## K

#### Our thesis is that the collapse of capitalism is inevitable, it is a question of now or later: you should frame your decision through an anti-capitalist lens by centering the valorization of productivity that aff’s logic is founded upon.

Kuang 20 [Da Kuang and Changyi Huang are professors at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology, College of Marxism in Wuhan 430074, China. A Study of Marx’s Thought on the Speed of Capital Accumulation, Presented at the 2020 International Conference on Social Science, Economics and Education Research (SSEER 2020), Atlantic Press: Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research Volume 455, 8-22-21, amrita]

III. CONTEMPORARY ENLIGHTENMENT: **CAPITALISM IS BOUND TO DIE OUT IN THE LONG-TERM STAGNATION OF CAPITAL ACCUMULATION** As we all know, Marx and Engels reached a most important scientific conclusion in the Manifesto of the Communist Party: **the death of the bourgeoisie and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.** This is the famous “Two Necessities” principle of Marxism. If we study **Marx’s thought of the speed of capital accumulation, we will come to the conclusion that capitalism is bound to die out in the long-term stagnation of capital accumulation.** Wallerstein believes that **although the production for the purpose of pursuing profits has a history of thousands of years, this mode of production has never occupied a dominant position in these historical systems. Only capitalism regards the endless accumulation of profits as the fundamental feature of its own system**. Wallerstein pointed out that the capitalist system has been maintained for more than 500 years, and the fundamental policy of endless capital accumulation has been quite successful. However, **the historical stage based on this has come to an end, and the late capitalism is coming to an end.** Andrew Kleiman made **an empirical study on the change trend of American profit margin from 1929 to 2009. He believed that after the boom period of World War II, the capital profit margin of the whole economic system was indeed declining irreversibly.** Robert Brenner calculated the declining trend of manufacturing profit margin in the United States and Japan since the 1950s. Among them, **the average profit margin of manufacturing industry in the United States has more than doubled, and the average profit margin of manufacturing industry in Japan has more than tripled**. These empirical studies **confirm Marx’s idea that the rate of capital profit keeps falling and the rate of capital accumulation tends to stagnate.** The global financial crisis that broke out in 2007-2008 is the most serious crisis of capitalism since the great depression in the 1930s. **Although the crisis is presented in the form of finance, the underlying law is still “relative overproduction”, that is, trying to expand credit consumption to alleviate the contradiction between the expansion of production and the relative reduction of consumption capacity, accelerating the real estate and finance** The development of bubbles. But **this contradiction is only temporarily covered by bubbles, and after a long period of accumulation and fermentation, the crisis finally broke out**. After 10 years of evolution**, the capitalist world has not recovered from crisis and stagnation, but has expanded into a structural crisis of capitalism along the path of financial crisis → economic crisis → financial crisis → debt crisis.** At the same time, **contemporary capitalism also faces the absolute limit of capital accumulation caused by the crisis of population aging and ecological crisis**. According to statistics, in 2014, the total population of 28 countries in the EU was 508 million, of which 18.5% were aged over 65, 19.9% were aged between 50 and 64, and 38.4% were aged between 50 and 64. **The trend of population aging will inevitably lead to the extreme shortage of labor force, increase labor cost, and further reduce the profit margin of capital; and the ecological crisis will gradually become the same or even more serious problem as the economic crisis.** As the existing capital accumulation models all go bankrupt, **the speed of capital accumulation will inevitably further decline. The economic cycle theory of western mainstream economics interprets the capitalist economic crisis as a kind of normal economic fluctuation, and holds that capital can always overcome the crisis and stagnation, and then accelerate the accumulation again. This kind of circular movement, which only attributes capital accumulation to quantitative change, conceals a historical fact: the final result of the crisis and stagnation of capital accumulation is the qualitative change of capitalist ownership, which is an irreversible linear process**. Over the past 200 years, **the world economic crisis has occurred more than 20 times, some of which directly triggered the proletarian revolution**, some of which first broke out in war and then triggered the proletarian revolution. **For example,** the result of **the capitalist economic crisis in 1847 was the final explosion of the French Revolution in June;** The capitalist economic crisis of 1867-1868 first triggered the Franco Prussian War, and finally triggered the Paris Commune Revolution; the capitalist economic crisis of 1907-1908 first triggered the first World War, and finally triggered the October Revolution of Russia which opened a new era of human history in 1917; the capitalist economic crisis of 1929-1933 gave birth to the second World War, and finally the war As a result, Eastern European countries including East Germany, Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and other countries, as well as China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Albania and other countries have embarked on the socialist road. **In addition to the proletarian socialist revolution caused by the economic crisis, the capitalist internal system of ownership has also made major adjustments in response to the economic crisis.** From individual private capital to stock system, this is the first adjustment of capitalist ownership; from stock system to monopoly, this is the second adjustment of capitalist ownership; from private stock monopoly to capitalist state monopoly, this is the third adjustment of capitalist ownership; from capitalist state monopoly to international monopoly, this is the fourth adjustment of capitalist ownership. As a result, the capitalist ownership of means of production is becoming more and more like public ownership rather than private ownership. It is getting further and further away from the original private ownership and closer to public ownership. It can be predicted **that capitalism will inevitably die out in the long-term stagnation of capital accumulation. The ultimate fate of capitalism is to be replaced** by socialism.

#### The aff’s insidious attempts to replace welfare with wage labor reinforces the idealization and social control of “work ethic”. Myths of work allow governments to blame systemic poverty on the behavior of the poor. Valorization of work and notions that you can resist via unionization deflates proletariat unity by turning workers against non-workers.

Frayne 15 Frayne, David. The Refusal of Work: The Theory and Practice of Resistance to Work . Zed Books, London (2015); 98-105; CE recut amrita

