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#### Elon Musk is the first step toward DIY space – state programs hinder this by making space exploration oriented against DIY and towards capital-extensivity – Carson 19:

Carson, Kevin. 8th Feb 2019. “Ephemeralization for Post-Capitalist Space Exploration.” <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/kevin-carson-ephemeralization-for-post-capitalist-space-exploration>

**At a time when government space programs like NASA’s seem to be in permanent retrenchment — shifting to a strategy focused on uncrewed probes, fighting to maintain an “International Space Station” that looks like a joke compared to Golden Age science fiction visions of giant cartwheel stations in orbit — a lot of people see Elon Musk’s private space venture SpaceX as a sign of hope** that we have a future in space after all. SpaceX has had considerable success developing reusable spacecraft and orbital boosters — the Dragon spacecraft has resupplied the International Space Station — and has achieved a controlled descent with tail landing by a Falcon booster. Starting with the first Dragon spacecraft to Mars, Musk has committed himself to regular Mars runs every 26 months, using low costvehicles10. The goal is an affordable and predictable cargo route, in order to encourage Mars-related research and industry. **Essentially what we’re saying is we’re establishing a cargo route to Mars. It’s a regular cargo route. You can count on it. It’s going happen every 26 months. Like a train leaving the station.** And if scientists around the world know that they can count on that, and it’s going to be inexpensive, relatively speaking compared to anything in the past, then they will plan accordingly and come up with a lot of great experiments. According to Tim Fernholz, This is akin to the way that massive container ships ply the oceans to bring components between far-flung factories. Planners don’t rely on a specific ship to make it across the Pacific at a discrete time, but instead imagine the ships as a kind of conveyor belt, constantly in motion, and plan their operations around the idea that goods are constantly in motion between two given sites. The first mission will be followed by several Dragons in 2020, and in 2022 a larger number carrying the infrastructure for a permanent base on Mars — laying the groundwork for the planned transportation of human passengers in 2024. Speaking of which, SpaceX’s Mars project — which envisions humans living in a permanent base constructed there — is easily the most famous. **But if state-directed space exploration fizzled out, let’s not accept, as the alternative, human expansion into the solar system under the direction of corporations and billionaire venture capitalists.** **Even now, there are all sorts of interesting space projects operating on relatively little capital, and taking advantage of cheap, ephemeral micro-manufacturing technology.** **Copenhagen Suborbitals, for example, is an amateur, crowdfunded spaceflight program based in Denmark11. They use a sea-based launch platform**. At the time of Aaronson’s 2012 article, the venture was “comprised of a coterie of 20-plus specialists determined to create the first homemade, manned spacecraft to go into suborbital flight.” **The estimated cost of such a mission is expected to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, eventually falling to $63,000 a shot. The project achieves enormous economies over government (and presumably corporate) bureaucracies by using off-the-shelf components whenever possible.** **One man’s kitchen sink valve is another rocket man’s missing component. A D.I.Y. spaceflight project can start with a good rummage at your local plumbing or hardware store**. With everyday,off-the-shelf products, the guys behind Copenhagen Suborbitals found cheaper solutions to expensive, complex systems.“Instead of trying to invent our own valve for instance, why not buy one that’s been produced maybe a million times,” explained Kristian. The peer-to-peer nature of the project means much faster turnaround times or iteration cycles — “OODA loops,” in the late Col. John Boyd’s words — than is possible in government or corporate bureaucracies. **Since Copenhagen Suborbitals is bereft of the red tape and regulations characteristic of federally or commercially funded spaceprojects, Kristian explained that his team can go from a revised sketch to an improved prototype, sometimes in less than five minutes.** That’s far quicker than NASA, of course, where he helped to design new moon rovers and co-authored the agency’s Human Integration Design Handbook. **As for their achievements, so far, their accomplishments are impressive: their solid-and-liquid-fuel rocket, the HEAT-1X, is the first “amateur” rocket flown with a payload of a full-size crash test dummy, and the first to perform a successful Main Engine Cut-Off, or MECO command, and the first launched from a “low budget” sea-based platform. It’s also the most powerful amateur rocket ever flown.** Since then, Copenhagen Suborbitals has tested the Sapphire (with improved guidance and maneuver systems), and has a Nexø I & II in the work. The Spica II, the rocket actually intended to send a live person into space, is expected to be tested.Bitnation — a transnational network created to organize a variety of non-state governance services using the Blockchain infrastructure — has created a Bitnation Space Agency. The Agency intends to be a coordination platform for open-source space efforts around the world, and has its own Five-Year Plan for crowdfunded technology development and space missions. Iman Mirbioki (“Bitnation Space Agency,” A Blog About Nothing Particular, June 2, 2015), who co-founded the venture with Susanne Tarkowski Tempelhof, estimates BSA will radically cheapenspaceflight by eliminating administrative overhead altogether (an 80% cost reduction by itself) as well as open-sourcing all technologies. **Tempelhof argues that corporate efforts like SpaceX are “just the beginning of democratizing the technology”; BSA will “take it further, not just make it accessible to people outside of the government, but also make it open source, and DIY friendly” The Agency’s Five Year Plan states a list of objectives:**

1. Create a decentralized and open-source space agency.
2. Research and develop new and better technology for space-travel/space-missions.
3. Develop new eco-friendly fuel for space vehicles. (Rocket fuel)
4. Develop a new generation of navigational systems, as the current GPS accuracy and maximum performance (speed and altitude) is limited due to enforced rules by the U.S military.
5. Create a cheaper technology and platform on an open source basis that enables those with limited budgets to reach space and/or do experiments in microgravity environments.
6. Develop new and cheaper space vehicles able of reaching LEO (Low Earth Orbit), GSO (Geostationary Orbit) and other celestial bodies like the Moon or asteroids.
7. Research alternative energy sources, mainly anti-matter trapped in the Earth’s magnetic field.
8. Research and develop technology for mining minerals and resources on other celestial bodies, like the Moon or asteroids.
9. Creating communication networks and datacenters in Earth orbit, beyond the reach of any state or regime to work toward totalimmunity and neutrality of the future IT-infrastructure.
10. Building fuel-depots and an international network based on virtual currencies for refueling of satellites and other space vehicles.
11. Doing research in the field of space-medicine and the effects of microgravity and cosmic radiation on living organisms.
12. Doing research on the effect of cosmic radiation on electronic components in order to develop new technology that is able to withstand the harsh environment of outer space.

