” which exacerbates the conditions of exploitation to which white working classes are subjected. As the Black Marxist Harry Haywood argued in 1948, “the stifling effects of the race factor are most strikingly illustrated by the drastic differences in the economic and cultural status of Negroes and whites.… Beyond all doubt, the oppression of the Negro, which is the basis of the degradation of the ‘poor whites,’ is of separate character demanding a special approach.”47 Superexploitation, he explained further, constitutes a combination of direct exploitation, outright robbery, physical violence, legal coercion, and perpetual indebtedness. It stifles “the free economic and cultural development” of the Black masses “through racist persecution as a basic condition for maintaining” virtual enslavement.48 The entrapment of Black [womxn] women in domestic labor throughout the twentieth century—a function of their “triple oppression”—is perhaps the most glaring example of labor superexploitation under modern U.S. racial capitalism. In 1936, the lifelong Black radical Louise Thompson explained that Black women’s superexploitation in the capitalist mode of production was based on their race, sex, and subordination in the labor market.49 That same year, Black militants Marvel Cooke and Ella Baker published an article titled “The Bronx Slave Market” in which they studied triple oppression as it related to Black domestic workers. Cooke and Baker explained that the entanglements of racism, sex-based labor subordination, and structural poverty were deeply intensified by the Great Depression and forced Black domestic workers to pauperize their labor for the abysmal wage of less than thirty cents an hour. This form of labor exploitation was unique to the female sex because domestic work was conventional “women’s work,” and it was racialized insofar as the denigration of Black people fitted this group of women for low-wage, unprotected, and contingent labor.50

#### Our theorization begins with the lumpenproletariat – those who are out of work, good for three things: incarceration, debt, or revolution – the goal must be not to redirect productive forces, but to sabotage them through alternative organizing.

**Wang 18** [Jackie, writer, poet, musician, and academic whose writing has been published by Lies Journal, HTML Giant, and BOMBlog, PhD African-American Studies @ Harvard, p. 56-63//ak47]

The Black Panther Party, Lumpenization and Automation In contemporary discussions of automation, there is rarely any acknowledgment of black Marxist theorizations of automation, such as those produced by the Black Panther Parry (BPP). The BPP was not only a revolutionary political organization, it was a political movement that produced many significant contributions to black political thought. Before the Black Panthers, few thinkers beyond Malcolm X had undertaken the daunting endeavor of both organizing the lumpen proletariat into a political organization and theorizing how and why the lumpen could be included in a revolutionary struggle. The BPP was also singular insofar as many of its leaders and theoreticians-such as George Jackson, Huey P. Newton, and Eldridge Cleaver-were former hustlers and members of the same class they were theorizing. BPP theorizations of the lumpenproletariat are somewhat distinct from traditional Marxist conceptions of the lumpen. In the Marxist view, unemployed people (the lumpen class) are essentially workers without work: a labor reserve that is necessary to keep wages down and weaken the power of labor unions. However, historically, they have not been considered a revolutionary class in themselves by Marxists because they do not control the means of production and are notoriously difficult to organize, as there are few social, political, and material forces that bind them to one another. For instance, factory workers are considered organizable because they share material interests (similar working conditions and a shared opposition to their bosses) as well as a physical space through which they can develop a workingclass consciousness and coordinate their actions. The lumpen class, on the other hand, is an aggregate of mostly de-skilled people whosometimes operate outside the licit economy. In Newton's, Cleaver's, and Jackson's post-Marxist theorizations of the new capitalist economy, most of humanity (aside from a small class of technocrats) will eventually be subjugated by technology. This is a significant departure from the techno-optimism of Marxism, and the view that capitalism is a necessary stage in the development of communism because it catalyzes technological innovations that will reduce the human labor required to provide for the material needs of humanity. Supposedly this would liberate the masses from the enervating drudgery of alienated work and allow people to cultivate themselves through more satisfying activities. However, for the BPP, the lumpen and the working class have a negative relationship with technology. These thinkers predicted that rapid technological innovation would lead to a "lumpenization" of the lower classes, who would become permanently unemployable as automated production rapidly supplanted human laborers. For the BPP, black Americans would be the first to feel the negative effects of automation (as well as deindustrialization), though eventually this condition would become generalized and affect all workers. Black Americans are what some might call "the canary in the coal mine" insofar as they are the first to suffer the consequences of political and economic restructuring. Newton writes: In this country the Black Panther Party ... sees that while the lumpen proletarians are the minority and the proletarians are the majority, technology is developing at such a rapid rate that automation will progress to cybernation, and cybernation probably to technocracy. ... If the ruling circle remains in power it seems to me that capitalists will continue to develop their technological machinery because they are not interested in the people. . . . If revolution does not occur almost immediately, and I say almost immediately because technology is making leaps (it made a leap all the way to the moon), and if the ruling circle remains in power the proletarian working class will definitely be on the decline because they will be unemployable and therefore swell the ranks of the lumpens, who are the present unemployables. Every worker is in jeopardy because of the ruling circle, which is why we say that the lumpen proletarians have the potential for revolution, will probably carry out the revolution, and in the near future will be the popular majority. Of course, I would not like to see more of my people unemployed or become unemployables, but being objective, because we're dialectical materialists, we must acknowledge the facts. 21 Thus, according to Newton, there would be a massive shift in class composition: as the working class shrank, the lumpen class would grow and eventually become the majority. But how, as workers are lumpenized, will the lumpen consume goods? Consumption, Cleaver argues, drives economic growth, and profits fall when there are coo few people with enough disposable income to purchase the products being produced. However, in "On Lumpen Ideology" Cleaver theorized that the problem of underconsumption would be solved by the state and the creation of a welfare system that would allow the lumpen to participate in the economy as consumers without participating in the process of production. Perhaps one could say that today the problems of underconsumption and the falling rate of profit identified by Cleaver have been temporarily solved (or deferred) by the creation of a debt economy that allows people to consume commodities using borrowed money. For the BPP, the technological transformation of the process of production requires the creation of political strategies and tactics that are responsive to the new situation. Since they were prophesying that the working class would eventually be demoted to the ranks of the lumpen, it was necessary that the lumpen class be the point of departure for their political theories,and that their strategies attend to the question of how the lumpen could be converted into a revolutionary class. For Jackson, U.S. blacks are-as former slaves and the hyper-exploited stratum of the working class-revolutionary because they have a "desperate historical relation to the violence of the productive system" that makes them more committed to uprooting the whole system, while the white working class would be more susceptible to neutralization because they did not have a fully antagonistic relation to production and thus could be bought off, as they had a stake in maintaining the system. 22 This antagonistic relationship to production also redefines how the People's War is waged: rather than seizing the means of production, Jackson emphasized the destruction of the protective and productive forces. He advocated destabilizing capitalism by halting production through sabotage, thus making the terrain uninhabitable for capitalists as well as unfit for capital investment. He writes, "The objective, I repeat, of the destruction of a city-based industrial establishment and its protective forces is to create perfect disorder, to disrupt all of their interacting processes that allow them to produce and distribute goods, and this can be done from within the process much more easily than from without."23 But sabotaging production also meant that the BPP would have to simultaneously develop autonomous infrastructure that could ensure, as the Panthers would say, *survival pending revolution.*

#### Racial Capitalism is a treadmill of misery that causes planetary crises and leaves the future cancelled – the fundamental task of modern Leftism is to articulate an alternative vision of the future that can appropriate modernity for utopian ends.

Williams and Srnicek ‘15

[Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, fastest Leftists in the West. City University London. 2015. “Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work”.] Pat

Where did the future go? For much of the twentieth century, the future held sway over our dreams. On the horizons of the political left a vast assortment of emancipatory visions gathered, often springing from the conjunction of popular political power and the liberating potential of technology. From predictions of new worlds of leisure, to Soviet-era cosmic communism, to afro-futurist celebrations of the synthetic and diasporic nature of black culture, to post-gender dreams of radical feminism, the popular imagination of the left envisaged societies vastly superior to anything we dream of today. Through popular political control of new technologies, we would collectively transform our world for the better. Today, on one level, these dreams appear closer than ever. The technological infrastructure of the twenty-first century is producing the resources by which a very different political and economic system could be achieved. Machines are accomplishing tasks that were unimaginable a decade ago. The internet and social media are giving a voice to billions who previously went unheard, bringing global participative democracy closer than ever to existence. Open-source designs, copyleft creativity, and 3D printing all portend a world where the scarcity of many products might be overcome. New forms of computer simulation could rejuvenate economic planning and give us the ability to direct economies rationally in unprecedented ways. The newest wave of automation is creating the possibility for huge swathes of boring and demeaning work to be permanently eliminated. Clean energy technologies make possible virtually limitless and environmentally sustainable forms of power production. And new medical technologies not only enable a longer, healthier life, but also make possible new experiments with gender and sexual identity. Many of the classic demands of the left – for less work, for an end to scarcity, for economic democracy, for the production of socially useful goods, and for the liberation of humanity – are materially more achievable than at any other point in history.