In The Problem With Work, Kathi Weeks explores the legacy of the work ethic in some detail, highlighting the ethic’s tremendous capacity for endurance and adaptation over the course of modern history (Weeks, 2011: Chapter 1). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was religion that demanded a life devoted to work, but the religious element had largely withered away by the nineteenth century, where it was being replaced by the promise of social mobility: the promise that through the sweat of one’s brow, it might be possible to elevate the social status of oneself and one’s family. By the middle of the twentieth century, a different element had been foregrounded, as work came to be idealised as a route to self actualisation and personal development. As an ascetic ideal, the work ethic has displayed a remarkable staying presence, but no matter what its form, the behaviours which the ethic prescribes have remained consistent. In all its forms, the work ethic has promoted ‘the identification with and systematic devotion to waged work, the elevation of work to the centre of life, and the affirmation of work as an end in itself ’ (Weeks, 2011: 46). In today’s affluent societies, holding down a job is still commonly heralded as a signal of independence, maturity and good character, and hard work continues to represent a proper way of living, and proof of a commitment to the prosperity of one’s nation. If there are other ways to contribute and achieve, outside the realm of paid employment, then these are not nearly as well represented or widely recognised. For evidence of this, we need only observe the aggressive return of the work ethic in the context of neoliberalism. The British prime minister, David Cameron, came to power in 2010 relentlessly stressing the government’s commitment to ‘hardworking people’. In 2013 Cameron said: ‘We are building a country for those who work and want to get on. And we are saying to each and every hard-working person in our country: we are on your side … This is a government for hard-working people, and that’s the way it will stay’ (Huffington Post, 2013). Prior to this, Cameron had routinely depicted benefit claimants as wasters, ‘sitting on their sofas waiting for their benefits to arrive’ (Cameron, 2010). These references to ‘hardworking people’ were echoed in a speech delivered by the Chancellor George Osborne at the 2012 Conservative Party conference: ‘Where is the fairness, we ask, for the shift-worker, leaving home in the dark hours of the morning, who looks up at the closed blinds of their nextdoor neighbour sleeping off a life on benefits?’ (Jowitt, 2013). These repeated references to diligent work (defined always in terms of paid employment) function to construct a rigid dichotomy in the public imagination. On one side of this dichotomy are those upstanding, hardworking citizens who help secure the country’s future, whilst on the other are those morally dubious unemployed people who do nothing. Which are you? The sleeper or the employee, the shirker or the worker? Do you do something, or nothing? This technique of splitting the population into binary opposites has long been used as a method of social discipline, whether we are talking about the mad versus the sane, the normal versus the abnormal, or the dangerous versus the harmless. The New Economics Foundation has referred to this latest dichotomy as the binary of ‘strivers versus skivers’: a cultural myth which perpetuates the idea that those who exist outside the moral clique of ‘the hardworking’ are undeserving, morally suspect and likely to be criminals (Coote and Lyall, 2013). Imogen Tyler refers to these attempts to discredit non-workers in terms of a ‘culturalisation of poverty’ (Tyler, 2013: 162). In spite of the structural facts of mass unemployment and deepening social inequalities, issues such as poverty and worklessness continue to be framed by governments as cultural or behavioural issues. As the discussion on social class wanes, an appreciation of the structural causes of unemployment fades away and poverty becomes regarded as a deserved result of poor self-management. Even in regions where the number of unemployed people significantly outweighs the number of available jobs, it is still maintained that were a person to present themselves a little better, put a little more effort in, or just believe in themselves, he or she could find work and climb out of poverty. Society’s poorest are regarded as those who have failed to make the right choices in life, or who have shown an unwillingness to grasp the opportunities that society has presented to them. Financial poverty is blamed on a poverty of aspiration, and this continued foregrounding of cultural attitudes has allowed governments to ignore the structural causes of poverty and unemployment. In this new framing, society’s main enemies are no longer the structural pathologies of inequality, job scarcity and the dearth of attractive jobs, but the personal pathologies inherent in a so-called culture of laziness, entitlement and dependency. Aside from the personal misery and stigmatisation they cause, perhaps the biggest crime of these cultural explanations is that they keep society’s more structural or systemic issues off the table. Mass unemployment should give us occasion to question the efficacy of work as a basis for social inclusion and solidarity, but the discussion that is actually taking place is much more blinkered. Not everybody will be convinced by the rhetoric of ‘strivers versus skivers’ of course, but its sheer ubiquity is cause enough for concern. The stigmatisation of unemployed people is infectious. Tabloid reports concerned with the wastage of public money seem almost uniformly obsessed with the comparatively minor cost of suspected benefit fraud. A benefits mythbuster published by Turn2Us (Turn2Us, 2012) suggested that the ‘welfare burden’ caused by UK unemployment has been grossly exaggerated. The report suggests that, contrary to popular opinion, public spending on welfare has stabilised since the economic crash of the year 2008/9, and was far lower in 2012 than it was in 1995, following the previous recession.1 There is notably less anger about the public funds spent on working tax credits (which compensate for miserly employers), the high rents that force many people to depend on housing benefit, or the criminally underpublicised problem of corporate tax evasion. The media pumps out a torrent of disgust towards unemployed people, who are typically portrayed as leading empty, morally rudderless lives. The case of Cait Reilly, unfolding in the UK over the course of 2012–13, offers a perfect example here, as a media event which brought the ‘striver versus skiver’ discourse to the fore. In 2012, the UK Coalition government attempted to tackle worklessness by forcing many benefit claimants to undertake periods of unpaid work. Under the rules of the new policy, Reilly, an unemployed geology graduate, was forced to leave a work experience placement in a museum, to instead work unwaged in a Poundland store. Reilly’s name hit the headlines after a lawyer heard about her story and volunteered to help establish a legal case against the government. The tabloid media exploded. Responding to the suggestion that Reilly’s forced labour was a violation of human rights, Jan Moir of the Daily Mail wrote: ‘It is hardly ten years’ imprisonment without charge in Guantanamo Bay. It is hardly like being incarcerated in a Nazi prisoner of war camp for five long years, never knowing each day if you would live or die’ (Moir, 2012). The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith, joined the debate, labelling Reilly a ‘job snob’ and levelling a broader attack on those who defended her actions – a so-called ‘commenting elite’ who are unaware of their own intellectual conceit and sense of superiority (Holehouse, 2012). These bitter comments came just months after UK public sector workers conducted a mass strike in response to government proposals to modify pension schemes. Rather than reporting on the motivations for strike action, Tim Shipman, also reporting for the Daily Mail, belittled the cause by citing statistics which claimed that, on average, state workers get paid 7.5% more than private sector employees in the UK. He wrote that ‘[t]he findings are a blow to the credibility of union leaders who claim that public sector staff are hard done by’ (Shipman, 2011). These examples show us that the moral fence around the work ethic is not only high but also tremendously well-fortified. Any worker who steps out of line is quickly targeted as a dangerous outsider and denied a political voice. The political significance of the rebellious act is muted by portraying the rebel as pathological, diverting public attention away from the political cause and on to the supposedly deviant psychology of the rebel: Resistance in this context is not explained as something related to the inequality of the capitalist labour process, but rather a matter of personal problems within the worker – a negative attitude, an inability to be a team player or shirking one’s duties. In other words, the contemporary pathologies of work are pushed onto employees themselves and are internalised as personal demeanours and characteristics that must be ‘worked through’ in team meetings, development assessment seminars and ‘self-help’ consumption in the private sphere. (Fleming and Spicer, 2003: 174) In Cait Reilly’s case, commentators variously implied that Reilly was neurotic, weird, or suffered from an unhealthy sense of entitlement. Catch-all terms such as ‘job snob’ work in the same vein as older terms such as ‘hippy’, ‘wacko’ or ‘conspiracy theorist’, being deployed in order to discredit immediately any threat to orthodox ways of thinking. Another common media response to labour disputes is the deployment of the Could Be Worse argument. If Reilly thought she was hard done by, then it was said that she should be grateful not to be a captive prisoner of war. If the UK public sector workers who went on strike in 2012 believed that they were victims of injustice, then it was said that they should have considered those who were earning less, working in poorer conditions, or struggling to find work. By providing suggestive examples of situations that are worse than the insurgent’s, journalists once again peddle the message that it is individuals and their sense of entitlement that are at fault. Whilst the moralisation of work certainly gains purchase through its ubiquity in the media, perhaps its real power derives from its installation in a suite of workfare policies designed to encourage benefit claimants out of the welfare system and into paid employment. If the moralisation of work is powerful as a cultural device, it takes on an uglier, more coercive guise when enshrined in a modern policy agenda. In the UK, the New Labour government arrived in office in 1997, resolving to ‘rebuild the welfare state around work’ (Department for Social Security, 1998), and previously protected welfare claimants such as lone parents and people with disabilities were increasingly expected to seek employment. The legacy of workfare continued in the UK Coalition government’s ‘big bold plan to Get Britain Working’, which has since phased in a tightening set of conditions around who is entitled to claim benefits, along with an increasingly stringent set of audits and penalties for non-workers who fail to comply.2 These tightening conditions represent less a helping hand for the citizen in need than a stranglehold. In order to avoid sanctions, the claimants to Jobseeker’s Allowance have been required to display a fully accountable commitment to job hunting, to accept offers of employment judged reasonable by Jobcentre Plus bureaucrats, and to attend job-seeker’s training programmes deemed likely to increase the chances of finding work. The critic Ivor Southwood argues that, given the known shortage of jobs in many areas, these activities often have a performative quality, forcing claimants to project a phoney display of positivity and enthusiasm for low-status work roles: ‘To refuse to go along with this performance and its mutual suspension of disbelief risks bringing the full weight of the institution down on the “customer”’ (Southwood, 2011: 46). Among the most troubling developments of the big bold plan was the controversial policy to force benefit claimants to complete compulsory periods of unpaid work. Also, the Work Capability Assessment – a test undertaken by claimants with disabilities, to verify their eligibility for benefits – was handed over to the private company ATOS in 2011. Following the handover, a controversy unfolded based on credible allegations from public investigators, whistle-blowers and failed applicants, who claimed that the flawed methodology of the Work Capability test, coupled with a punitive auditing process, was strongly biased towards a rejection of benefit applications (Franklin, 2013). It is estimated that thousands of people have been declared erroneously ‘fit for work’ by a system which, instead of providing support, has aimed to cap the number of welfare recipients.3 Whilst workfare policies have undergone a complex series of changes, their underpinning morality remains consistent: paid employment is unambiguously promoted as the normal and superior state to which everybody should aspire. What all of this ultimately means is that although we have reached a point in history where a reduction and re-evaluation of work are urgently needed, powerful moral forces remain mobilised against the development of a genuinely open discussion. A range of personal, social and environmental crises give us strong occasion to question work’s function and importance in modern society, but the relentless moralisation of work is confining us to the usual circuits of thought. It is like a constant source of noise pollution – the equivalent to someone repeatedly flicking your earlobes when you are trying to think. I will show the effects of this in Chapter 7, where we will see that many of the non-workers I interviewed found it difficult to maintain conviction in their critical views inside this work-focused moral climate. Like Cait Reilly and the public sector workers mentioned here, they often found themselves stigmatised for their alternative views and actions. In a context where those who resist work are so readily disparaged, reviled and feared, it becomes increasingly difficult to foster an open-minded and intelligent debate on the future of work.