The agenda of milestone projects in the Plan — including orbital satellite launches, moon shots, probes to near-earth asteroids and the deployment of a permanent space station by the end of 2020 — seems implausibly ambitious. But to be fair, even the fully and partly funded items at the top of the list (e.g. the BULLDOG rocket launch for deploying a payload in low-earth orbit is partly funded) are quite impressive. **Extrapolate the Copenhagen Suborbitals and BSA model far enough and you get something like Openshot, a fictional open source moon shot** in a short story by Craig DeLancey14. **The open source hardware spacecraft, the Stallman, was the product of a network of ten thousand volunteers worldwide — and it beat the big corporate players in a competition to be “the first non-governmental organization to put a person back on the moon.”** Cutter, leader of one of the corporate-funded teams, warned that “the Opensource Rocket Program will have a tremendously pernicious effect on humanity and human destiny by destroying the benefit of privatizing space exploration with an unscalable stunt.” And in the ultimate irony, the Stallman‘s crew rescued Cutter’s crew and repaired his disabled ship based on crowdsourced advice from the Openshot global network. **Once you’ve bootstrapped affordable orbital ferries, the addition of 3-D printers and other cheap, open-source micromanufacturing technologies that can be used to construct interplanetary craft in orbit or construct buildings on the surface of other worlds means that the path to the entire solar system lies open. The focus by both corporate ventures like SpaceX and open-source ventures like Copenhagen Suborbital and Bitnation Space Agency, on developing bottom-up infrastructures, one step at a time, arguably amounts to backtracking to a crossroads and getting on the path that space exploration should have taken in the first place. Jim Henley of Unqualified Offerings, in a comment at Pixel Scroll, noted that the Apollo project essentially destroyed the long-term future of the U.S. space program by diverting it away from the necessary work of building a sustainable technological ecosystem:** When I was but a lad, reading Golden Age Science Fiction like Grandpa used to write, because it was what was in the middle-school libraries back in the early 70s, I was struck by how late the dates for a first moon-landing were in stories from the 40s and 50s.I think the earliest date I encountered was maybe 1978, and some of them placed it in the 1990s. And I thought, “Hah! We already got there!”But the mistake those Campbell-era authors made was assuming we’d do it right. That first we’d build a real space station, and develop a sustainable outer-space infrastructure, and then when we went to the Moon, go for keeps.Instead we raced to get there with a few cans full o’ humans, hit some golf balls, planted a flag, and – bagged the whole business. By 1978, that earliest date for a moonshot I’d encountered in fiction, it was like we’d never been there at all. **Rather than organically building an entire technological ecosystem from the ground up, with infrastructures that were immediately useful in their own right at each stage, and then using the existing stage of infrastructure as the jumping off place to build the next stage when it became necessary for the needs of the existing system, Kennedy chose an arbitrary goal for its symbolic value — and the moon has since gone unvisited for forty years while the U.S. space program atrophied. Henley also, anticipating those who point to Elon Musk’s space ventures as a hopeful sign, points out that *“the private Mars foundation gang admits that their strategic plan way underestimates the likely cost.”* But it’s worth considering that the same blockbuster projects that diverted the space program from sustainability also tended to push it towards high-cost technologies beyond the reach of voluntary associations. The effect of the space program’s focus on blockbuster projects like Apollo was to push space travel technology towards extreme capital-intensiveness, and away from the kinds of modular, granular, multi-purpose and reusable building blocks that could evolve into a sustainable technological ecosystem. Corporate space efforts like Musk’s are a first, intermediate step towards developing an affordable, sustainable infrastructure for exploring and developing outer space. And projects like Copenhagen Suborbital and Bitnation Space Agency are completing the evolution by relying entirely on open-source hardware, and replacing high-overhead managerial bureaucracies with peer-network governance. Things look genuinely optimistic for the future of space exploration and human expansion into the solar system. The reason for hopefulness doesn’t lie with the state; and with luck, maybe it won’t lie with Elon Musk for much longer either.**

#### Anarchist revolutions are fragile; they need space apart, space to grow strong – and the process of reading the kritik is one of creating revolutionary spaces in literal, actual space – Bevensee:

Bevensee, Emmi. No Date. “Anarchists Need Space Because We’re Fighting in All Directions.” <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emmi-bevensee-anarchists-need-space-because-we-re-fighting-in-all-directions>