Yet, for all the glossy sheen of our technological era, we remain bound by an old and obsolete set of social relations. We continue to work long hours, commuting further, to perform tasks that feel increasingly meaningless. Our jobs have become more insecure, our pay has stagnated, and our debt has become overwhelming. We struggle to make ends meet, to put food on the table, to pay the rent or mortgage, and as we shuffle from job to job, we reminisce about pensions and struggle to find affordable childcare. Automation renders us unemployed and stagnant wages devastate the middle class, while corporate profits surge to new heights. The glimmers of a better future are trampled and forgotten under the pressures of an increasingly precarious and demanding world. And each day, we return to work as normal: exhausted, anxious, stressed and frustrated.

At a planetary level, things appear even more ominous. The breakdown of the global climate continues unabated, and the ongoing fallout from the economic crisis has led governments to embrace the ~~paralysing~~ death-spiral of austerity. Buffeted by imperceptible and abstract powers, we feel incapable of evading or controlling the tidal pulsions of economic, social and environmental forces. But how are we to change this? All around us, it seems that the political systems, movements and processes that dominated the last hundred years are no longer able to bring about genuinely transformative change. Instead, they have forced us onto an endless treadmill of misery. Electoral democracy lies in remarkable disrepair. Centre-left political parties have been hollowed out and sapped of any popular mandate. Their corpses stumble on as vehicles for careerist ambitions. Radical political movements bloom promisingly but are quickly snuffed out by exhaustion and repression. Organised labour has seen its power systematically taken apart, leaving it sclerotic and incapable of anything more than feeble resistance. Yet, in the face of these calamities, today’s politics remains stubbornly beset by a lack of new ideas. Neoliberalism has held sway for decades, and social democracy exists largely as an object of nostalgia. As crises gather force and speed, politics withers and retreats. In this paralysis of the political imaginary, the future has been cancelled.

### Part 2 is the Solvency

#### I affirm Resolved: The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust. Spec and definitions in doc.

The – “used to point forward to a following qualifying or defining clause or phrase”. Google. <https://www.google.com/search?q=the+definition&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS877US877&oq=the+definition&aqs=chrome.0.69i59j69i64j69i61j69i60l2.2103j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

Appropriation – “an act or instance of appropriating something”. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/appropriation>

Of – “indicating an association between two entities, typically one of belonging”. <https://www.google.com/search?q=of+definition&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS877US877&oq=of+definition&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i60.1494j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

Outer Space – “the physical universe beyond the earth's atmosphere”. <https://www.google.com/search?q=outer+space+definition&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS877US877&oq=outer+space+definition&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i60.2363j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

By – “identifying the agent performing an action.”. <https://www.google.com/search?q=by+definition&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS877US877&oq=by+definition&aqs=chrome.0.69i59.1433j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

Is – “dialectal present tense first-person and third-person singular of BE”. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/is>

Unjust – “not morally right; not fair”. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/unjust>

#### The aff identifies appropriation as unjust

Webster ND Definition of IS," Merriam Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/is> IS

is Definition of is (Entry 1 of 4) present tense third-person singular of BE dialectal present tense first-person and third-person singular of BE dialectal present tense plural of BE

#### Dialectical present tense means logical coherence which implies no implementation

Your Dictionary ND, , "Dialectical Meaning," No Publication, <https://www.yourdictionary.com/dialectical> Cho

The definition of dialectical is a discussion that includes logical reasoning and dialogue, or something having the sounds, vocabulary and grammar of a specific way of speaking. An example of something dialectical is a Lincoln Douglass style of debate, where both parties argue a point in a logical order. Of, or pertaining to dialectic; logically reasoned through the exchange of opposing ideas.

#### Private space appropriation as worldmaking isn’t value neutral but is an apparatus of racial capitalism – scaling from cosmic elite and unequal IR, there is always someone left behind.

Stockwell 20 [Samuel Stockwell (Research Project Manager, the Annenberg Institute at Brown University). “Legal ‘Black Holes’ in Outer Space: The Regulation of Private Space Companies”. E-International Relations. Jul 20 2020. Accessed 12/7/21. <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/07/20/legal-black-holes-in-outer-space-the-regulation-of-private-space-companies/> //Xu]

The US government’s support for private space companies is also likely to lead to the reinforcement of Earth-bound wealth inequalities in space. Many NewSpace actors frame their long-term ambitions in space with strong anthropogenic undertones, by offering the salvation of the human race from impending extinction through off-world colonial developments (Kearnes & Dooren: 2017: 182). Yet, this type of discourse disguises the highly exclusive nature of these missions. Whilst they seem to suggest that there is a stake for ordinary citizens in the vast space frontier, the reality is that these self-described space pioneers are a member of a narrow ‘cosmic elite’ – “founders of Amazon.com, Microsoft, Pay Pal… and a smattering of games designers and hotel magnates” (Parker, 2009: 91). Indeed, private space enterprises have themselves suggested that they have no obligation to share mineral resources extracted in space with the global community (Klinger, 2017: 208). This is reflected in the speeches of individuals such as Nathan Ingraham, a senior editor at the tech site EngadAsteroid mining, who claimed that asteroid mining was “how [America is] going to move into space and develop the next Vegas Strip” (Shaer, 2016: 50). Such comments highlight a form of what Beery (2016) defines as ‘scalar politics’. In similar ways to the ‘scaling’ of unequal international relations that has constituted our relationship with outer space under the guise of the ‘global commons’ (Beery, 2016: 99), private companies – through their anthropogenic discourse – are scaling existing Earth-bound wealth inequalities and social relations into space by siphoning off extra-terrestrial resources. By constructing their endeavours in ways that appeal to the common good, NewSpace actors are therefore concealing the reality of how commercial resource extraction serves the exclusive interests of their private shareholders at the expense of the vast majority of the global population.

### Part 3 is the Method

#### We affirm the normative statement but our analysis isn’t separate from the broader framework – justifications are a prior question to concrete analysis because they answer when, why and how violence and injustice operate

#### “Resolved” means to analyze.

Merriam Webster [It’s the dictionary! Big dictionary! On a website! Isn’t the internet incredible? <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resolved>] pat

b : to reduce by analysis

resolve the problem into simple elements

Our scenario analysis of the resolution develops the political grammar for revolution – before we can discuss how to get there, we first must theorize what exact future we are fighting for

#### Mass base cultivation must start through utopic communist demands like the aff that prophesize the end of Capitalism.

**Tonstad 16** (Professor Tonstad is a constructive theologian working at the intersection of systematic theology with feminist and queer theory. Her first book, God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude, was published by Routledge in 2016 and was named both as a best new book in ethics and a best new book in theology in Christian Century in the spring of 2017. “Debt Time is Straight Time” political theology, Vol. 17 No. 5, September 2016, 434–448, Edited for ableist language – “visible” changed to “recognizable” )