#### Rights based frameworks that posit unionization as the end all to all problems are part of the problem—consumption and work fuel each other cyclically. The proletariat must refuse the demand of work to refuse the demand of consumption.

Lafargue 83 [Lafargue, Paul. *The Right To Be Lazy*. Charles Kerr and Co., Illinois (1883); Retrieved on March 23, 2010 from [www.marxists.org](http://www.marxists.org/archive/lafargue/1883/lazy/index.htm); <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/paul-lafargue-the-right-to-be-lazy> amrita]

That the competition of man and the machine might have free course, the proletarians have abolished wise laws which limited the labor of the artisans of the ancient guilds; they have suppressed the holidays. [[9]](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/paul-lafargue-the-right-to-be-lazy#fn9) Because the producers of that time worked but five days out of seven, are we to believe the stories told by lying economists that they lived on nothing but air and fresh water? Not so, they had leisure to taste the joys of earth, to make love and to frolic, to banquet joyously in honor of the jovial god of idleness. Gloomy England, immersed in protestantism, was then called “Merrie England.” Rabelais, Quevedo, Cervantes, and the unknown authors of the romances make our mouths water with their pictures of those monumental feasts [[10]](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/paul-lafargue-the-right-to-be-lazy#fn10) with which the men of that time regaled themselves between two battles and two devastations, in which everything “went by the barrel” Jordaens and the Flemish School have told the story of these feasts in their delightful pictures. Where, O, where, are the sublime gargantuan stomachs of those days; where are the sublime brains encircling all human thought? We have indeed grown puny and degenerate. Embalmed beef, potatoes, doctored wine and Prussian schnaps, judiciously combined with compulsory labor have weakened our bodies and narrowed our minds. And the times when man cramps his stomach and the machine enlarges its out-put are the very times when the economists preach to us the Malthusian theory, the religion of abstinence and the dogma of work. Really it would be better to pluck out such tongues and throw them to the dogs. Because the working class, with its simple good faith, has allowed itself to be thus indoctrinated, because with its native impetuosity it has blindly hurled itself into work and abstinence, the capitalist class has found itself condemned to laziness and forced enjoyment, to unproductiveness and over consumption. But if the over-work of the laborer bruises his flesh and tortures his nerves, it is also fertile in griefs for the capitalist. The abstinence to which the productive class condemns itself obliges the capitalists to devote themselves to the over-consumption of the products turned out so riotously by the laborers. At the beginning of capitalist production a century or two ago, the capitalist was a steady man of reasonable and peaceable habits. He contented himself with one wife or thereabouts. He drank only when he was thirsty and ate only when he was hungry. He left to the lords and ladies of the court the noble virtues of debauchery. Today every son of the newly rich makes it incumbent upon himself to cultivate the disease for which quicksilver is a specific in order to justify the labors imposed upon the workmen in quicksilver mines; every capitalist crams himself with capons stuffed with truffles and with the choicest brands of wine in order to encourage the breeders of blooded poultry and the growers of Bordelais. In this occupation the organism rapidly becomes shattered, the hair falls out, the gums shrink away from the teeth, the body becomes deformed, the stomach obtrudes abnormally, respiration becomes difficult, the motions become labored, the joints become stiff, the fingers knotted. Others, too feeble in body to endure the fatigues of debauchery, but endowed with the bump of philanthropic discrimination, dry up their brains over political economy, or juridical philosophy in elaborating thick soporific books to employ the leisure hours of compositors and pressmen. The women of fashion live a life of martyrdom, in trying on and showing off the fairy-like toilets which the seamstresses die in making. They shift like shuttles from morning until night from one gown into another. For hours together they give up their hollow heads to the artists in hair, who at any cost insist on assuaging their passion for the construction of false chignons. Bound in their corsets, pinched in their boots, decollette to make a coal-miner blush, they whirl around the whole night through at their charity balls in order to pick up a few cents for poor people, — sanctified souls! To fulfill his double social function of non-producer and over-consumer, the capitalist was not only obliged to violate his modest taste, to lose his laborious habits of two centuries ago and to give himself up to unbounded luxury, spicy indigestibles and syphilitic debauches, but also to withdraw from productive labor an enormous mass of men in order to enlist them as his assistants. Here are a few figures to prove how colossal is this waste of productive forces. According to the census of 1861, the population of England and Wales comprised 20,066,244 persons, 9,776,259 male and 10,289,965 female. If we deduct those too old of too young to work, the unproductive women, boys and girls, then the “ideological professions”, such as governors, policemen, clergy, magistrates, soldiers, prostitutes, artists, scientists, etc., next the people exclusively occupied with eating the labor of others under the form of land-rent, interest, dividends, etc. ... there remains a total of eight million individuals of both sexes and of every age, including the capitalists who function in production, commerce, finance, etc. Out of these eight millions the figures run: “If we add together the textile workers and the miners, we obtain the figures of 2,208,442; if to the former we add the metal workers, we have a total of 1,039,605 persons; that is to say, in each case a number below that of the modern domestic slaves. Behold the magnificent result of the capitalist exploitation of machines.” [[11]](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/paul-lafargue-the-right-to-be-lazy#fn11) To this class of domestics, the size of which indicates the stage attained by capitalist civilization, must still be added the enormous class of unfortunates devoted exclusively to satisfying the vain and expensive tastes of the rich dasses: diamond cutters, lace-makers, embroiderers, binders of luxurious books, seamstresses employed on expensive gowns decorators of villas, etc. [[12]](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/paul-lafargue-the-right-to-be-lazy#fn12) Once settled down into absolute laziness and demoralized by enforced enjoyment, the capitalist class in spite of the injury involved in its new kind of life, adapted itself to it. Soon it began to look upon any change with horror. The sight of the miserable conditions of life resignedly accepted by the working class and the sight of the organic degradation engendered by the depraved passion for work increased its aversion for all compulsory labor and all restrictions of its pleasures. It is precisely at that time that, without taking into account the demoralization which the capitalist class had imposed upon itself as a social duty, the proletarians took it into their heads to inflict work on the capitalists Artless as they were, they took seriously the theories of work proclaimed by the economists and moralists, and girded up their loins to inflict the practice of these theories upon the capitalists. The proletariat hoisted the banner, “He who will not work Neither shall he Eat”. Lyons in 1831 rose up for bullets or work. The federated laborers of March 1871 called their uprising “The Revolution of Work”. To these outbreaks of barbarous fury destructive of all capitalist joy and laziness, the capitalists had no other answer than ferocious repression, but they know that if they have been able to repress these revolutionary explosions, they have not drowned in the blood of these gigantic massacres the absurd idea of the proletariat wishing to inflict work upon the idle and reputable classes, and it is to avert this misfortune that they surround themselves with guards, policemen, magistrates and jailors, supported in laborious unprodutiveness. There is no more room for illusion as to the function of modern, armies. They are permanently maintained only to suppress the “enemy within”. Thus the forts of Paris and Lyons have not been built to defend the city against the foreigner, but to crush it in case of revolt. And if an unanswerable example be called for, we mention the army of Belgium, that paradise of capitalism. Its neutrality is guaranteed by the European powers, and nevertheless its army is one of the strongest in proportion to its population. The glorious battlefields of the brave Belgian army are the plains of the Borinage and of Charleroi. It is in the blood of the unarmed miners and laborers that the Belgian officers temper their swords and win their epaulets. The nations of Europe have not national armies but mercenary armies. They protect the capitalists against the popular fury which would condemn them to ten hours of mining or spinning. Again, while compressing its own stomach the working class has developed abnormally the stomach of the capitalist class, condemned to over-consumption. For alleviation of its painful labor the capitalist class has withdrawn from the working class a mass of men far superior to those still devoted to useful production and has condemned them in their turn to unproductiveness and over-consumption. But this troop of useless mouths in