**Space travel throws the entire game board up in the air. The first and most obvious way is that it makes the available places to build much more numerous.** **The notion that anarchists could have our own spaceships and be exploring and setting up shop on distant rocks might seem absurd now, but it’s an eventuality in time. The technology will continue getting cheaper. We will steal and reverse engineer.** The radicals will go to space and when we get there, we will find places with no life on them that we’re can’t introduce microbiomes and decimate and **we will be able to practice our ways of being without having to pry the space back from the landlords capitalists and state thugs. Or if there are signs of life, because anarchists actually care about deeply rooted ethics, we’ll be thoughtful and considerate about what our presence could mean. We need to play to our strengths.** We should try to avoid war not just because it is fundamentally terrible, but because we’re not well suited for it. Guerilla insurrection we can do, but the losses are extreme. Because we’ll never have the monopoly on brutality we should try to go somewhere where we’re not bothering anyone and can more or less do our own thing. We would obviously still need to be able to defend ourselves but we can completely disentangle ourselves from the imperial geopolitical games of earth. To those ends, we should avoid trying to militaristically seize territories whenever possible because it sucks and again we suck at it**. Assuming colonies will get set up on every rock within humanities ever expanding sphere of reach, we shouldn’t just keep to ourselves. We can do our thing and infiltrate and agitate and challenge everywhere we are but the vastness of space gives us more room to be ourselves.** **We can deter a lot of threats by just being far enough out that we are perceived as a non-threat and that travel costs make attacking us less appealing anyways**. It works similarly with politics. Rather than playing the endless tug-of-war with reform and direct action we can follow our instincts and just leave the whole thing alone. **We can actually put our ideas into practice without the constant sabotage of state political repression and counterproductive liberal progressivism. Obviously anarchist ideas, practices, and victories often make it into the mainstream of society but nonetheless we are often a movement in the margins. This isn’t a defeatist view either. It’s just because the truly nuanced struggle for freedom is always going to be, in a sense, opposed to the prevailing order. That’s why we need to carve out our spaces here on earth, but if we can find them out there, it would be even better. The typical lefty retort to something like this is to compare the inherent homesteading attitude of these ideas to homesteading as it was practiced by colonists on earth. To be clear, the homesteader movement in the U.S. and most other places is deeply entrenched in the violence of indigenous dispossession and outright genocide. But what makes it bad isn’t the desire to move and to explore. Remember, those very same indigenous people also moved and explored depending on the timescale at play. What makes it bad is the murder and dispossession.** **With space colonization it’s a very different situation because the vast majority of places we would go will be completely lifeless. We will not be murdering or dispossessing anyone. In that sense the entire paradigm of colonial extraction is mis-played. So while the explorer mindset is horrifying for brutalist conquistadors, for nerdy anarchist scientists deeply rooted in a desire not to harm, it’s a very different situation.** Aside from issues of defensibility and minimizing the need for defensive violence, there’s also a range of other practical issues. **For example, if we can scrape together some rock hoppers we can ethically harvest materials from asteroids to develop and sustain our societies. No slave labor. No deforestation. No ecocide**. We can build research labs unencumbered by the fascist nationalism and capitalism in our present society that massively throttle progress. We can have ecosystems of testing that allow us to try out a wide range of anarchist approaches to existence. **The love of space and the love of anarchism are themselves related in the degree to which they provide habitable environments to the other. Much like anarchists, earth itself faces existential risks from all sides.** **Whether climate change or the boogey-man of unaligned AI, the human race faces massive threats to continuity. Humans will go to space and it’s up to us to decide what that looks like. For anarcho-transhumanists specifically, we know that the existential risks facing humanity will require us to dramatically shift our notions of what being human means at a core level.** We need to make ourselves into swarming, stigmergic networks of interconnected minds. We need to technologically, pharmacologically, emotionally, and intellectually widen the bridges between us, increase our abilities, and decrease our needs. **We need to develop what consciousness can be and hack ourselves to be able to meet the challenges we face**. For climate change we need to change what our bodies need and what conditions we can live under. For AI we need to grow alongside it if we hope to maintain any of what makes being human special and meaningful. Our adaptations to both AI and climate X-risks aid our ability to go to space and our ability to blossom once there while simultaneously cultivating our adaptive resilience as a weapon for positive change. Changing what it means to be human is a part of changing what we see as possible in terms of our anarchist visions**. One important piece of changing what it means to be human is changing where we associate being human with.** For those of us who know that we stand in the lineage that hopes to create paths not just to survive, but to radically thrive in space and a transhumanist world, these are the exciting questions. **We know that we want and need space and are more than anything just excited to build and dream. We are here for the gritty details. How can we steal or build ships to mine asteroids? How will we terraform in a way that promotes non-hierarchical societies of exchange and mutual-aid? To what extent can we cultivate connections that would give us access to the closed source patent world of space-tech monopolies that we need to liberate? What do we need to learn now to survive then? How will we hold up against the sheer expanse of space? What vegetables would grow best on a long-distance space flight? How could we network our minds to catalyze our problem solving abilities? Should we settle-down or stay on the move? In the anarchist struggle we get tired of fighting battles in all directions at once.** **When you get tired, I encourage you to take some space and notice the feeling it gives you. Respite and recharging. A revitalization and centering of our vision and faculties. The playful curiosity is born again anew. When we follow that curiosity we often find something amazing hidden in its path. Our eyes get big and glittery with awe. This is a tiny shard of what we want. Space gives us a chance to transform the struggle into a joyous militancy of hope capable of exponentiating our goals. And if we don’t do it... we all die anyways. So we might as well try our damndest to do it and do it radically. Besides building our own better world and salvaging this one though, who but us will fight the authoritarians and space capitalists andprevent them from expanding their sphere of havoc?**

#### The alternative is an anarchist space program making us space pirates. Revolution on earth is doomed. We don’t need to solve—we need to dream.– Debord 20:

Debord, Syzygy. 2020 “Another Galaxy for Another Life.” <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/syzygy-debord-another-galaxy-for-another-life>