If debt time, as I have argued, is straight time, can other temporal modes of production and affiliation be imagined? If debt time depends on promises made in the past to subjugate the present and future, might other promising pasts (made available through the non-limitative, intergenerational relations that “homosexual production” sometimes promotes) redirect us toward other futures — futures located in queer time? Dreaming and day-dreaming allow for Kathi Weeks’s “utopian demand” that can teach us what a “different world” in which our dreams would come to life would look like.45 To reeducate our temporal desires, we need to “affirm what we are and will it, because it is also the constitutive basis from which we can struggle to become otherwise.”46 This affirmation is no mere acceptance of the past as it is enforced on us by the moral couplings effort-reward or debt-obligation. Rather, it is “an active intervention into our ways of inhabiting the past.” The utopic demand affirms a future in which the demand would no longer be utopic, while also estranging us from the ethos that there is no alternative.47Guy Hocquenghem writes, “Homosexual production takes place according to a mode of non-limitative horizontal relations, heterosexual reproduction according to one of hierarchical succession … another possible social relation … is not vertical but horizontal.”48 Horizontal temporal relations can join with new spatial orders to constitute a we. Franco Berardi notes that one of the reasons workers’ struggles have tended to disappear historically (as exceptions rather than lasting coalitions) is that “for struggles to form a cycle there must be a spatial proximity of laboring bodies and an existential temporal continuity. Without this proximity and this continuity, we lack the conditions for cellularized bodies to become a community.”49 Spatial proximity is not enough by itself — antiblackness in the United States is but one example proving the point — but it is essential to the formation of coalitions and new forms of solidarity. Without side-by-side relationships, spatial and symbolic, and without creating and becoming a we, we can neither understand “our” time aright to diagnose it, nor shift the future into a direction other than the one marked out by the insistence that there is no alternative. With such relationships, the door is open for possibilities for redirecting the trajectory of debt time that do not require “distance from dominant culture,” but instead can take their own “imbrication with contemporary socioeconomic forces”50 as a point of departure. The first step is to name the powers and in so naming call them up and make them visible [recognizeable]— materialization of the demons that ride and haunt us, seeking to destroy us. The next step is to reorder our temporal and spatial relations to each other to create a we that does not yet exist.The promise of queer prophetic performance Sleeping and waking cross each other: for we must wake from our dreams of dust and ashes in order to read the signs of the times, and we must sleep so that we can learn to dream new dreams. Between the space of sleep and waking, we encounter the memory of other times, a memory that may become grounds for a future that is no future. Naming the signs of the times (knowing the time in order to escape its grasp, refusing the future in order to redirect it) is a prophetic practice. Althaus-Reid says, “[I]f God is to be found in human relationships of economic and loving orders, it is obvious that the right not to be straight in a capitalist society and church has the goal of liberating God.”51 And who can set God free? We need a prophetic52 bodily reordering in which the untimely one will arrive and tell us, or better show us, the series of negations, intentional relations, and world-making activities that are our best hope for living love in a time of capital. These hopes weigh less than the Spirit of Gravity does on our shoulders (that always-already that the history of Christian capitalism imposes on us); with them we may hope for an easier yoke that would allow us to replenish our relations to ourselves and others. Prophets dream for us and against us; they sound the alarm and they fall into trances in which revelations are given to them. Prophets use speech, performance, visions, dreams, and bodies to shift the relations between structures of authority and embedded hierarchicalizations. Those manipulations, those reorderings of apparently fixed elements of the world, reproduce but can also reconfigure visions of orders of power.53 Most importantly, prophets contend with other prophets in inexplicable bodied acts,54 and prophets contend with the prophets of other gods.55 Prophetic contestation breaks open the “monopoly of actuality” that insists “there is no alternative.” “Blow the trumpet … sound the alarm!” “Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days.”56 The passage from Joel points to the transgenerational and transgendered aspects of prophecy, and to the importance of dreams. Late capitalism denies us dreams, and late capitalism monetizes even our dreams. But prophets dream the dreams that the rest of us are denied. Prophecies “have been a means by which the “poor” have externalized their desires, given legitimacy to their plans, and have been spurred to action.” For this reason, prophecy had to be “replaced with the calculation of probabilities” — a calculation that depends on the postulate that “the future will be like the past.”57 We are seeking a future that is not like the past. Prophecy opens the possibility of the impossible beyond calculation and prediction. Prophecy can connect the partially open future with the overdetermined present to suggest strategies for redirection and recreation. Kirk Fuoss argues that performance always involves contestation; if he is right, the same would apply to prophetic performances.58 Prophetic performances may contribute to the development of what Valerie Rohy understands as queer non-causality: a temporality “whose beginnings are found in the future.”59 Rohy describes the way becoming gay may involve a circular causality that escapes linear historical determination. In the case of Oscar Wilde, for instance, “Wilde’s homosexuality both causes the gay male identity of the future and is caused by it.”60 Such alternative causalities may break the effort-reward, promise-fault couplings of determinate historical time — of debt time. If we become what is not yet possible, our becoming escapes the past’s determination without negating it. Queer performances that embody impossible futures may have the capacity to vivify and illuminate extant alternative imaginaries while challenging the “monopoly of actuality” exercised by debt time, especially if these queer prophetic performances distinguish themselves from capital not by their freedom from it61 but by practicing in relation to it. Performance can reeducate our imaginations (our dreams) in ways that do not pretend — as attenuated or homonormative gay culture sometimes does — that no other economic order is possible. We need to relearn the connections between sexuality and the economic order that lesbian feminists and black feminists recognized from the very beginning.62 We must enter desire’s school for reeducation so we may learn to name the present for the sake of a redirected future. In order to change our futures (to make them no future for the time of financialized capitalism and hetero-same reproduction), we need — as I have argued — spatial and symbolic side-by-side relations, we need to learn the nature of our time (and times), and we need to create the worlds that we need to learn to want through institution-building and the generation of publics.

Transitions wars and revolution fails do not link – we agree a revolution would fail now but we think it should happen in the future and scenario analysis in debate is key to plan what a successful revolution in the future would look like.

#### Debate is a valuable pedagogical space for material analysis and scientific planning – our form of study uses historical synthesis to avoid error replication and catalyze a mass base transition.

Williams 18 [Carine, 7/30/18, “Why Black People Need Maoism in 2018”, *The Hampton Institute*, <http://www.hamptoninstitution.org/why-black-people-need-maoism.html#.XWwv7ZNKh0s> // KZaidi]

When they hear Maoism, many people think of China, Peru, and the Philippines. They picture peasants "surrounding the cities from the countryside." This is, of course, understandable, but a mistake. Maoism is not simply "everything that Mao did," or "everything that happened in China between 1949 and now." I have spent a great deal of my time writing working to dispel these sorts of myths, some peddled in an unprincipled fashion by anti-Maoists. Maoism is a living, breathing science. By science we mean something with universal principles that can be taken and applied by all who have a material interest in making revolution. In the United States, this is Black people, or the New Afrikan nation. It was not by accident that the original Black Panther Party (BPP) developed close relations with the revolutionary leadership of the People's Republic of China. Huey didn't go to China to play; he went to study and learn things that could be applied back home. Of course, he eventually degenerated in political line and practice, taking a right opportunist course along with Bobby Seale (always a centrist) and Elaine Brown (who guided the party, in his absence, into a mainstream political force that led into the arms of the Democratic Party). This opportunism in the highest expression of revolutionary sentiment, practice, and force in this country to date needs to be studied and ruthlessly criticized, yet we should be careful. We must place things in their historical context and ensure that we are able to divide one into two, meaning see the beneficial as well as the negative aspects of a thing but also realize that one aspect must be primary. The BPP was destroyed by a combination of factors: lack of a really scientific method of analysis and cohesive program of political education, failure to promote and apply the Marxist-Leninist principle of Democratic Centralism (debate inside the party, formation of a political line through this debate, and the upholding of this decision by all party members and organs), and a culture of liberalism that ended with comrades fighting comrades, thus opening the door for external factors (the FBI and other LE agencies) to play havoc and get cadre railroaded into prison and killed. We must study and learn all of these lessons, because when we develop another organization with the prestige, mass base, and power that the Panthers had, and we will, they will come for us all again. So, why do we need Maoism? Because we are against the most brutal, bloody, and vicious empire known to humankind. This country is looting and enslaving our class siblings all over the world. To overturn this order of things, to smash it and rebuild it in the interests of the revolutionary proletariat of the entire world, we must apply the synthesis of 200 years of systematic, organized class struggle, which is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism: the continuity of the revolutionary project that was Marxism-Leninism, with a rupture from the dogmatism and revisionism. Maoists do not uphold "Actually Existing Socialism" because a scientific analysis rooted in the principles laid down by the revolutionary movements and projects that gave us Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao would demonstrate that stealing food from Filipino fisherfolk, like the People's Republic of China (PRC) has been doing, is 100% non-Marxist. This is in disagreement with many Marxist-Leninist organizations today, which uphold these things and other imperialist depredations carried out under the faded red banner of China. The Maoist argument is that Marxist-Leninist terrain has been spent, and the 21st century must learn from Maoism. "You haven't seized state power yet!" others cry. Indeed, and there has never been a truly Maoist party that has initiated armed struggle in the imperialist metro poles. This doesn't mean that Maoist principles cannot be applied to these countries, this means that we must be ever more creative in our application and ever more disciplined in our party-building efforts. Party building in the USA requires the careful and thorough cultivation of a mass base. Tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of people must depend on and follow this party and participate in mass organizations before it can even begin to call itself a vanguard. This is what many who came out of the New Communist Movement of the mid-late 1970s failed to realize. The days of endless squabbling sects that fight over "mass bases" of a handful of other activists must be put to an end, and we must have a truly mass perspective. There is optimism in the spread of For the People (FTP) organizations and the development of the Organizing Committee for a Maoist Communist Party (MCP-OC) which has a more mass orientation and places primacy on the development of a class analysis and political line in the USA that is based in painstaking investigation and rooted in the aspirations and struggles of the most oppressed, along with a record of seeking to develop international solidarity and prison work. This, I believe, is the best hope for New Afrikan Maoists in the United States and I wholeheartedly encourage Black comrades to develop FTP-type organizations in their own communities under OC guidance. Even if this isn't done, at the very least studies in Maoism, studies in Maoist revolutions, and studies in Maoist theory are beneficial. After and during these studies, think about how it can be applied on your block and in your community. Learn about and be like Fred Hampton. Time is up for spinning our wheels; we must get together, unite on a principled and unshakeable basis, and mount a formidable resistance against decades and centuries-old oppression based in capitalism and white supremacy. I also encourage support and donation to the Hampton Institute as an invaluable resource in promoting revolutionary ideology and practice in the finest Marxist tradition.