spite of its insatiable voracity, does not suffice to consume all the goods which the laborers, brutalized by the dogma of work, produce like madmen, without wishing to consume them and without even thinking whether people will be found to consume them. Confronted with this double madness of the laborers killing themselves with over-production and vegetating in abstinence, the great problem of capitalist production is no longer to find producers and to multiply their powers but to discover consumers, to excite their appetites and create in them fictitious needs. Since the European laborers, shivering with cold and hunger, refuse to near the stuffs they weave, to drink the wines from the vineyards they tend, the poor manufacturers in their goodness of heart must run to the ends of the earth to find people to wear the clothes and drink the wines: Europe exports every year goods amounting to billions of dollars to the four corners of the earth, to nations that have no need of them. [[13]](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/paul-lafargue-the-right-to-be-lazy#fn13) But the explored continents are no longer vast enough. Virgin countries are needed. European manufacturers dream night and day of Africa, of a lake in the Saharan desert, of a railroad to the Soudan. They anxiously follow the progress of Livingston, Stanley, Du Chaillu; they listen open-mouthed to the marvelous tales of these brave travelers. What unknown wonders are contained in the “dark continent”! Fields are sown with elephants’ teeth, rivers of cocoanut oil are dotted with gold, millions of backsides, as bare as the faces of Dufaure and Girardin, are awaiting cotton goods to teach them decency, and bottles of schnaps and bibles from which they may learn the virtues of civilization. But all to no purpose: the over-fed capitalist, the servant class greater in numbers than the productive class, the foreign and barbarous nations, gorged with European goods; nothing, nothing can melt away the mountains of products heaped up higher and more enormous than the pyramids of Egypt. The productiveness of European laborers defies all consumption, all waste. The manufacturers have lost their bearings and know not which way to turn. They can no longer find the raw material to satisfy the lawless depraved passion of their laborers for work. In our woolen districts dirty and half rotten rags are raveled out to use in making certain cloths sold under the name of renaissance, which have about the same durability as the promises made to voters. At Lyons, instead of leaving the silk fiber in its natural simplicity and suppleness, it is loaded down with mineral salts, which while increasing its weight, make it friable and far from durable. All our products are adulterated to aid in their sale and shorten their life. Our epoch will be called the “Age of adulteration” just as the first epochs of humanity received the names of “The Age of Stone”, “The Age of Bronze”, from the character of their production. Certain ignorant people accuse our pious manufacturers of fraud, while in reality the thought which animates them is to furnish work to their laborers, who cannot resign themselves to living with their arms folded. These adulterations, whose sole motive is a humanitarian sentiment, but which bring splendid profits to the manufacturers who practice them, if they are disastrous for the quality of the goods, if they are an inexhaustible source of waste in human labor, nevertheless prove the ingenuous philanthropy of the capitalists, and the horrible perversion of the laborers, who to gratify their vice for work oblige the manufacturers to stifle the cries of their conscience and to violate even the laws of commercial honesty. And nevertheless, in spite of the over-production of goods, in spite of the adulterations in manufacturing, the laborers encumber the market in countless numbers imploring: Work! Work! Their super abundance ought to compel them to bridle their passion; on the contrary it carries it to the point of paroxysm. Let a chance for work present itself, thither they rush; then they demand twelve, fourteen hours to glut their appetite for work, and the next day they are again thrown out on the pavement with no more food for their vice. Every year in all industries lockouts occur with the regularity of the seasons. Over-work, destructive of the organism, is succeeded by absolute rest during two or four months, and when work ceases the pittance ceases. Since the vice of work is diabolically attached to the heart of the laborers, since its requirements stifle all the other instincts of nature, since the quantity of work required by society is necessarily limited by consumption and by the supply of raw materials, why devour in six months the work of a whole year; why not distribute it uniformly over the twelve months and force every workingman to content himself with six or five hours a day throughout the year instead of getting indigestion from twelve hours during six months. Once assured of their daily portion of work, the laborers will no longer be jealous of each other, no longer fight to snatch away work from each other’s hands and bread from each other’s mouths, and then, not exhausted in body and mind, they will begin to practice the virtues of laziness. Brutalized by their vice, the laborers have been unable to rise to the conception of this fact, that to have work for all it is necessary to apportion it like water on a ship in distress. Meanwhile certain manufacturers in the name of capitalist exploitation have for a long time demanded a legal limitation of the work day. Before the commission of 1860 on professional education, one of the greatest manufacturers of Alsace, M. Bourcart of Guebwiller, declared: “The day of twelve hours is excessive and ought to be reduced to eleven, while work ought to be stopped at two o’clock on Saturday. I advise the adoption of this measure, although it may appear onerous at first sight. We have tried it in our industrial establishments for four years and find ourselves the better for it, while the average production, far from having diminished, has increased.” In his study of machines M.F. Passy quotes the following letter from a great Belgian manufacturer M. Ottevaere: “Our machines, although the same as those of the English spinning mills, do not produce what they ought to produce or what those same machines would produce in England, although the spinners there work two hours a day less. We all work two good hours too much. I am convinced that if we worked only eleven hours instead of thirteen we should have the same product and we should consequently produce more economically.” Again, M. Leroy Beaulieu affirms that it is a remark of a great Belgian manufacturer that the weeks in which a holiday falls result in a product not less than ordinary weeks. [[14]](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/paul-lafargue-the-right-to-be-lazy#fn14) An aristocratic government has dared to do what a people, duped in their simplicity by the moralists, never dared. Despising the lofty and moral industrial considerations of the economists, who like the birds of ill omen, croaked that to reduce by one hour the work in factories was to decree the ruin of English industry, the government of England has forbidden by a law strictly enforced to work more than ten hours a day, and as before England remains the first industrial nation of the world. The experiment tried on so great a scale is on record; the experience of certain intelligent capitalists is on record. They prove beyond a doubt that to strengthen human production it is necessary to reduce the hours of labor and multiply the pay days and feast days, yet the French nation is not convinced. But if the miserable reduction of two hours has increased English production by almost one-third in ten years, what breathless speed would be given to French production by a legal limitation of the working day to three hours. Cannot the laborers understand that by over-working themselves they exhaust their own strength and that of their progeny, that they are used up and long before their time come to be incapable of any work at ail, that absorbed and brutalized by this single vice they are no longer men but pieces of men, that they kill within themselves all beautiful faculties, to leave nothing alive and flourishing except the furious madness for work. Like Arcadian parrots, they repeat the lesson of the economist: “Let us work, let us work to increase the national wealth.” O, idiots, it is because you work too much that the industrial equipment develops slowly. Stop braying and listen to an economist, no other than M.L.Reybaud, whom we were fortunate enough to lose a few months ago. “It is in general by the conditions of hand-work that the revolution in methods of labor is regulated. As long as handwork furnishes its services at a low price, it is lavished, while efforts are made to economize it when its services become more costly.” [[15]](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/paul-lafargue-the-right-to-be-lazy#fn15) To force the capitalists to improve their machines of wood and iron it is necessary to raise wages and diminish the working hours of the machines of flesh and blood. Do you ask for proofs? They can be furnished by the hundreds. In spinning, the self-acting mule was invented and applied at Manchester because the spinners refused to work such long hours as before. In America the machine is invading all branches of farm production, from the making of butter to the weeding of wheat. Why, because the American, free and lazy, would prefer a thousand deaths to the bovine life of the French peasant. Plowing, so painful and so crippling to the laborer in our glorious France, is in the American West an agreeable open-air pastime, which he practices in a sitting posture, smoking his pipe nonchalantly.