Closed Doors Brings Open Minds **Life on this planet being, at best, an utter bore and, at worst, entirely grotesque** — **there remains to open-minded, irresponsible, thrill-seeking pro-revolutionaries only to disregard the government, build our own spaceships, and establish outer-space autonomous communities.** The world of Tomorrowland is already yesterday with the totality of capitalism complete. **If the socialistic alternatives couldn’t defeat the capitalist system in its earliest stages, what hope is there in the present? Or worse, how much longer must one wait for the material conditions for a revolution to be appropriate? Accepting the existing order in one way or another is absurd. What is needed is an alternative to the alternative.** **A program that begins with the rejection of the spectacle’s permanence and holds no definitive end.** An alternative that yields to individualist self-determination in place of concessions to reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries. **The only alternative possible: autonomous astronauts. “It’s easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism,”** so says some benign theorist. **But! We have no need to imagine either if we leave this planet. Let the capitalists fret over their sacred private property.** Let the Earth cowards cling to their faith of monetary riches. Let these Terran revelers keep their third world, third rate, third class slum known as “America.” **They can have this wretched heap they are so fond of, their patriotic submission**. They can stay behind and suffocate on the noxious fumes of pollution while battling yet another carnivorous disease. **Let them enjoy their skies cluttered by ugly fucking buildings and their repugnant light pollution that asphyxiates the night. Such archaisms are of no use to us. We won’t even give a minute of our life in the hope that the multitude will suddenly become aware and take off! If the gravitationally oppressed are not ready to raise the launchpad, this is a problem of the gravitationally oppressed**.[[1]](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/syzygy-debord-another-galaxy-for-another-life#fn1) **Let us begin by detailing why we have abandoned the socialist alternative on Earth. Assuming even a poor understanding of dialectics, with capitalism serving as the thesis and the socialistic tree as the antithesis — the synthesis is always a reinforced spirit of capitalism**. Perhaps in some instances the abuses of the capitalist system against the working class lessen, but overall, **the socialist and communist antitheses only serve as mere corrections and additives to the initial thesis of capitalism. Nothing truly changes.** Not even in what you feel. **In our hearts, we all know Earth will not be saved.** Every revolt is cut off from its mode of success in advance. The empire squats solidly upon its own immunity! **However, this does not mean the proposed systems in space will necessarily fail. What will a socialistic community look like without imperialism imposing on self-determination? What will anarchistic communities look like when freed of the threat of state violence? What objectives, what plans, what lives, what adventures are there when the oppressions are abandoned and we float away from the world; not disabled by disillusionment, but unburdened by it? No gods, no masters, no gravity** – no problem! lways Falling **Life on this planet is unsatisfactory. Yet we are not resigned to it. We refuse to be fooled. We fear nothing: being misunderstood, being criticized, being labelled ‘jokers’ or ‘insane’, suffering, life or death – nothing. We are neither dreamers nor idealists nor unrealistic…** The AAA is an attitude of reaction, defiance, and distrust. A distrust of the illusory philosophies at the level of the naïve, a distrust of unctuous and sonorous morals… No galaxy is obscure… So as not to be overloaded with rhetoric or cloying sincerity, the astronaut’s message is no less a song in which emotion’s modesty dismisses fine transports. When a spider flings itself from a fixed point down into its consequences, it continually sees before it an empty space in which it can find no foothold, however much it stretches. And yet, it finds corners and crevices to build its place of rest, its source of nourishment. So it is with the AAA; before us is continually an empty space, and we are propelled by the conditions that lie behind us. **What is going to happen? What will the future bring? I do not know, I offer no presentiment. Those who consider our goals impossible to achieve will necessarily find our methods impossible to think.** **Trapped in the false permanency and ahistoricism of the spectacle, these “realistic” pro-revolutionaries are quick to assure our naivety and imploring failure. But why not fail? Is the guarantee of dying from boredom recourse from the risk of dying from spaghettification?** Perhaps knowing there is no future is our greatest freedom. Waiting With The Coffins Under Heaven **The AAA is not a strand of Posadism and does not share their helpless hopes of communistic Alien salvation or global collapse. Their yearning is the same as the pious Christians, waiting for Christ’s return and direction to a better place in a better time.** The lathe of heaven does not exist. It must be built. Nor does the AAA urge a resignation to one’s docile fate on this planet. **However much it hurts to hope for the impossible, to imagine a future we don’t believe in (the Earth being saved, Global revolution, etc.), what matters is the strength we feel every time we don’t bow our heads, every time we destroy the false idols of civilization, every time our eyes meet those of our comrades, every time that our hands set fire to the symbols of Power**. **In those moments we don’t ask ourselves: ‘Will we win? Will we lose?’ In those moments we just fight. Even if we have no future on this planet, we can still find life on it today**. One does not have to return to sleep after the alarm clock rings. **Most importantly, we are not advocating a definitive plan for leaving this planet or for what ought to be done in space. It is left to the self-determination of individuals and unions to decide what is appropriate and ideal for them. The accent is placed not on the content of a choice proposed, but the fact of choosing.** **Thus, the AAA decision is a decision to decide no longer (that is, the free activity of space without geography would be betrayed if it is subordinated to some conception beforehand.)** As I could sit here and lament about Stanford Toruses, O’Neill Cylinders, and my frothy daydreams of surgically implanting bonsai trees into lungs and dining at souvlaki space stations, but why burden this manuscript with frivolities? **Better to go out without constraint later, when day is done, to perfect the design – grown greater in the uncertain twilight of mere dream – in that inward moment that turns upon itself, yet never repeats itself. The AAA is less of an organization than it is a network of individuals and unions cooperatively working toward a defined beginning – leaving this planet.** All that can come from the AAA are tools, not answers. Because as much as this reads as a manifesto, it isn’t one. It is an invitation. I’ll see you on the dark side of the moon… **Astronauts of all determinations, unite! We have a world to lose, but a universe to gain!**

#### The role of the ballot is fidelity to the truth – dedication to a shared horizon is liberatory and space is the best horizon of all, Dean 19:

Dean, Jodi. Comrade: An essay on political belonging. Verso, 2019. // LHP BT + LHP PS