#### The aff forwards a model of debate where iterative ballots over a season help us determine what a future communist world would look like – the ROB is to establish the conditions that makes revolution possible

Southall 10 (Nicholas Southall, doctoral student, University of Wollongong. “A Multitude of Possibilities: The Strategic Vision of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt,” School of History and Politics and Sociology, 2010, <http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4274&context=theses> )

Communism will remain associated with many of the horrors of the twentieth century. Yet the term is still used and understood as a name for the continuing proletarian revolution. A 'communist revival' in the English speaking academy has been indicated by the manifesto of students who occupied the University of California, Santa Cruz last year (Communique from an Absent Future: 2009) and the thousand participants in 2009 who paid to attend the 'Idea of Communism' conference at the University of London. My use of the word 'communism' is influenced and inspired by such actions as well as by Hardt and Negri's commitment to struggle over the meaning of words that have a powerful heritage and profound significance to the proletariat. Of course, the word is often linked to previous or existing 'communist states' and 'communist parties'. However, I agree with Hardt and Negri that these states and parties are generally manifestations of state capitalism rather than of communism. The errors and defeats of previous communist experiments and the dead hand of capitalist forms of praxes calling themselves communist continue to weigh heavily on the proletariat, making it difficult to speak of communism without 'corpses in our mouths'. Reclaiming and speaking of communism in a positive sense recognises the genuine communist heritage, which opposes authoritarianism, repression, war and terror, and illuminates its praxes of freedom, democracy, peace and love. Communism has been the enemy common to many neo-liberal, social democratic, fascist and socialist regimes and those identified as communists have been targeted and murdered in their millions during the global class war to break proletarian power. Today these communist victims and the victims of 'communism' 'haunt the world'. But communism is not a ghost, not even "a positive ghost" (Negri in Casarino and Negri: 2008: 200), rather communism is a movement, or movement of movements, and is very much alive. It is this living movement of movements that continues to threaten, challenge and go beyond capital. When I began this thesis, the world was at war and the people of the globe had been told: "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists" (Bush: 2003). As terror and fear spread, there were growing threats to 'academic freedom' and 'freedom of speech' from those backing the Bush administration's agenda. When Negri was invited to speak at an academic conference in Sydney in 2005 he was publicly denounced as a terrorist in and by major media outlets and the event was cancelled (see Chapter One). Just as Negri was dragged in I977 from the academy in a previous 'state of emergency', to rot in jail under preventative detention for alleged terrorist activity, in the current global 'war on terror' others have fallen victim to a continuous 'strategy of tension'. Dr Andrej Holm and Dr Matthias B were arrested in Berlin in 2007 under anti-terrorist laws and alleged by police to have written, in academic publications, 'phrases and key words' also used by a militant group and of being intellectually capable of authoring the group's 'sophisticated texts'. Liliany Oblando, a Colombian sociologist, was charged in 2008 with 'rebellion' and 'managing resources related to terrorist activities' while investigating right-wing death squads. Both within the academy and outside it, this is a dangerous time to choose the latter option of 'either with us or against us' and to challenge those who seek to silence dissent, curtail critical debate and label opponents of capital, war and repression as 'traitors' and 'terrorists', while they defend an established order that is in fact terroristic. Hardt and Negri (2004: 33) assert that today "the majority of political scientists are merely technicians working to resolve the quantative problems of maintaining order, and the rest wander the corridors from their universities to the courts of power, attempting to get the ear of the sovereign and whisper advice"- Negri has also argued that "it is more interesting and more useful to make revolution than to write about it" (quoted in Hardt: 2005b: 29). Yet Hardt and Negri (2009: 127) are interested in the kind of academic strategic investigations that have "been forged by professors and students who take their work outside the universities both to put their expertise at the service of the social movements and to enrich their research by learning from the movements and participating in the production of knowledge developed there". In order to learn from proletarian theory and practice, throughout this thesis I provide in-depth analysis of Hardt and Negri's writings and discussions about real world politics, while testing their ideas out on various case studies. The thesis maps the development of Hardt and Negri's thought by offering a historical analysis that locates their writings in relation to class struggle and provides contextual analyses of their key ideas. To avoid becoming fixated on the power of capital requires a focus on how the proletariat's agency is a constituent element of social processes. Helping me to resist becoming a technician of social order or an adviser to the sovereign, I embark on this project as an active militant involved in class struggle. Since "it is not feasible to keep the values that a researcher holds totally in check", Bryman (2004: 21) argues that a researcher's politics will influence a whole variety of presuppositions that in turn have implications for the conduct of the research. Accordingly, Mies (1993: 68) advocates a "conscious partiality" in conducting research, while Mitropoulos and Neilson (2005) argue against "the apparently objective space of an ivory tower-whose recourse to a de-politicisation of knowledge marks the concealment of a politics". Proletarian politics is compelled to an incessant process of polemic, critique and intervention in social relations (Thobum: 2002: 453) and my politics have, to a certain extent, determined and will determine, my choice of research areas, choice of method, the analysis and interpretation of data and the conclusions of the thesis. My work is strongly inï¬‚uenced by my values, beliefs, experiences and the methodological assumption that the proletariat must free itself by collectively breaking with capital- Assisting this process, I believe, requires a mode of enquiry that promotes proletarian subjectivities, constructed on the multitude's movements of self-valorisation. The role of the communist intellectual is to embark "on the project of co-research aimed at making the multitude. The intellectual is thus not 'out in front' to determine the movements of history or 'on the sidelines' to critique them but rather completely 'inside"' where strategic investigation can be "a form of militancy" (Hardt and Negri: 2009: H8, 125). Marx's conception of proletarian praxis, that is the relation of theory and practice, explains how change comes about as people act and learn by taking action. "Struggles are the great teachers" about social developments, the "engines of revolutionary theory" (Negri: 2005b: xiii) and Hardt and Negri (2009: I28) advocate the "strategic production of knowledge" through a variety of routes as an "active engagement with the production of subjectivity in order to transform reality, which ultimately involves the production of new truths". They use the ideas of Raniero Panzieri and Cornelius Castoriadis (in Hardt and Negri: 2009: 24) to explain that "although Marxism is born as sociology, the fundamental task is to translate that sociological perspective into not just political science but really the science of revolution" and "revolutionary research constantly has to follow and be redefined by the forms of social movements". Following this advice, I look to the social movements of the multitude, to a wide variety of praxis as well as to theory, to understand Hardt and Negri's strategic vision, interweaving communist hypotheses with the proletariat's multitudinous struggles.

### Part 4 is the Cold War

#### Communist organizing requires collective struggle and the establishment of centralized organization to inform both theory and practice.

Kuhn ‘18

[Gabriel, Austrian-born writer and translator living in Sweden. Among his book publications is “All Power to the Councils! A Documentary History of the German Revolution of 1918-1919”. March 2018. “Don't Mourn, Organize! Is Communism a Pipe Dream—or a Viable Future?” <https://brooklynrail.org/2018/03/field-notes/Dont-Morn-Organize-Is-Communism-a-Pipe-Dreamor-a-Viable-Future>] Pat

The forms of organization this requires must go further than the affinity group but stop short of the vanguard party. Affinity groups do not answer the demand for mass organizing that mass societies require. But neither do vanguard parties. They attempt to lead the masses, not organize them, and that’s a big difference. The party model might in general be insufficient for mass organizing today. The networks that movementism gave way to are perhaps more appropriate, but only if they can overcome the assumption that the looser the connections are, the better. This assumption is wrong. Loose connections might suit the needs of an ever more flexible market economy, but not of effective political organizing. To “have contacts” is not enough; you need to do something with them. And you need to stay committed to the projects you initiate. I will try to flesh this out by listing the aspects I consider most important in organizing today.

1. We need to leave sectarianism behind. The left is weak and each additional division weakens it further. In a 2011 article titled “Movement, Cadre, and the Dual Power,” Joel Olson made a simple, yet very important observation: “We believe that the old arguments between communists and anarchists are largely irrelevant today.” This must be our point of departure.

2. We need theory that is adapted to our times. It must overcome the false contradiction between “class struggle” and “cultural struggle.” There is a fruitful debate about a “new class politics” in the German-speaking world. Sebastian Friedrich, one of its main proponents, drew these conclusions in an article published by Counterpunch:

A new class politics does not relegate gender, race, and imperial legacy to issues that are supplementary to class relations. These issues, and the struggles they imply, are an integral part of class relations. In fact, feminist, anti-racist, and anti-colonial struggles are the base on which effective unified class struggles must be launched.… A new class politics must clarify where and how the specific experiences of workers based on gender, race, citizenship, and other factors converge. It must reveal the overlapping interests of workers as members of the class. This makes common struggles possible.

3. We must not rely on the “objective forces” identified by historical materialism. Subjective forces are important for change. It is easy to underestimate how much neoliberalism shapes the lives even of people opposed to it. In the Global North, political activism has become a leisure activity that people engage in or not, depending on their mood, the identity they are trying to create for themselves, or the road of “self-improvement” they have chosen. In almost all cases, it is secondary to professional careers and personal comforts. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to get anything done. There is nothing wrong with being “voluntaristic.” Radical change is dependent on people wanting radical change, no matter how much Marxists still insist on economic realities determining individual consciousness and, therefore, individuals’ capacity for political action. An organization’s efficiency relies on the individual qualities of its members, that is, responsibility, reliability, and accountability.