#### But capitalism can’t be saved. The short-term rejuvenation simply pushes back the long-term inevitable collapse which dooms us to death by climate change before the revolution can happen—this card is amazing and also preempts all their “cap solves climate change” answers.

Foster 18 [John Bellamy Foster, John Bellamy Foster is a professor of sociology at the University of Oregon and also editor of Monthly Review. He writes about political economy of capitalism and economic crisis, ecology and ecological crisis, and Marxist theory. “Making War on the Planet.” Monthly Review. September 1, 2018. <https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/> recut 8-22-2021 amrita]

A short fuse is burning. At the present rate of global emissions, the world is projected to reach the trillionth metric ton of cumulative carbon emissions, breaking the global carbon budget, in less than two decades.[1](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en1) This would usher in a period of dangerous climate change that could well prove irreversible, affecting the climate for centuries if not millennia. Even if the entire world economy were to cease emitting carbon dioxide at the present moment, the extra carbon already accumulated in the atmosphere virtually guarantees that climate change will continue with damaging effects to the human species and life in general. However, reaching the 2°C increase in global average temperature guardrail, associated with a level of carbon concentration in the environment of 450 ppm, would lead to a qualitatively different condition. At that point, climate feedbacks would increasingly come into play threatening to catapult global average temperatures to 3°C or 4°C above preindustrial levels within this century, in the lifetime of many individuals alive today. The situation is only made more serious by the emission of other greenhouse gases, including methane and nitrous oxide. The enormous dangers that rapid climate change present to humanity as a whole, and the inability of the existing capitalist political-economic structure to address them, symbolized by the presence of Donald Trump in the White House, have engendered a desperate search for technofixes in the form of schemes for geoengineering, defined as massive, deliberate human interventions to manipulate the entire climate or the planet as a whole. Not only is geoengineering now being enthusiastically pushed by today’s billionaire class, as represented by figures like Bill Gates and Richard Branson; by environmental organizations such as the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council; by think tanks like the Breakthrough Institute and Climate Code Red; and by fossil-fuel corporations like Exxon Mobil and Shell—it is also being actively pursued by the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and Russia. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has incorporated negative emissions strategies based on geoengineering (in the form of Bio-energy with Carbon Capture and Storage, or BECCS) into nearly all of its climate models. Even some figures on the political left (where “accelerationist” ideas have recently taken hold in some quarters) have grabbed uncritically onto geoengineering as a deus ex machina—a way of defending an ecomodernist economic and technological strategy—as witnessed by a number of contributions to Jacobin magazine’s Summer 2017 Earth, Wind, and Fire issue.[2](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en2) If the Earth System is to avoid 450 ppm of carbon concentration in the atmosphere and is to return to the Holocene average of 350 ppm, some negative emissions by technological means, and hence geoengineering on at least a limited scale, will be required, according to leading climatologist James Hansen.[3](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en3) Hansen’s strategy, however, like most others, remains based on the current system, that is, it excludes the possibility of a full-scale ecological revolution, involving the self-mobilization of the population around production and consumption. What remains certain is that any attempt to implement geoengineering (even in the form of technological schemes for carbon removal) as the dominant strategy for addressing global warming, subordinated to the ends of capital accumulation, would prove fatal to humanity. The costs of such action, the burden it would put on future generations, and the dangers to living species, including our own, are so great that the only rational course is a long ecological revolution aimed at the most rapid possible reduction in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, coupled with an emphasis on agroecology and restoration of global ecosystems, including forests, to absorb carbon dioxide.[4](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en4) This would need to be accompanied by a far-reaching reconstitution of society at large, aimed at the reinstitution on a higher level of collective and egalitarian practices that were undermined by the rise of capitalism. Geoengineering the Planet Under the Regime of Fossil Capital Geoengineering as an idea dates back to the period of the first discoveries of rapid anthropogenic climate change. Beginning in the early 1960s, the Soviet Union’s (and at that time the world’s) leading climatologist, Mikhail Budyko, was the first to issue a number of warnings on the inevitably of accelerated global climate change in the case of industrial systems based on the burning of fossil fuels.[5](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en5) Although anthropogenic climate change had long been recognized, what was new was the discovery of major climate feedbacks such as the melting of Arctic ice and the disruption of the albedo effect as reflective white ice was replaced with blue seawater, increasing the amount of solar radiation absorbed by the planet and ratcheting up global average temperature. In 1974, Budyko offered, as a possible solution to climate change, the use of high-flying planes to release sulfur particles (forming sulfate aerosols) into the stratosphere. This was meant to mimic the role played by volcanic action in propelling sulfur into the atmosphere, thus creating a partial barrier, limiting incoming solar radiation. **The rationale he offered was that capitalist economies, in particular, would not be able to curtail capital-accumulation-based growth, energy use, and emissions, despite the danger to the climate**.[6](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en6) Consequently, technological alternatives to stabilize the climate would have to be explored. But it was not until 1977 when the Italian physicist Cesare Marchetti proposed a scheme for capturing carbon dioxide emissions from electrical power plants and using pipes to sequester them in the ocean depths that the word “geoengineering” itself was to appear.[7](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en7) Budyko’s pioneering proposal to use sulfur particles to block a part of the sun’s rays, now known as “stratospheric aerosol injection,” and Marchetti’s early notion of capturing and sequestering carbon in the ocean, stand for the two main general approaches to geoengineering—respectively, solar radiation management (SRM) and carbon dioxide removal (CDR). SRM is designed to limit the solar radiation reaching the earth. CDR seeks to capture and remove carbon to decrease the amount entering the atmosphere. Besides stratospheric aerosol injection, first proposed by Budyko, another approach to SRM that has gained influential adherents in recent years is marine cloud brightening. This would involve cooling the earth by modifying low-lying, stratocumulus clouds covering around a third of the ocean, making them more reflective. In the standard scenario, a special fleet of 1,500 unmanned, satellite-controlled ships would roam the ocean spraying submicron drops of seawater in the air, which would evaporate leaving salty residues. These bright salt particles would reflect incoming solar radiation. They would also act as cloud condensation nuclei, increasing the surface area of the clouds, with the result that more solar radiation would be reflected. Both stratospheric aerosol injection and marine cloud brightening are widely criticized as posing enormous hazards on top of climate change itself, while simply addressing the symptoms not the cause of climate change. Stratospheric aerosol injection—to be delivered to the stratosphere by means of hoses, cannons, balloons, or planes—would alter the global hydrological cycle with enormous unpredictable effects, likely leading to massive droughts in major regions of the planet. It is feared that it could shut down the Indian monsoon system disrupting agriculture for as many as 2 billion people.