The idea that comrades are those who belong to the same side of a political struggle leads to the fourth thesis: **The** relation between comrades is mediated by **fidelity to a** truth**;** practices **of comradeship** materialize **this** fidelity**. The “same side” points to the truth comrades are faithful to—the political truth that unites them**—**and the fidelity with which they work to realize this truth in the world.** “Belonging” invites attention to the expectations, practices, and affects that being on the same side generates. The notions of truth and fidelity at work here come from Alain Badiou. In brief, **Badiou rejects the idea of truth as a proposition or judgment, arguing instead that** truth is a process**. The process begins with the eruption of something new, an event.** **Because an event changes the situation, breaks the confines of the given, it is undecidable in terms of the given; it is something entirely new**. Badiou argues that this undecidability “induces the appearance of a *subject* of the event.”[60](about:blank) **This subject isn’t the cause of the event. It’s an effect of or response to the event,** “the decision to *say* that the event has taken place.” Grammar might seduce us into rendering this subject as “I.” **We should** avoid this temptation and **recognize the subject** **as** designating an inflection point, **a response that extends the event.** **The decision that a truth has appeared, that an event has occurred, incites a process of verification**, the “infinite procedure of verification of the true,” **in** **what Badiou calls an “exercise of fidelity**.”[61](about:blank) **Fidelity is a working out and working through of the truth, an engagement with truth that extends out into and changes the world. We should recognize here the unavoidably collective dimension of fidelity: in the political field, verification is a struggle of the many.** Peter Hallward draws out some implications of Badiou’s conception of truth. First, it is subjective. Those faithful to an evental truth involve themselves in working it out, exploring its consequences.[62](about:blank) Second, fidelity is not blind faith; it is rigorous engagement unconcerned with individual personality and incorporated into the body of truth that it generates. Hallward writes:Fidelity is, by definition, ex-centric, directed outward, beyond the limits of a merely personal integrity. To be faithful to an evental implication always means to abandon oneself, rigorously, to the unfolding of its consequences. **Fidelity implies that, if there is truth, it can be only cruelly indifferent to the private as such.** **Every truth involves a kind of anti-privatization, a subjective collectivization. In truth, “I” matter only insofar as I am subsumed by the impersonal vector of truth—say, the political organization, or the scientific research program.**[**63**](about:blank) **The truth process builds a new body**. This body of truth is a collective formed to “work for the consequences of the new” and this work, this collective, disciplines and subsumes the faithful.[64](about:blank)Third, collectivity does not imply uniformity. The infinite procedure of verification incorporates multiple experiments, enactments, and effects.Badiou writes, “An organization lies at the intersection between an Idea and an event. However, this intersection only exists as process, whose immediate subject is the political militant.”[65](about:blank) We should amend this statement by replacing *militant* with *comrade*. Comrade highlights the “discipline of the event,” the way that political fidelity cannot be exercised by a solitary individual—hence, the Marxist-Leninist emphasis on the unity of theory and practice, the barren incapacity of each alone. Comrade also affirms the self-abandonment accompanying fidelity to a truth: its vector, its unfolding, is indifferent to my personal experiences and inclinations. For communists, the process of truth has a body and that body is the party, in both its historical and formal sense. Already in *Theory of the Subject*, Badiou recognizes the necessity of a political body, the party as the “subject-support of all politics.”[66](about:blank) He writes:The party is the body of politics, in the strict sense. The fact that there is a body by no means guarantees that there is a subject … But for there to be a subject, for a subject to be found, there must be the support of a body.[67](about:blank) **As a figure of political belonging, the comrade is a faithful response to the evental rupture of crowds and movements, to the egalitarian discharge that erupts from the force of the many where they don’t belong, to the movement of the people as the subject of politics.**[**68**](about:blank) **Comrades demonstrate fidelity through political work; through concerted, disciplined engagement. Their practical political work extends the truth of the emancipatory egalitarian struggle of the oppressed into the world.** Amending Badiou (by drawing from his earlier work), we can say that the comrade is not a faithful subject but a political relation faithful to the divided people as the subject of emancipatory egalitarian politics.[69](about:blank) **For us to see the revolutionary people as the subject in the struggles of the oppressed, for their subject to be found, we must be comrades.** In *Ninotchka*, Nina Ivanova Yakushova can’t tell who her comrades are by looking at them. The party has told her who to look for, but she has to ask. After Iranoff identifies himself, Yakushova tells him her name and the name and position of the party comrade who authorized her visit. Iranoff introduces Buljanoff and Kopalski. Yakushova addresses each as comrade. But it’s not the address that makes them all comrades. They are comrades because they are members of the same party. **The party is the organized body of truth that mediates their relationship. This mediation makes clear what is expected of comrades—disciplined, faithful work.** Iranoff, Buljanoff, and Kopalski have not been doing the work expected of comrades, which is why Moscow sent Yakushova to oversee them in Paris. That Kopalski says they would have greeted her with flowers demonstrates their *embourgeoisment*, the degeneration of their sense of comradeship. But they are all there for work. Gendered identity and hierarchy don’t mediate relations between comrades. The practices of fidelity to a political truth, the work done toward building that truth in the world, do. The solidarity of comrades in political struggle arises out of the intertwining of truth, practice, and party. It’s not reducible to any of these alone. **Comrades are not simply those who believe in the same truth—as in, for example, the idea of communism. Their fidelity to a certain truth is manifested in practical work.** Work for the realization of a political truth brings people into comradely relation. **But carrying out similar tasks in fidelity to the same truth isn’t sufficient for comradeship. The work must be in common; no one is a comrade on their own. Practices of comradeship are coordinated, organized. The party is the organization out of which comradeship emerges and that comrade relations produce. It concentrates comradeship even as comradeship exceeds it.**

## Case

#### 1] Their claims about subjectivity appeal to no external standard and have no true impacts – ask yourself WHY does it matter for movements HOW does affect your ballot story, and WHAT does it mean for them to win their theory of subject. Even if you think that matters here are reasons they are wrong:

#### A] Labor is just being exploited by capital interests – facebook and tech companies have overwhelming capital – there is no path to liberation that’s not structural change – sure they have material data but that’s only important insofar the material foundations of their company which is material capitalism

#### B] They are wrong at the level of subjectivity – things like exhaustion miss the fundamental change of subjectivity we need is a collective we – only the alterative can fix subjectivity like that

#### 2] Exhaustion turn – both of our theories say that capitalism kills subjectivity and has bad impacts, only the K method of resistance can solve – the only real world solution to depression is by trying to make yourself feel better and create movements – their advocacy just means that we sit around and absolutely nothing

#### Semiocap misdiagnoses the problem—the problem is not the inability of the individual to be truly individual, it is the individual as a form of subjectivity itself.

Dean, Jodi. October 10, 2016. “**Collective Desire And The Pathology Of The Individual, Part 1 (Jodi Dean).”**  https://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/