Making Things Concrete

If we want communism to be more than a pipe dream, we have to be willing to face reality, even if it confuses, challenges, or even frightens us. We cannot ignore struggles that refer to communist ideals, simply because they aren’t the struggles we’d like to see. If our enthusiasm for communism remains limited to lecture halls and conference rooms, it won’t be anything the powerful will lose sleep over.

The struggle that currently receives most attention among communists of all stripes in the Global North is the one in Kurdistan. In Rojava (Syrian Kurdistan), forces affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, PKK, have established a direct-democratic council system, based on the “democratic confederalism” conceived by the imprisoned PKK leader Abduallah Öcalan. Öcalan describes democratic confederalism as “a non-state political administration or a democracy without a state,” and cites Murray Bookchin’s “libertarian municipalism” as a major influence. There are people who celebrate this as a form of anarchism. But as an observant friend of mine noted, an anarchism that is imposed by a leader is a strange kind of anarchism. Besides, there are reports from the ground that challenge the libertarian narrative. The editors of Lower Class Magazine, an online project dedicated to “low budget underground journalism,” travel regularly to Kurdistan and have the following to say:

The Western left sees Rojava as the realization of a democracy “from below”: communes, councils, a confederation; no hierarchies, no party, a spontaneous mass project. Anarchists and “libertarian” communists wax lyrically about the dawn of a direct-democratic Shangri-La. […] Yes, the change in Rojava comes “from below. It is based on the power of the people, no doubt. Communes and councils are at the heart of decision-making, that is true. But as essential is the following: None of this would be happening if it wasn’t for a vanguard leading the way. The revolution in Rojava proves that Leninist vanguardism is correct, not false.

Another European journalist visiting the region noted that the cadres of the People’s Protection Units, YPG, relate to the councils of Rojava in the same way the Bolshevists related to the councils of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, there are troubling pragmatic alliances, which have included collaboration with the U.S. military. Yet the people behind Rojava Solidarity NYC sum up the situation well:

Rojava, an autonomous region in Northern Syrian, the largest revolutionary territory of the 21st century, has projected anarchist and communist ideas to the forefront of political discourse and into the pragmatic and messy reality of everyday life. … From communal relationships to the councils and self-defense units, we can assess numerous potential routes by which we can create liberated communities at home, while learning from their possibilities and pitfalls.

Rojava won’t be the answer to our problems. No single struggle ever is. But the developments in Rojava challenge us to discuss real-life strategies for radical change. It is easy to focus on shortcomings, but if this is all we ever do, where will it get us?

Councils are essential for communist projects. Their power, which is based on the direct involvement and active participation of the masses, is curtailed as soon as political interest groups, such as parties, assume control over them. This conviction separated historical council communism, represented by figures such as Otto Rühle and Anton Pannekoek, from the Bolsheviks. Pannekoek wrote:

The councils are no government; not even the most central councils bear a governmental character. For they have no means to impose their will upon the masses; they have no organs of power. All social power is vested in the hands of the workers themselves.

Unless we want the transition to communism to entail enormous human suffering (which would be utterly absurd), we need to consider the fact that billions of people will need to be fed, sheltered, nursed, provided with access to clean water, and so forth. To produce according to the needs of the people rather than the needs of profit requires enormous efforts in planning, especially if current living standards are to be upheld. (Living standards don’t equal standards of consumption—the standards of consumption in the Global North cannot and should not be upheld, since they are unsustainable.) Furthermore, we must collectively dispose of industrial and nuclear waste, weapons of mass destruction, and ticking environmental bombs. None of this is possible without a level of centralization, no matter how visceral the reactions are that the word might provoke in some circles.

Only a council system can combine the centralization required by the complexity of modern societies with participative democracy. Centralization requires formal structures. Participative democracy requires these structures to be transparent. They need to be bottom-up rather than top-down, and delegates must be directly responsible to their constituencies. The council system is the only administrative framework to provide that.

Romanticizing particular struggles rarely does any good, no matter how council-based they are—or claim to be. If radicals in the Global North fail to address concerns with respect to struggles in the Global South, it is not respectful but condescending. To escape into the intellectual poverty of cultural relativism doesn’t help. We can only evolve from critical engagement. But real-life struggles are our starting point. It makes little sense to demand struggles for communism if we shy away from engaging with the ones that exist. Arundhati Roy put it simply after spending time with Maoist Naxalites in the forests of central India, an experience she chronicled in the book Walking with the Comrades. She said: “I went in because I wanted to tell the story of who these people are.” This informs revolutionary theory and, in turn, improves revolutionary practice. Most importantly, it is crucial for saving communist struggles from betraying their own principles. Everyone can watch failure unfold. The challenge lies in helping to prevent it.

#### 1] Counter-hegemony –

Williams and Srnicek ‘15

[Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, fastest Leftists in the West. City University London. 2015. “Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work”.] Pat

Today it appears that the greatest amount of effort is needed to achieve the smallest degree of change. Millions march against the Iraq War, yet it goes ahead as planned. Hundreds of thousands protest austerity, but unprecedented budget cuts continue. Repeated student protests, occupations and riots struggle against rises in tuition fees, but they continue their inexorable advance. Around the world, people set up protest camps and mobilise against economic inequality, but the gap between the rich and the poor keeps growing. From the alter-globalisation struggles of the late 1990s, through the antiwar and ecological coalitions of the early 2000s, and into the new student uprisings and Occupy movements since 2008, a common pattern emerges: resistance struggles rise rapidly, mobilise increasingly large numbers of people, and yet fade away only to be replaced by a renewed sense of apathy, melancholy and defeat. Despite the desires of millions for a better world, the effects of these movements prove minimal.

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE PROTEST

Failure permeates this cycle of struggles, and as a result, many of the tactics on the contemporary left have taken on a ritualistic nature, laden with a heavy dose of fatalism. The dominant tactics – protesting, marching, occupying, and various other forms of direct action – have become part of a well-established narrative, with the people and the police each playing their assigned roles. The limits of these actions are particularly visible in those brief moments when the script changes. As one activist puts it, of a protest at the 2001 Summit of the Americas:

“On April 20, the first day of the demonstrations, we marched in our thousands towards the fence, behind which 34 heads of state had gathered to hammer out a hemispheric trade deal. Under a hail of catapult-launched teddy bears, activists dressed in black quickly removed the fence’s supports with bolt cutters and pulled it down with grapples as onlookers cheered them on. For a brief moment, nothing stood between us and the convention centre. We scrambled atop the toppled fence, but for the most part we went no further, as if our intention all along had been simply to replace the state’s chain-link and concrete barrier with a human one of our own making.”

We see here the symbolic and ritualistic nature of the actions, combined with the thrill of having done something – but with a deep uncertainty that appears at the first break with the expected narrative. The role of dutiful protestor had given these activists no indication of what to do when the barriers fell. Spectacular political confrontations like the Stop the War marches, the now-familiar melees against the G20 or World Trade Organization and the rousing scenes of democracy in Occupy Wall Street all give the appearance of being highly significant, as if something were genuinely at stake. Yet nothing changed, and long-term victories were traded for a simple registration of discontent.

To outside observers, it is often not even clear what the movements want, beyond expressing a generalised discontent with the world. The contemporary protest has become a melange of wild and varied demands. The 2009 G20 summit in London, for instance, featured protestors marching for issues that spanned from grandiose anti-capitalist stipulations to modest goals centred on more local issues. When demands can be discerned at all, they usually fail to articulate anything substantial. They are often nothing more than empty slogans – as meaningful as calling for world peace. In more recent struggles, the very idea of making demands has been questioned. The Occupy movement infamously struggled to articulate meaningful goals, worried that anything too substantial would be divisive. And a broad range of student occupations across the Western world has taken up the mantra of ‘no demands’ under the misguided belief that demanding nothing is a radical act.

When asked what the ultimate upshot of these actions has been, participants differ between admitting to a general sense of futility and pointing to the radicalisation of those who took part. If we look at protests today as an exercise in public awareness, they appear to have had mixed success at best. Their messages are mangled by an unsympathetic media smitten by images of property destruction – assuming that the media even acknowledges a form of contention that has become increasingly repetitive and boring. Some argue that, rather than trying to achieve a certain end, these movements, protests and occupations in fact exist only for their own sake. The aim in this case is to achieve a certain transformation of the participants, and create a space outside of the usual operations of power. While there is a degree of truth to this, things like protest camps tend to remain ephemeral, small-scale and ultimately unable to challenge the larger structures of the neoliberal economic system. This is politics transmuted into pastime – politics-as-drug-experience, perhaps – rather than anything capable of transforming society. Such protests are registered only in the minds of their participants, bypassing any transformation of social structures. While these efforts at radicalisation and awareness-raising are undoubtedly important to some degree, there still remains the question of exactly when these sequences might pay off. Is there a point at which a critical mass of consciousness-raising will be ready for action? Protests can build connections, encourage hope and remind people of their power. Yet, beyond these transient feelings, politics still demands the exercise of that power, lest these affective bonds go to waste. If we will not act after one of the largest crises of capitalism, then when?