[8](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en8) There are also worries that it might affect photosynthesis and crop production over much of the globe.[9](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en9) The injection of sulfur particles into the atmosphere could contribute to depletion of the ozone layer.[10](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en10) Much of the extra sulfur would end up dropping to the earth, leading to acid rain.[11](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en11) **Most worrisome of all, stratospheric aerosol injection would have to be repeated year after year. At termination the rise in temperature associated with additional carbon buildup would come almost at once with world temperature conceivably rising by 2–3°C in a decade—a phenomenon referred to as the “termination problem.”**[12](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en12) As with stratospheric aerosol injection, **marine cloud brightening would drastically affect the hydrological cycle in unpredictable ways**. For example, it could generate a severe drought in the Amazon, drying up the world’s most vital terrestrial ecosystem with incalculable and catastrophic effects for Earth System stability.[13](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en13) Many of the dangers of cloud brightening are similar to those of stratospheric aerosol depletion. Like other forms of SRM, it would do nothing to stop ocean acidification caused by rising carbon dioxide levels. The first form of CDR to attract significant attention from economic interests and investors was the idea of fertilizing the ocean with iron, thereby boosting the growth of phytoplankton so as to promote greater ocean uptake of carbon. There have been a dozen experiments in this area and the difficulties attending this scheme have proven to be legion. The effects on the ecological cycles of phytoplankton, zooplankton, and a host of other marine species all the way up to whales at the top of the food chain are indeterminate. Although some parts of the ocean would become greener due to the additional iron, other parts would become bluer, more devoid of life, because they would be deprived of the nutrients—nitrate, phosphorus, and silica—needed for growth.[14](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en14) Evidence suggests that the vast portion of the carbon taken in by the ocean would stay on the surface or the intermediate levels of the ocean, with only a tiny part entering the ocean depths, where it would be naturally sequestered.[15](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en15) Among the various CDR schemas, it is BECCS, because of its promise of negative emissions, which today is attracting the most support. This is because it seems to allow nations to overshoot climate targets on the basis that the carbon can be removed from the atmosphere decades later. Although BECCS exists at present largely as an untested computer model, it is now incorporated into almost all climate models utilized by the IPCC.[16](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en16) As modeled, **BECCS would burn cultivated crops in order to generate electricity, with the capture and underground storage of the resulting carbon dioxide. In theory, since plant crops can be seen as carbon neutral—taking carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and then eventually releasing it again—BECCS, by burning biomass and then capturing and sequestering the resulting carbon emissions, would be a means of generating electricity while at the same time resulting in a net reduction of atmospheric carbon. BECCS, however, comes into question the moment one moves from the abstract to the concrete.** The IPCC’s median-level models are projected to remove 630 gigatons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, around two thirds of the total emitted between the Industrial Revolution and 2011.[17](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en17) This would occur on vast crop plantations to be run by agribusiness. **To remove a trillion tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as envisioned in the more ambitious scenarios would take up a land twice the size of India (or equal to Australia), about half as much land as currently farmed globally, requiring a supply of freshwater equal to current total global agricultural usage.**[18](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en18) The costs of implementing BECCS on the imagined scales have been estimated by climatologist James Hansen—who critically notes that negative emissions have “spread like a cancer” in the IPCC climate models—to be on the order of hundreds of trillions of dollars, with “minimal estimated costs” ranging as high as $570 trillion this century.[19](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en19) The effects of BECCS—used as a primary mechanism and designed to avoid confrontation with the present system of production—would therefore be a massive displacement of small farmers and global food production. Moreover, the notion that the forms of large-scale, commercial agricultural production presumed in BECCS models would be carbon neutral and would thus result in negative emissions with sequestration has been shown to be exaggerated or false when the larger effects on global land use are taken into account. BECCS crop cultivation is expected to take place on vast monoculture plantations, displacing other forms of land use. Yet, biologically diverse ecosystems have substantially higher rates of carbon sequestration in soil and biomass than does monocrop agriculture.[20](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en20) An alternative to BECCS in promoting carbon sequestration would be to promote massive, planetary ecological restoration, including reforestation, together with the promotion of agroecology modeled on traditional forms of agriculture organized around nutrient recycling and improved soil management methods.[21](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en21)This would avoid the metabolic rift associated with agribusiness monocultures, which are less efficient both in terms of food production per hectare and carbon sequestration. Another commonly advocated technofix, carbon capture and sequestration (CCS), is not strictly a form of geoengineering since it is directed at capturing and sequestering carbon emissions of particular electrical plants, such as coal-fired power plants. However, **the promotion of a CCS infrastructure on a planetary scale as a means of addressing climate change—thereby skirting the necessity of an ecological revolution in production and consumption—is best seen as a form of planetary geoengineering due to its immense projected economic and ecological scale**. Although CCS would theoretically allow the burning of fossil fuels from electrical power plants with no carbon emissions into the atmosphere, **the scale and the costs of CCS operations are prohibitive.** As Clive Hamilton writes in Earthmasters: The Dawn of the Age of Climate Engineering, CCS for a single “standard-sized 1,000 megawatt coal-fired plant….would need 30 kilometers of air-sucking machinery and six chemical plants, with a footprint of 6 square kilometers.”[22](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en22) Energy expert Vaclav Smil has calculated that, “in order to sequester just a fifth of current [2010] CO2 emissions we would have to create an entirely new worldwide absorption-gathering-compression-transportation-storage industry whose annual throughput would have to be about 70 percent larger than the annual volume now handled by the global crude oil industry, whose immense infrastructure of wells, pipelines, compressor stations and storage took generations to build.”[23](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en23) **Capturing and sequestering current U.S. carbon dioxide emissions would require 130 billion tons of water per year, equal to about half the annual flow of the Columbia River. This new gigantic infrastructure would be placed on top of the current fossil fuel infrastructure—all in order to allow for the continued burning of fossil fuels**.