An **interesting strand of contemporary theory designates the specificity of capitalism with the qualifier “cognitive**.”[[1]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn1) I do not write under this term, although I am influenced by theorists who do insofar as they also highlight communication. Franco **Berardi, for example, observes that “cognitive labor is essentially a labor communication**, that is to say communication put to work.”[[2]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn2) While communication encompasses a wide array of waged and non-waged activities expropriated for and exploited by contemporary capitalism, **the term “cognitive capitalism” feels to me like an academic version of the hacker dream of leaving the meat. It gives away too much**. **The term accepts the neoliberal claim for a knowledge society wherein workers are primarily** creative workers or a kind of “**cognitariat**.” It’s not surprising, then, to find those interested in contemporary knowledge management emphasizing the convergence between capitalist management gurus like Peter Drucker and Marxists Antonio Negri and Paulo Virno.[[3]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn3) In a way**, the term “cognitive capitalism” makes the world appear smarter than it is**, **as if intelligence replaced manufacturing when in fact manufacturing was pushed out of some countries and onto others in the search for ever cheaper labor**, **when factory work was becoming all the more brutal and massified even if less visible**.[[4]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn4) **Further, the term cognitive capitalism implies that affective labor is something new. This obscures rather than acknowledges the long histories of women’s affective labor and the struggles around attempts to enclose it in the home and harness it for capital**.[[5]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn5) **Finally, “cognitive capitalism” overplays immateriality even as it brings materiality, meat, bones, and blood back in via the emphasis on brains.** And here **especially I am reluctant to embrace the term because of the ways its diagnoses, the pathologies it identifies, can be rendered functional for capita**l**: they can tell capital what it needs to fix. Workers too depressed? Try Zoloft!** Working so many hours that focus is impossible? Try Adderall! **Or, in a more recent configuration, one that is sinister in its playfulness: bored by your screen of spreadsheets and memos? Watch some cute kitty videos – these improve worker efficiency**![[6]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn6) **Rather than viewing contemporary capitalism as cognitive, I view it as communicative**.[[7]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn7) As Hardt and Negri write, “Communication is the form of capitalist production in which capital has succeeded in submitting society entirely and globally to its regime, suppressing all alternative paths.”[[8]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn8) Whether of affects, images, anxieties, or ideas, communication is the means of capitalist subsumption, the vehicle for its intensification and expansion. **My focus here is on one pathology associated with the capture and instrumentalization of our communicative capacities, that it to say, on what happens when our basic sociality serves as a primary means of capitalist expropriation, which it has since capitalism began. This pathology is the individual form of subjectivity**, **a form that emerges historically and is today the site of opposing dynamics, of pressures that simultaneously disperse, concentrate, and overburden individuality as personal singularity**. My discussion might be particular to the hyper-individualistic culture of the United States. In an overview of histories of the individual, the political theorist Steven Lukes describes differences among nineteenth century French, German, English, and American concepts of the individual, noting how the American version implied capitalism, liberal democracy, and the American Dream.[[9]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn9) I do not attend to these differences (and so may over generalize from an American situation, which may still be beneficial insofar as it sets out a kind of imperialist individuating). Rather, **I focus on the individual as a form like the commodity is a form. The commodity is a form for value. The individual is a form for subjectivity, indeed, a form endeavoring to abolish collective subjectivity by separating it into and containing it within individuated bodies and psych**es. C.B. MacPherson locates a “possessive individual” at the heart of the liberal theory of the seventeenth century which conceived the individual “as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them.”[[10]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn10) **For liberals like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke**, MacPherson argues, “**The human essence is freedom from dependence on the wills of others, and freedom is a function of possession**.”[[11]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn11) **This individual is not understood as part of something larger, as fundamentally interconnected with others, as dependent on relations to others human and nonhuman. Rather, it is a proprietor of capacities engaging other proprietors. This necessarily and unavoidably capitalistic orientation, fundamental not only to liberal understandings of property but also to the market and to contract**s, is crucial to MacPherson’s critique of liberalism. We should note its fundamental reflexivity: proprietorship relies on a series of separations and enclosures. **Capacities are separate from others as well as separate from the self or ego, which can thus enclose these capacities within its person**. Training, whether moral or technical, is then work on and for the self rather than part of collective reproduction for the common good. **Enclosed within the individual, capacities become so many objects available for exchange, and, as capitalism evolves and expands, for investment, stylization, and self-branding**. **Even as I treat the individual as pathology, I also consider how we are moving beyond the pathology of the individual form. The last couple of years have been tremendously exciting. People have come together in opposition to capital and its demands for cuts, austerity, and more and more money for the one percent. Critical analyses of our setting and diagnoses of the pathologies plaguing it need to be supplemented by attention to the ways people are already overcoming them, moving beyond them, expressing new or formerly repressed capacities**. **My tag for this beyond is “collective desire.”** My research in this direction is just beginning, still provisional and influx.[[12]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn12) The intuition I pursue here is that **recognizing the pathological nature of the individual form lets us see possibilities for emerging senses of and desires for collectivity. More precisely, rather than looking at drugs and mental illness as pathologies, we should consider the likelihood that the individual form itself is the pathology; drugs attempt to maintain it, keep it going. The individual, then, is pathological in the sense that the setting in which it functioned is passing away. So the problem is not that the extremes of a contemporary capitalism that has merged with the most fundamental components of communicativity is making us depressed, anxious, autistic, and distracted and so we need to find ways to preserve and protect our fragile individualities. Rather, depression, anxiety, autism, and hyperactivity signal the breakdown of a form that was always itself a problem, a mobilization of reflexivity, a turning inward, to break connection and weaken collective strength.** The setting that is passing away is bourgeois capitalism. I use “bourgeois capitalism” to indicate an economic form inclusive of industrial as well as post-industrial, communicative, capitalism; Keynesian as well as neoliberal approaches to the economy; and a vision of the subject as a free, rational, individual as well as the critique of the exclusivity of this vision. In bourgeois capitalism, the individual appears as a form of freedom even as it functions as that enclosure of the common that fragments, disperses, and diminishes that collective power capable of guaranteeing freedom. **As capitalism has intensified, so have the pressures for and on the individual. The individual is called on to express her opinion, speak for herself, get involved. She is told that she, all by herself, can make a difference – collective action, though, that’s off the table, either impossible or too repressive to constitute a real alternative. It is no wonder that communicative capitalism enjoins us to uniqueness, to specialization and specificity: we have to distinguish ourselves to get hired or, for most of us, to maintain the fantasy of something like a fair competition (it would be horrible to think that we went into enormous debt for nothing, that we put all the work into a proposal, design, or manuscript that had no chance). At the same time, this specialization supports marketers’ interests in ever more granular access to customers, police efforts to locate and track, and capital’s concern with preventing people from coalescing in common struggle**. **Once we acknowledge, however, that the individual form is not threatened but is the threat, not a form to be preserved but one whose dissolution points to emerging collectivity, then we can move beyond the diagnosis of the pathologies of what has already past and amplify alternative tendencies in the present**. *Alone Together* Sherry Turkle’s ethnography of people and machines explores “networked life and its effects intimacy and solitude, on identity and privacy.”