#### 2] Aesthetic Transgressions fail –

Shaviro ‘15

[Steven, English at Wayne State University. Written lots of cool books on capitalism. 2015. “No Speed Limit – Three Essays on Accelerationism”.] Pat

In Hardt and Negri’s expanded redefinition of “subsumption,” it isn’t just labor that is subsumed by capital, but all aspects of personal and social life. This means that everything in life must now be seen as a kind of labor: we are still working even when we consume and even when we are asleep. Affects and feelings, linguistic abilities, modes of cooperation, forms of know-how and of explicit knowledge, expressions of desire: all these are appropriated and turned into sources of surplus value. We have moved from a situation of extrinsic exploitation, in which capital subordinated labor and subjectivity to its purposes, to a situation of intrinsic exploitation, in which capital directly incorporates labor and subjectivity within its own processes.

This means that labor, subjectivity, and social life are no longer “outside” capital and antagonistic to it. Rather, they are immediately produced as parts of it. They cannot resist the depredations of capital, because they are themselves already functions of capital. This is what leads us to speak of such things as “social capital,” “cultural capital,” and “human capital”: as if our knowledge, our abilities, our beliefs, and our desires had only instrumental value and needed to be invested. Everything we live and do, everything we experience, is quickly reduced to the status of “dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.” Under a regime of real subsumption, every living person is transformed into a capital stock that must not lie fallow but has to be profitably invested. The individual is assumed—and indeed compelled—to be, as Foucault puts it, “an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of [themselves] himself . . . being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings.”

This process of real subsumption is the key to our globalized network society. Everything without exception is subordinated to an economic logic, an economic rationality. Everything must be measured, and made commensurable, through the mediation of some sort of “universal equivalent”: money or information. Real subsumption is facilitated by—but also provides the impetus for—the revolutionization of computing and communication technologies over the course of the past several decades. Today we live in a digital world, a world of financial derivatives and big data. Virtual reality supplements and enhances physical, “face-to-face” reality, rather than being, as we used to naively think, opposed to it. Neoliberalism is not just the ideology or belief system of this form of capitalism. It is also, more importantly, the concrete way in which the system works. It is an actual set of practices and institutions. It provides both a calculus for judging human actions and a mechanism for inciting and directing those actions.

What does this mean for aesthetics? The process of real subsumption requires the valuation and evaluation of everything, even of that which is spectral, epiphenomenal, and without value. Real subsumption leaves no aspect of life uncolonized. It endeavors to capture and to put to work even those things that are uneconomical, or “not part of the mechanism.” Affect and inner experience are not exempt from this process of subsumption, appropriation, and extraction of a surplus. For capitalism now seeks to expropriate surplus value not just from labor narrowly considered but from leisure as well, not just from “private property” but also from what the Autonomists call “the common,” and not just from palpable things but also from feelings and moods and subjective states. Everything must be marketed and made subject to competition. Everything must be identified as a “brand.”

This leads to a veritable Kantian Antinomy of the aesthetic under late capitalism. Aesthetics must be simultaneously promoted beyond all measure, and yet reduced to nothing. On the one hand, as Fredric Jameson noted long ago:

“Aesthetic production today has become integrated into commodity production generally: the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes), at ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation.”

Or as the free-market economist Virginia Postrel cheerily and uncritically puts the same argument, “aesthetics, or styling, has become an accepted unique selling point, on a global basis.” In today’s capitalism everything is aestheticized, and all values are ultimately aesthetic ones.

Yet at the same time, this ubiquitous aestheticization is also a radical extirpation of the aesthetic. It’s not just that sensations and feelings are trivialized when they are packaged for sale and indexed upon the most minute variations of product lines; it’s also that the two most crucial qualities of the aesthetic according to Kant—that it is disinterested and that it is noncognitive—are made to vanish or are explained away. Aesthetic sensations and feelings are no longer disinterested, because they have been recast as markers of personal identity: revealed preferences, brands, lifestyle markers, objects of adoration by fans. Aesthetic sensations and feelings are also ruthlessly cognized: for it is only insofar as they are known and objectively described, or transformed into data, that they can be exploited as forms of labor and marketed as fresh experiences and exciting lifestyle choices. Ironically, then, it is precisely in a time when the “affective labor” is privileged over material production, and when marketing is increasingly concerned with impalpable commodities like moods, experiences, and “atmospheres,” that we enter into the regime of a fully “cognitive capitalism,” guided by the findings of cognitive psychology and cognitive philosophy of mind.

It is under the conditions of real subsumption that accelerationism first becomes a possible aesthetic strategy. It is a fairly recent invention. In the twentieth century, before the developments that I have recounted, the most vibrant art was all about transgression. Modernist artists sought to shatter taboos, to scandalize audiences, and to pass beyond the limits of bourgeois “good taste.” From Stravinsky to the Dadaists, from Bataille to the makers of Deep Throat, and from Charlie Parker to Elvis to Guns N’ Roses, the aim was always to stun audiences, by pushing things further than they had ever been pushed before. Offensiveness was a measure of success. Transgression was simply and axiomatically taken to be subversive.

But this is no longer the case today. Neoliberalism has no problem with excess. Far from being subversive, transgression today is entirely normative. Nobody is really offended by Marilyn Manson or Quentin Tarantino. Every supposedly “transgressive” act or representation expands the field of capital investment. It opens up new territories to appropriate, and jump-starts new processes from which to extract surplus value. What else could happen, at a time when leisure and enjoyment have themselves become forms of labor? Business and marketing practices today are increasingly focused upon novelty and innovation. More rapid turnover is one way to combat what Marx called the tendential fall of the rate of profit. Far from being subversive or oppositional, transgression is the actual motor of capitalist expansion today: the way that it renews itself in orgies of “creative destruction.”

In other words, political economy today is driven by resonating loops of positive feedback. Finance operates according to a transgressive cultural logic of manic innovation and ever-ramifying metalevels of self-referential abstraction. This easily reaches the point where financial derivatives, for instance, float in a hyperspace of pure contingency, free of indexical relation, as Elie Ayache shows, to any “underlying” whatsoever. At the same time that it floats off into digital abstraction, however, neoliberalism also operates directly on our bodies. Data are extracted from everything that we feel and think do. These data are appropriated and consolidated, and then packaged and sold back to us.

In such a climate, nothing is more prized than excess. The further out you go, the more there is to accumulate and capitalize upon. Everything is organized in terms of thresholds, intensities, and modulations. As Robin James puts it, “for the neoliberal subject, the point of life is to ‘push it to the limit,’ closing in ever more narrowly on the point of diminishing returns . . . The neoliberal subject has an insatiable appetite for more and more novel differences.” The point is always to reach “the edge of burnout”: to pursue a line of intensification and yet to be able to pull back from this edge, treating it as an investment and recuperating the intensity as profit. As James says, “privileged people get to lead the most intense lives, lives of maximized (individual and social) investment and maximized return.”

This is why transgression no longer works as a subversive aesthetic strategy. Or more precisely, transgression works all too well as a strategy for amassing both “cultural capital” and actual capital, and thereby it misses what I have been calling the spectrality and epiphenomenality of the aesthetic. Transgression is now fully incorporated into the logic of political economy. It testifies to the way that, as Hardt and Negri say, under the regime of real subsumption, “there is nothing, no ‘naked life,’ no external standpoint . . . there is no longer an ‘outside’ to power.” Where transgressive modernist art sought to break free from social constraints, and thereby to attain some radical Outside, accelerationist art remains entirely immanent, modulating its intensities in place. As James says, in neoliberal art “life’s intensity, like a sine wave, closes in on a limit without ever reaching it.”

The deadlock of accelerationism as a political strategy has much to do with the aesthetic failure of transgression. They are really two sides of the same process. The acceleration of capitalism itself in the decades since 1980 has become a classic example of how we must be careful what we wish for—because we just might get it. As a result of the neoliberal “reforms” of the past thirty-five years or so, the full savagery of capitalism has been unleashed, no longer held back by the checks and balances of financial regulation and social welfare. At the same time, what Boltanski and Chiapello call the “new spirit of capitalism” successfully took up the subjective demands of the 1960s and 1970s and made them its own. Neoliberalism now offers us things like personal autonomy, sexual freedom, and individual “self-realization”; though of course, these often take on the sinister form of precarity, insecurity, and continual pressure to perform. Neoliberal capitalism today lures us with the prospect of living, in James’s words, “the most intense lives, lives of maximized (individual and social) investment and maximized return,” while at the same time it privatizes, expropriates, and extracts a surplus from everything in sight.

In other words, the problem with accelerationism as a political strategy has to do with the fact that—like it or not—we are all accelerationists now. It has become increasingly clear that crises and contradictions do not lead to the demise of capitalism. Rather, they actually work to promote and advance capitalism, by providing it with its fuel. Crises do not endanger the capitalist order; rather, they are occasions for the dramas of “creative destruction” by means of which, phoenix-like, capitalism repeatedly renews itself. We are all caught within this loop. And accelerationism in philosophy or political economy offers us, at best, an exacerbated awareness of how we are trapped.