[24](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en24) A Planetary Precautionary Principle for the Anthropocene If today’s planetary ecological emergency is a product of centuries of war on the planet as a mechanism of capital accumulation, fossil-capital generated geoengineering schemes can be seen as gargantuan projects for keeping the system going by carrying this war to its ultimate level. Geoengineering under the present regime of accumulation has the sole objective of keeping the status quo intact—neither disturbing the dominant relations of capitalist production nor even seeking so much as to overturn the fossil-fuel industry with which capital is deeply intertwined. Profits, production, and overcoming energy poverty in the poorer parts of the world thus become justifications for keeping the present fossil-capital system going, maintaining at all cost the existing capitalist environmental regime. The Promethean mentality behind this is well captured by a question that Rex Tillerson then CEO of Exxon Mobil Corporation asked—without a trace of irony—at an annual shareholders meeting in 2013: “What good is it to save the planet if humanity suffers?”[25](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en25) The whole history of ecological crisis leading up the present planetary emergency, punctuated by numerous disasters—from the near total destruction of the ozone layer, to nutrient loading and the spread of dead zones in the ocean, to climate change itself—serves to highlight the march of folly associated with any attempt to engineer the entire planet. The complexity of the Earth System guarantees that enormous unforeseen consequences would emerge. As Frederick Engels warned in the nineteenth century, “Let us not…flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first.”[26](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en26) In the face of uncertainty, coupled with an extremely high likelihood of inflicting incalculable harm on the Earth System, it is essential to invoke what is known as the Precautionary Principle whenever the question of planetary geoengineering is raised. As ecological economist Paul Burkett has explained, the strong version of the Precautionary Principle, necessarily encompasses the following: (1) The Precautionary Principle Proper, which says that if an action may cause serious harm, there is a case for counteracting measures to ensure that the action does not take place. (2) The Principle of Reverse Onus, under which it is the responsibility of those supporting an action to show that it is not seriously harmful, thereby shifting the burden of proof off those potentially harmed by the action (e.g. the general population and other species occupying the environment). In short, it is safety, rather than potential harm, that needs to be demonstrated. (3) The Principle of Alternative Assessment, stipulating that no potentially harmful action will be undertaken if there are alternative actions available that safely achieve the same goals as the action proposed. (4) All societal deliberations bearing on the application of features 1 through 3 must be open, informed, and democratic, and must include all affected parties.[27](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en27) It is clear that geoengineering promoted in a context of a capitalist regime of maximum accumulation would be ruled out completely by a strong Precautionary Principle based on each of the criteria listed above. There is a near certainty of extreme damage to the human species as a whole arising from all of the major geoengineering proposals. If the onus were placed on status quo proponents of capitalist geoengineering to demonstrate that great harm to the planet as a place of human habitation would not be inflicted, such proposals would fail the test. Since the alternative of not burning fossil fuels and promoting alternative forms of energy is entirely feasible, while planetary geoengineering carries with it immense added dangers for the Earth System as a whole, such a technofix as a primary means of checking global warming would be excluded by that criterion, too. Finally, geoengineering under the present economic and social system invariably involves some entity from the power structure—a single multi-billionaire, a corporation, a government, or an international organization—implementing such action ostensibly on behalf of humanity as a whole, while leaving most affected parties worldwide out of the decision-making process, with hundreds of millions, perhaps billions, of people paying the environmental costs, often with their lives. In short, geoengineering, particularly if subordinated to the capital accumulation process, violates the most sacred version of the Precautionary Principle, dating back to antiquity: First Do No Harm. Eco-Revolution as the Only Alternative As an extension of the current war on the planet, a regime of climate geoengineering designed to keep the present mode of production going is sharply opposed to the view enunciated by Barry Commoner in 1992 in Making Peace with the Planet, where he wrote: “If the environment is polluted and the economy is sick, the virus that causes both will be found in the system of production.”[28](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en28) There can be no doubt today that it is the present mode of production, particularly the system of fossil capital, that needs to change on a global scale. In order to stop climate change, the world economy must quickly shift to zero net carbon dioxide emissions. This is well within reach with a concerted effort by human society as a whole utilizing already existing sustainable technological means—particularly when coupled with necessary changes in social organization to reduce the colossal waste of resources and lives that is built into the current alienated system of production. Such changes could not simply be implemented from the top by elites, but rather would require the self-mobilization of the population, inspired by the revolutionary actions of youth aimed at egalitarian, ecological, collective, and socialized solutions—recognizing that it is the world that they will inherit that is most at stake. Today’s necessary ecological revolution would include for starters: (1) an emergency moratorium on economic growth in the rich countries coupled with downward redistribution of income and wealth; (2) radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; (3) rapid phase-out of the entire fossil fuel energy structure; (4) substitution of an alternative energy infrastructure based on sustainable alternatives such as solar and wind power and rooted in local control; (5) massive cuts in military spending with the freed-up economic surplus to be used for ecological conversion; (6) promotion of circular economies and zero-waste systems to decrease the throughput of energy and resources; (7) building effective public transportation, together with measures to decrease dependence on the private automobile; (8) restoration of global ecosystems in line with local, including indigenous, communities; (9) transformation of destructive, energy-and chemical-intensive agribusiness-monocultural production into agroecology, based on sustainable small farms and peasant cultivation with their greater productivity of food per acre; (10) institution of strong controls on the emission of toxic chemicals; (11) prohibition of the privatization of freshwater resources; (12) imposition of strong, human-community-based management of the ocean commons geared to sustainability; (13) institution of dramatic new measures to protect endangered species; (14) strict limits imposed on excessive and destructive consumer marketing by corporations; (15) reorganization of production to break down current commodity chains geared to rapacious accumulation and the philosophy of après moi le déluge; and (16) the development of more rational, equitable, less wasteful, and more collective forms of production.[29](https://monthlyreview.org/2018/09/01/making-war-on-the-planet/#en29) Priority in such an eco-revolution would need to be given to the fastest imaginable elimination of fossil fuel emissions, but this would in turn require fundamental changes in the human relationship to the earth and in the relationship of human beings to each other. A new emphasis would have to be placed on sustainable human development and the creation of an organic system of social metabolic reproduction. Centuries of exploitation and expropriation, including divisions on the basis of class, gender, race, and ethnicity, would have to be transcended. The historical logic posed by current conditions thus points to the necessity of a long ecological revolution, putting into place a new system of sustainable human development aimed at addressing the totality of needs of human beings as both natural and social beings: what is now called ecosocialism.