[[13]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn13) Reporting on her interviews with teenagers, Turkle describes young people waiting for connection, fearful of abandonment, and dependent on immediate responses from others even to have feelings. For example, seventeen-year-old-Claudia has “happy feelings” as soon as she starts to text. Unlike a previous generation that might call someone to talk about feelings, when Claudia’s wants to have a feeling, she sends a text.[[14]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn14) Turkle also reports people’s anxieties about face-to-face interactions, expectations associated with the telephone, that is, speaking to another person in real time (205), and the multitasking that implants an uncertainty as to whether another is even paying attention. **Combined with pressures for immediate response and the knowledge that the “internet never forgets” insofar as it’s difficult for most of us to eliminate all traces of our digital identities after they’ve been uploaded, archived, and shared, our new intimacy with technology, she demonstrates, is affecting the kinds of selves we become. We experience solitude, privacy, connection, and others differently from how we did before. For Turkle, these new experiences are pathological**.[[15]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn15) Drawing from Erik Erikson’s work on personal identity, she argues that networked technologies inhibit the kind of separation necessary for maturation. Parents are always in reach, available, even if they are not actually present but themselves over-worked, distracted, and over-extended. **Young people do not learn how to be alone, how to reflect on their emotions in private. Fragile and dependent, they fail to develop that sense of who they are that they need to have “before” they “forge successful life partnershi**ps.”[[16]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn16) **Rather than inner-directed and autonomous (Turkle refers to David Riesman), the culture of mobile phones and instant messaging has raised other-directedness “to a higher power**.”[[17]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn17) The expectation of constant connectivity eliminates opportunities for solitude even as people are “increasingly insecure, isolated, and lonely.”[[18]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn18) Turkle concludes, “Loneliness is failed solitude. To experience solitude, you must be able to summon yourself by yourself; otherwise you will only know how to be lonely.”[[19]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn19) On the one hand, Turkle is surely right. There is nothing surprising in her account of contemporary “tethered selves.” From her diagnoses of narcissism (which in their gesture to what is arguably Freud’s most unreadable essay could be seen as indexing the fraught problematic of individuation) to her worries about the constant and even addictive character of networked communications, she repeats already well-known criticisms of teens and media. **On the other hand, the language Turkle employs when she speaks of solitude might signal something more than an updating of the critique of mass and teen culture for a networked age. She uses the second person– “you must be able to summon yourself by yourself”—and shifts from a descriptive to an imperative mode: “you must” if you are to know something besides how to be lonely. Turkle relies on this mode because she has described the reflective individual as threatened by networked technologies and she wants us to join her in defending the individual from this threat. Directly addressing the reader, she insists that the reflective individual be shored up (even as she rejects technologically mediated forms of this shoring up as themselves pathological). For Turkle, a self that is less bounded, more expansive, less separate, more connected, is immature, at risk of loneliness. It needs to form its identity, separate itself from others, and go through the stages of its becoming individual**. I should add here that what Turkle links to technology, Dany-Robert Dufour (in *The Art of Shrinking Heads*), has linked to the acceleration of the process of individuation more broadly, particularly in connection to the decline in symbolic efficiency or change in the structure of the symbolic.[[20]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn20) The contemporary subject, he says, is called upon to create itself.[[21]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn21) **Turkle’s interviewees describe themselves in ways that rub up against Turkle’s own concerns with separation and individuation. For example, a nurse, tired after eight hours at work and a second shift at home says that she logs onto Facebook and feels less alone. A college junior explains, “I feel that I am part of a larger thing, the Net, the Web. The world. It becomes a thing to me, a thing I am part of. And the people, too. I stop seeing them as individuals, really. They are part of this larger thing.”****[[22]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn22) The student’s words here remind me of a line from Felix Guattari in “The micropolitics of fascism”: “The collective engagement is at once the subject, the object and the expression. No longer is the individual always the reference point for the dominant significations.”****[[23]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn23) The college junior feels himself and others to be part of a larger collectivity such that viewing himself and others as separate, as individuals, makes no sense; it loses the connection that arises through their mutual engagement.** For Turkle, though, connectivity is so pathological that she depicts it biochemically, as an addiction. Her argument relies on Mihaly Csikscentmihalyi’s work on “flow.” Most references to flow are positive, descriptions of a desirable experience of focus, involvement, and immersion. Turkle’s, however, is critical: “In the flow state, you are able to act without self-consciousness” (as I will explore in a minute this absence of self-consciousness is an attribute crowds theorists also associate with being in a group, mass, or crowd). For Turkle, this acting without self-conscious is a problem because “you can have it when texting or e-mailing or during an evening on Facebook” (again, the use of the second person pronoun points to Turkle’s own anxiety, her attempt to implicate us in practices that are threatening and most be combatted).[[24]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn24) Melding game and life, that is, actual games like World of Warcraft, with email and Facebook, Turkle explains, “**When online life becomes your game, there are new complications. If lonely, you can find continual connection. But this may leave you more isolated, without real people around you. So you may return to the Internet for another hit of what feels like connection**.”[[25]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn25) She uses neurochemistry to justify the language of addiction: “Our neurochemical response to every ping and ring tone seems to be the one elicited by the ‘seeking’ drive, a deep motivation of the human psyche. Connectivity becomes a craving; when we receive a text or an e-mail, our nervous system responds by giving us a shot of dopamine. We are stimulated by connectivity itself. We learn to require it, even when it depletes us.”[[26]](http://jcrt.org/religioustheory/2016/10/10/collective-desire-and-the-pathology-of-the-individual-jodi-dean/" \l "_edn26) **What’s interesting in Turkle’s pathologizing treatment of connectivity is the way she blurs interaction with machines—phones, computers—with interactions with people. Our brains react to sounds by releasing—injecting—dopamine. But rather than this reaction being a valuable reinforcement of our connections with others, it is a dangerous stimulant that can deplete us. Would happy neurochemical responses to seeing people face-to-face be similarly suspect? Is the thrill of contact with others at a party, in a rally, at a concert, or in a crowd also at risk at becoming a craving insofar as such intense and demanding contact might also deplete us?**