#### 3] Self Sufficiency gets coopted –

Dean ‘16

[Jodi, Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Erasmus Professor of the Humanities in the Faculty of Philosophy at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, *Crowds and Party*, Verso (Brookyn, NY): 2016, p. 33-35] rc/pat

Silva’s account of a transition to adulthood marked not by “entry into social groups and institutions but rather the explicit rejection of them” provides a poignant rejoinder to Sennett.19 One man tells Silva that “the hardest part about being an adult is finding a real fucking job.” People aren’t lacking a narrative for adulthood. Capitalism presents adulthood as an individual project. For the young working people Silva interviewed, individualism equals dignity. They tell heroic tales of self-sufficiency, turning inward as they manage feelings of betrayal, accept flexibility and flux, and buttress their sense of being utterly alone. Although the dependencies of the welfare state and corporate bureaucracy that Lasch associates with the therapeutic sensibility have been dismantled and replaced by a harsher, more competitive capitalism, therapeutic language remains the vocabulary through which to account for individual success and failure.

Instead of the jettisoning of the past that Lasch and Sennett observe, Silva’s subjects embrace the past as they narrate the challenges they have had to overcome in order to realize their authentic selves. Understood in terms of familial and personal experiences, the past provides an open field of explanations for hardship, failure, and the diminution of what they see as success. Unlike Lasch’s empty narcissists, Silva’s young adults have lives of inner purpose—surviving on their own in a context where the odds are against them. They struggle with illness and battle with addiction. They overcome dysfunctional families and past relationships. The fight to survive is the key feature of an identity imagined as dignified and heroic because it has to produce itself by itself.

Silva’s young adults point to an imaginary identity beyond the rugged individualist and the narcissistic gamesman: the survivor. Unlike the symbolic identity of institutions (the place from which one sees oneself as acting), imaginary identity is the image one adopts of oneself. Since so many of Silva’s informants feel they have had to do it all by themselves, in contexts of poverty and diminishing opportunity, they take the fact of their survival as the morally significant fact: making it on one’s own is what bestows dignity. Some of the white survivors Silva interviews resent “socialists” like US President Barack Obama for trying to take away their last best thing, the special something that is all they have left, namely, the dignity they have because they are completely self-reliant. The black survivors, too, narrate their experiences in individual rather than collective terms. They, too, seek to hold on to the only person they can count on—themselves. Betrayed by schools, the labor market, and the government, Silva’s working-class informants in general feel “completely alone, responsible for their own fates and dependent on outside help at their peril.” For them, surviving means internalizing the painful lesson that “being an adult means trusting no one by yourself.”

What Sennett lauded as a repudiation of dependence appears in Silva’s account as a deep skepticism of solidarity. Reliance on other people requires acknowledging one’s insufficiency as an individual, one’s inability to survive alone. The hostility to the needy expressed by some of Silva informants suggests a defense against their own need. Hostility lets them displace their need onto others and thereby shore up a fragile and impossible individuality. Having learned that they can’t rely on anyone, these young working-class adults try to numb their sense of betrayal by affirming the worst cultural scripts of individualism, personal responsibility, and self-reliance, hardening themselves to the world around them. Their hostility to various forms of government intervention, particularly affirmative action, makes them ideal supports for neoliberal capitalism. Incidentally, those of us who write and circulate critical exposés—stories of governmental corruption, university failure, and corporate malfeasance—may not be helping our cause. We may be affirming what some in the working class already know to be true: they are being betrayed.

Likewise countering Sennett’s happy rendering of the repudiation of dependence, Carrie M. Lane’s research on white-collar technology workers in Dallas situates the emphasis on individual responsibility in the context of wide-scale layoffs and unemployment. Insecurity is a primary feature of the lives of these tech workers. Most alternate through contract positions of varying duration, unemployment, and self-employment. Lane notes how the technology workers she interviewed embrace a “career management” ideology that casts “insecurity as an empowering alternative to dependence on a single employer.” They construe loyalty as a thing of the past: since everyone is a victim of economic forces beyond their control, neither companies nor employees owe each other anything. Owners and workers both want to make money however they can. No one should expect a company to provide employment security or opportunities for professional development. Such an expectation indicates a childish attitude of dependence. According to one executive, “To give my employees job security would be to disempower them and relieve them of the responsibility that they need to feel for their own success.” Laid-off and job-seeking tech workers adopt the corresponding individualist mindset: success comes from doing “whatever it takes” to get by, get through, get that next job.

The survivor is a compelling identity under conditions of extreme competition and inequality. It validates surviving by any means necessary. Survival is its own reward. Setbacks and lapses are new challenges, ultimately greater proof of one’s survival skills. Popular culture provides a wide array of survivors to emulate (as well as examples of those who have been unable to get themselves together): from Katniss in The Hunger Games, to the winners of uncountable reality television competitions, to games like Day Z and Fallout, to victims of illness or crime. Emotions of anger, suspicion, and defensiveness are justified—one can rely only on oneself—and potentially useful as the psychic weapons that can help maintain an impossible individuality.

The survivor is a figure not for a culture of narcissism but for a psychotic culture. If narcissistic culture is characterized by the dislodging of symbolic authority, psychotic culture is characterized by its foreclosure. In brief, Lacan defines psychosis in terms of the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father or master signifier. That the master signifier is foreclosed means that it does not stabilize meaning; the signifying chain lacks an anchor that can hold it together. The generalized loss of symbolic power impacts the subject such that he feels this now-missing authority to be all the closer, more powerful, and intrusive. In a psychotic culture, then, mistrust is pervasive, all-consuming. Each confronts power directly and alone.

To compensate for the missing symbolic authority, the psychotic turns to the imaginary. He positions himself in relation to a “captivating image,” perhaps of one whom he hates, admires, or fears. This imaginary other would then be a rival to defeat or destroy. The psychotic may try to mimic those around him, particularly as he grapples with intense fear and aggression. And he may also become captivated by an image of himself. Here the psychotic imagines himself not as anyone or anything in particular: I am my own worst enemy. What matters is persistence, survival, for its own sake.

Whether rendered as caring for oneself or looking out for number one, the captivating image of the individual enjoins its own maintenance. For all their emphases on self-reliance, Silva’s interviewees nonetheless want to be recognized. They want someone else to hear their stories, validate what they’ve accomplished. Communicative capitalism supplies the necessary infrastructure, the crowd of many who might view, like, or share.

Lasch’s diagnosis of cultural narcissism has lost its currency: communicative capitalist society is less narcissistic than it is psychotic, oriented via an alliance of the imaginary and the Real in the wake of the loss of the symbolic. Rather than enduring a surfeit of expertise, we are awash in multiple, conflicting, irreconcilable opinions. Unable ever fully to determine which is right, we have to decide for ourselves. Algorithms and data render social science obsolete. Power is backed by neither authority nor knowledge, appearing and manifesting instead as violence. Therapy offers neither justice nor cure. Militarized policing—arrests and shootings without accountability or cause—takes the place of the former; a wide array of pharmaceuticals takes the place of the latter, and when these fail there is depression, incapacity, addiction, and suicide. Finally, precarity, competition, and social networks supplant the antagonistic cooperation Lasch associates with the internal life of the corporation. Aggressive impulses need not be repressed under a veneer of cheerfulness. In the extreme inequality of communicative capitalism, multiple channels encourage their expression: hate and outrage circulate easily in affective networks.

Nevertheless, Lasch’s attention to the forces that simultaneously command and undermine individuality remains compelling for the way it opens up the growing weight placed on the individual form. As subsequent sociological research attests, the interiorization of this weight continues to unburden corporations and the state from social responsibilities, intensifying concentration on already stressed individuals. An effect has been the diminishing of expectations such that survival itself becomes the achievement worth celebrating.

### Part 5 is Preempts

#### Impact Framing – Revolutionary Suicide is the risk we must take to abolish Racial Capitalism – there is no damnation worse than the current system.