#### A focus on discourse is an abandonment of real change – we must use a materialist focus to solve oppression Cloud ‘1:

#### (Dana L. Cloud, Associate Professor, Communication Studies UT Austin, “The Affirmative Masquerade,” American Communication Journal, Volume 4, Issue 3, Spring 2001, http://www.acjournal.org/holdings/vol4/iss3/special/cloud.htm)

At the very least, however, it is clear that **poststructuralist discourse theories have left behind** some of **historical materialism’s most valuable conceptual tools for** any **theoretical and critical practice that aims at informing practical, oppositional political activity on behalf of** historically exploited and **oppressed groups**. As Nancy Hartsock (1983, 1999) and many others have argued (see Ebert 1996; Stabile, 1997; Triece, 2000; Wood, 1999), **we need to retain concepts such as standpoint epistemology** (wherein truth standards are not absolute or universal but arise from the scholar’s alignment with the perspectives of particular classes and groups) **and fundamental, class-based interests** (as opposed to understanding class as just another discursively-produced identity). We need extra-discursive reality checks on ideological mystification and economic contextualization of discursive phenomena. Most importantly, **critical scholars bear the obligation to explain the origins and causes of exploitation and oppression in order** better **to inform the fight against them**.  In poststructuralist discourse theory, **the "retreat from class**" (Wood, 1999) **expresses an unwarranted pessimism about what can be accomplished in late capitalism with regard to** understanding and **transforming** system and **structure at the level of the economy and the state**. **It** substitutes meager cultural freedoms for macro-level social transformation even **as millions of people around the world feel the global reach of capitalism more deeply than ever before**. At the core of the issue is a debate across the humanities and social sciences with regard to whether we live in a "new economy," an allegedly postmodern, information-driven historical moment in which, it is argued, organized mass movements are no longer effective in making material demands of system and structure (Melucci, 1996). In suggesting that global capitalism has so innovated its strategies that there is no alternative to its discipline, arguments proclaiming "a new economy" risk inaccuracy, pessimism, and conservatism (see Cloud, in press). While a thoroughgoing summary is beyond the scope of this essay, there is a great deal of evidence against claims that capitalism has entered a new phase of extraordinary innovation, reach, and scope (see Hirst and Thompson, 1999).  Furthermore, both class polarization (see Mishel, Bernstein, and Schmitt, 2001) and the ideological and management strategies that contain class antagonism (see Cloud, 1998; Parker and Slaughter, 1994) still resemble their pre-postmodern counterparts. A recent report of the Economic Policy Institute concludes that in the 1990s, inequality between rich and poor in the U.S. (as well as around the world) continued to grow, in a context of rising worker productivity, a longer work week for most ordinary Americans, and continued high poverty rates.  Even as the real wage of the median CEO rose nearly 63 percent from 1989, to 1999, more than one in four U.S. workers lives at or below the poverty level. Among these workers, women are disproportionately represented, as are Black and Latino workers. (Notably, unionized workers earn nearly thirty percent more, on average, than non-unionized workers.) Meanwhile, Disney workers sewing t-shirts and other merchandise in Haiti earn 28 cents an hour. Disney CEO Michael Eisner made nearly six hundred million dollars in 1999--451,000 times the wage of the workers under his employ (Roesch, 1999). According to United Nations and World Bank sources, several trans-national corporations have assets larger than several countries combined. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Russian Federation have seen sharp economic decline, while assets of the world’s top three billionaires exceed the GNP of all of the least-developed countries and their combined population of 600 million people (Shawki and D’Amato, 2000, pp. 7-8).  **In this context of a real** (and clearly bipolar) **class divide in** late **capitalist society,** the postmodern party is a masquerade ball, in which theories claiming to offer ways toward emancipation and progressive critical practice in fact **encourage scholars** and/as activists **to abandon** any **commitment to crafting oppositional political blocs** with instrumental and perhaps revolutionary potential. Instead, on their arguments, we must recognize agency as an illusion of humanism and settle for playing with our identities in a mood of irony, excess, and profound skepticism. Marx and Engels’ critique of the Young Hegelians applies equally well to the postmodern discursive turn: "They are only fighting against ‘phrases.’ They forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world" (1976/1932, p. 41).  Of course, the study of "phrases" is important to the project of materialist critique in the field of rhetoric. The point, though, is to explain the connections between phrases on the one hand and economic interests and systems of oppression and exploitation on the other. Marxist ideology critique, understands that classes, motivated by class interest, produce rhetorics wittingly and unwittingly, successfully and unsuccessfully. Those rhetorics are strategically adapted to context and audience. Yet **Marxist theory is not naïve in** its **understanding** of intention or individual **agency**. Challenging individualist humanism, **Marxist** ideology **critics regard people as "products of circumstances**" (and changed people as products of changed circumstances; Marx, 1972b/1888, p. 144).  Within this understanding, **Marxist** ideology **critics can describe and evaluate cultural discourses** such as that of racism or sexism **as strategic and complex expressions of both their moment in history and of their class basis**. Further, this mode of critique seeks to explain both why and how social reality is fundamentally, systematically oppressive and exploitative, exploring not only the surface of discourses but also their often-complex and multi-vocal motivations and consequences. As Burke (1969/1950) notes, **Marxism is both a method of rhetorical criticism and a rhetorical formation** itself (pp. 109-110). There is no pretense of neutrality or assumption of transcendent position for the critic.  Teresa Ebert (1996) summarizes the purpose of materialist ideology critique:   Materialist critique is a mode of knowing that inquires into what is not said, into the silences and the suppressed or missing, in order to uncover the concealed operations of power and the socio-economic relations connecting the myriad details and representations of our lives. It shows that apparently disconnected zones of culture are in fact materially linked through the highly differentiated, mediated, and dispersed operation of a systematic logic of exploitation. In sum, materialist critique disrupts **‘what is’ to explain how social differences**--specifically gender, race, sexuality, and class--**have been systematically produced and continue to operate within regimes of exploitation, so that we can change them. It is the means for** producing transformative knowledges**.** (p. 7)