Pinkard 13 [2013, Lynice Pinkard, “Revolutionary Suicide: Risking Everything to Transform Society and Live Fully”, Tikkun 2013 Volume 28, Number 4: 31-41, http://tikkun.dukejournals.org/content/28/4/31.full]

I’d like to present an alternative to conventional identity politics, one that requires that we understand the way that capitalism itself has grown out of a very particular kind of identity politics — white supremacy — aimed at securing “special benefits” for one group of people. It is not sufficient to speak only of identities of race, class, and gender. I believe we must also speak of identities in relation to domination. To what extent does any one of us identify with the forces of domination and participate in relations that reinforce that domination and the exploitation that goes with it? In what ways and to what extent are we wedded to our own upward mobility, financial security, good reputation, and ability to “win friends and influence people” in positions of power? Or conversely, do we identify (not wish to identify or pretend to identify but actually identify by putting our lives on the line) with efforts to reverse patterns of domination, empower people on the margins (even when we are not on the margins ourselves), and seek healthy, sustainable relations? When we consider our identities in relation to domination, we realize the manifold ways in which we have structured our lives and desires in support of the very economic and social system that is dominating us. To shake free of this cycle, we need to embrace a radical break from business as usual. We need to commit revolutionary suicide. By this I mean not the killing of our bodies but the destruction of our attachments to security, status, wealth, and power. These attachments prevent us from becoming spiritually and politically alive. They prevent us from changing the violent structure of the society in which we live. Revolutionary suicide means living out our commitments, even when that means risking death. When Huey Percy Newton, the cofounder of the Black Panther Party, called us to “revolutionary suicide,” it appears that he was making the same appeal as Jesus of Nazareth, who admonished, “Those who seek to save their lives will lose them, and those who lose their lives for the sake of [the planet] will save them.” Essentially, both movement founders are saying the same thing. Salvation is not an individual matter. It entails saving, delivering, rescuing an entire civilization. This cannot be just another day at the bargain counter. The salvation of an entire planet requires a total risk of everything — of you, of me, of unyielding people everywhere, for all time. This is what revolutionary suicide is. The cost of revolutionary change is people’s willingness to pay with their own lives. This is what Rachel Corrie knew when she, determined to prevent a Palestinian home in Rafah from being demolished, refused to move and was killed by an Israeli army bulldozer in the Gaza Strip. This is what Daniel Ellsberg knew when he made public the Pentagon Papers. It’s what Oscar Schindler knew when he rescued over 1,100 Jews from Nazi concentration camps, what subversive Hutus knew when they risked their lives to rescue Tutsis in the Rwandan genocide. This call may sound extreme at first, but an unflinching look at the structure of our society reveals why nothing less is enough. Before returning to the question of revolutionary suicide and what it might mean in each of our lives, let’s look at what we’re up against.

#### Governance is good and inevitable.

Renaux 19 [Valarie, 5/29/19, Philosophy. Writing on Marxism, eliminativism in philosophy of mind and metaethics, suffering(-focused ethics), and philosophical pessimism, “Marxism and the State”, <https://medium.com/@valarierenaux/marxism-and-the-state-eeb6ceca4515> //GBS Majeed & Jacobs]

Here, perhaps, is a manifestation of one of the foundational flaws in anarchist theory: its veneration of human nature (as it understands it, at least). Bakunin claims that “human nature” makes corruption and counterrevolutionary, anti-proletarian actions inevitable once a section of the working class seizes power. Why does he say this? What proof does he have? In a word, none. ‘Human nature’ as it is predominantly understood is nothing more than our proclivity towards certain actions within specific material contexts, which are subject to change — and thus so are the proclivities. Even if it could be established that capitalist society generates some kind of fundamental proclivity among the working class and even humanity as a whole to act out of greed, selfishness and short-termism (which is practically speaking impossible to prove anyway), it does not follow that this is inherent and unavoidable in the human animal itself as some kind of abstract template for our actions. By elevating the human creature itself to the level of pseudoreligious ideology, anarchism practises exactly the same form of ideologising that the bourgeoisie and the feudal and even patrician classes before them have long done. Marxism rightfully does not concern itself with such sophistry, with such meaningless protestations against placing power in the hands of the working class and its party. “During its lifetime the working class state will continually evolve up to the point that it finally withers away: the nature of social organisation, of human association, will radically change according to the development of technology and the forces of production, and man’s nature will be equally subject to deep alterations always moving away more and more from the beast of burden and slave which he was.”²⁴ This links closely with the final problem with Bakunin and the anarchists’ position on the state that we shall address here. Bakunin describes his fictitious once-proletarians as “look[ing] down” on the workers from the “governing heights of the State.” What does this mean? It means, in one clear sense, that Bakunin sees the state as something distinct from society, something separate from and alien to it, something parasitical and detached from the productive elements of society. But never has or will the state be something “imposed on society from without,”²⁵ something that stands above class distinctions, or gendered divisions in labour, or religious and secular ideology alike, or indeed anything else. The state is not separate from society; it is society, it is the inevitable and necessary product of a society as it exists at certain stages of historical-economic development, and without it, the society would be reduced to utter barbarism, open, ubiquitous kinetic violence, a marked decline in living standards for all, both relative and actual, a severe degradation in the quality of goods, and so on. In a word, you would have social and even civilisational collapse. This is because ‘society’ is not one harmonious thing; rather, it is the aggregate of all human social and economic relations, and these humans and their socioeconomic situations are anything but uniform. Without the state, with its monopoly on violence and its often dominant role in the cultural narrative, these contradictions — irreconcilable contradictions — would be acted out through direct, physical struggle. There are but two outcomes to such a thing: either a state will be formed anew, but only after an extended period of acute crisis dealing devastating damage to all, and so the destruction of the state (and more precisely the failure to build a new state to replace it) was not only pointless but entirely undesirable to the society, or, worse still, the construction of a new state, for whatever reason, fails, and the population collapses into a regressed state of primitive-communism. History would have been reset. There does not exist some dichotomy of society and state, only the existence of a society with a state, and if a society has a state, it needs a state, and simply seeking its destruction is entirely misguided and naïve, springing from a fundamental misconstruing of what the state is, what society is, and what one’s own material interests are. In a word, it is idealism — it is utopianism. It should be evident from the rest of this essay that the state is not something that can be simply dismantled and destroyed by force and violence; it can only “wither away” when the material conditions are right. To attempt to act outside of history as anarchism does is dangerous to all, never mind arrogant and individualist. It is a position in absolute opposition to the interests of the workers. General remarks on the nature of class dictatorship Mao Zedong famously taught that “[p]olitical power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”²⁶ Truly there is no more succinct and accurate description of politics — which is, at its core, the systematised control and regulation of violence — than this. Anything that suggests otherwise is an obfuscation; such obfuscations serve an agenda, and all but always one of the ruling class. The class destined to vanquish class society itself has no need of the propaganda and sophistry of traditional class rule; we can, and should, state in no uncertain terms that the only rational expression of our political interests is a class dictatorship won and maintained by force of arms for the exclusive benefit of our economic class at the expense of all others. The proletarian state represents, for the first time in history, the material and thus socio-political interests of the vast majority of the people. From this simple fact an equally simple conclusion can be drawn: namely, that both when the working class is barred from power and when it holds it, it is only benefited by a frank and open understanding of the thoroughly class- and violence-based nature of state power. In the former situation, the proletarian is aware that society is organised upon his exploitation and that he has no material interest whatsoever in the preservation of the status quo, while in the latter, he sees that he should not be afraid of ‘tyranny,’ that the bourgeoisie are justly and necessarily without power and rights, and that should they be granted them, they will use them to undermine and overthrow the régime and institute terror of a previously unprecedented scale and harshness. In short, the stripping away of the pretensions and illusions of the state represent, and reinforce, heightened class consciousness. In terms of our interests, power is best manifested naked, and as proletarians, we have, unequivocally, a side on which to fall in the class struggle. As such, our political goals must include as a matter of necessity the seizure of state power. The lessons of the Paris Commune and of all revolutionary ventures throughout history is that the revolution that does not seize state power is thwarted. Never, in all human history, has this truth been countered. What’s more, the nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat is that it is exactly that: a dictatorship. All true communists know this to be so, and do not fear, but relish the opportunities that lie in controlling the state. The state is a tool — a weapon, and no weapon has morals in and of itself. Only when the sword is taken up and brandished in anger does it become an instrument of war and not simply a sliver of metal. The state is much the same. The anarchic view of the state is one of an enemy of ‘the people,’ one that is inherently undesirable and wretched, whoever straddles it. Marxism is not so naïve, not so utopian: the state serves her masters, and serves them well; when the working class reigns, the state delivers its Terror upon the counterrevolution and with it the socialist society can progress, in time, to a communist one. Without it, the working class movement is simply destroyed the instance the bourgeois reaction can organise itself anew. Marxism is scientific socialism; it is not utopianism. It would be false and misleading to claim that Marxism has ends; rather, it merely has analyses and observations. In their scientific study of the march of history and the intricacies of the capitalistic mode of production, the Marxists have discovered and laid out the series of progressions and laws that, hopefully, this essay has allowed the reader to understand, if only in brief: that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle,”²⁷ that the working class must smash the existing bourgeois state, that the working class must create its own state to serve its own needs, and that this state must inevitably be the last stage of the state in all history. Marxism does not talk of that which is impossible; only that which is possible. The triumphs of the working class movement during the twentieth century prove this to be so, but much that was won has since been lost. As the Great Acceleration of the Anthropocene deepens, the need to place power in the hands of the workers intensifies with every passing week towards a singularly apocalyptic zenith. In the past, Marxists have rightly given the slogan socialism or barbarism?, but today, that is no longer sufficient: today, it it must be socialism or extinction? In matters of war and revolution, liberalism’s façades are quick to fall from the eyes of the class conscious worker. The premier and central issue of working class politics must be the conquest of state power. Only then can we change the world.