#### Endorse a dictatorship of the proletariat. Global capitalism’s inequities can only be fully purged once its intrinsic contradictions expose themselves and allow for the collapse of the bourgeoisie state. A dictatorship is required to solidify our transition to communism and is why you should reject any perm that attempts to preserve the state apparatus.

Revolution 73 Proletarian Dictatorship Vs. Bourgeois “Democracy”; Encyclopedia of Anti-Revisionism On-Line; Revolution; May 1973; Edited by Paul Saba; <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/pd-v-bd.htm>; CE recut amrita

This situation can only be reversed by socialist revolution to overthrow capitalist rule. The first task of this revolution is to smash the power of the bourgeois state through the armed might of the workers and their allies. The bourgeoisie and its armed forces are disarmed. The political structure and the courts and bureaucracies of the bourgeois state–and all its rules and regulations aimed at enslaving the people–are abolished. Once in power the working class moves to socialize the ownership of the means of production-making them the common property of society–to resolve the basic contradiction of capitalism, to break down the obstacles capitalism puts in the way of progress, and makes possible the rapid development of society. Socialism is a higher form of society than capitalism, and is bound to replace it all over the world, just as capitalism replaced the feudal system of landlords and serfs. In the process of socialist revolution the working class and its allies builds up their own state machine, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Workers are armed and organized into people’s militias and armed forces. The capitalists and their enforcers are punished for their crimes against the people. This dictatorship imposed by the working class on the former exploiters and over new capitalist elements who arise under socialism is absolutely necessary in order to crush their resistance and prevent them from wrecking socialism and restoring their rule. Although this country’s capitalists like to point to the Soviet Union today and say, “This is what communism means,” the dictatorship of the proletariat is not what exists in the Soviet Union today. The working class was once in power in the Soviet Union and was building a powerful socialist society which was the bright hope of workers around the world. But the capitalist class was able to stage a comeback, when a new bourgeoisie seized power in the mid-’50s and turned the Soviet Union back from a socialist country to a capitalist country. Today the Soviet Union, as well as Cuba and most Eastern European countries under its thumb, are examples of bourgeois dictatorships. They disguise themselves as socialist countries where the working class rules, but in reality a new capitalist class rules and enforces its strict dictatorship over the working class. The dramatic events in China since the death of Mao Tsetung and the arrest of those most closely associated with him are signs of the fact that a new bourgeoisie has seized the reins in China and is attempting to steer this country, too, down the capitalist road. The dictatorship of the proletariat is qualitatively different from the bourgeois state that exists in the U.S. and the Soviet Union and other capitalist countries. Its purpose is not to enforce exploitation and the rule of a tiny minority. The proletarian state for the first time in history means the rule of the majority, the working class, allied with all of the oppressed. At the same time that there is a dictatorship over the former capitalist exploiters there is the unparalleled extension of real democracy for those oppressed by capitalism–the working people. The proletarian state is a million times more democratic than even the most democratic capitalist state. No longer do a handful of parasites run society for their own private profit and the working class sets out to transform all of society. To accomplish this the government is set up and run by workers, and the press, television stations, schools, etc., which the capitalists use to mold public opinion and shore up their rule, are stripped from them and become the common property of the working class and the masses of people. Since the working class and the socialist society built under its leadership represent the interests of the great majority of society, the workers openly proclaim their rule and openly dictate to their former exploiters and tormentors. The rule of the working class cannot be exercised by deceiving the masses of people, but only by their active involvement in every part of the political life of society and raising their political consciousness. But socialism is not a Utopia. It replaces capitalism, but cannot do away in one stroke with the inequalities, the old selfish ideas and the remnants of capitalism. Socialism itself is only the lower stage and transition to a still higher form of society, communism, where there will no longer be any classes, and, therefore, there will no longer be any need for the dictatorship of the proletariat. During this entire transition period, the working class must maintain and strengthen its rule over the former exploiters and the new bourgeois elements that arise under socialism, prevent them from subverting the new society and restoring the old, and overcome the remaining influences of their dog-eat-dog, “look out for number one” philosophy. When everyone in society can share equally in mental and manual work, in producing goods and services and managing the affairs of society; when the outlook of the working class, putting the common good above narrow, individual interests, has become “second nature” to members of society; when goods and services can be produced so abundantly that money is no longer needed to exchange them and they can be distributed to people solely according to their needs; then society will have reached the stage of communism. Classes will have been completely eliminated, and the state as such will be replaced by the common administration of society by all its members. As this happens, throughout the world, mankind will have scaled a great mountain and will look out on a whole new horizon. The experience of the socialist countries, the Soviet Union under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin and the People’s Republic of China during the lifetime of Mao Tsetung, has shown that the working class can overthrow the exploiters and run society in the interests of the masses of people. The fact that the rule of the working class was overthrown in the Soviet Union and now temporarily in China also shows how stubborn the class struggle is under socialism and the need for the proletarian dictatorship to be maintained. Communism will show that the people can do away completely and forever with the institutions and influences of capitalism and all other forms of class society. Karl Marx, founder of communist philosophy and of the revolutionary workers movement, wrote, “The existence of classes is only bound up with particular phases in the development of production . . . the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . [and] this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of classes and to a classless society. ”

#### ROB is to vote for the debater that best deconstructs capitalism and centers anti-capitalist action

#### The aff must defend their epistemic orientation and not just the causal consequences of the plan:

#### Interrogation DA: A dissection of the aff at the level of scholarship is crucial to ensure that capitalist and reactionary logics are not being reproduced in the debate space.

#### Movement DA: Anti-capitalist discussion is crucial to un-indoctrinate people from the hold of capitol. Movement building starts inside the classroom.

## Case

#### Framing gender as an ontologically superior explanation relies on violent, totalizing categories that cause their impacts

Carline **New** **‘4** (Review of *Undoing Gender* by Judith Butler)

(<http://www.equinoxjournals.com/ojs/index.php/JCR/article/viewFile/1487/984>)

In this book of eleven previously published essays Butler expounds her recent thinking on gender, transgender and sexuality. For readers unfamiliar with her work, Butler is famous in feminist and poststructuralist circles as the author of Gender Trouble (1990), Bodies that Matter (1993) and other works advocating the deconstruction of gender, both as an academic position and a political goal. In this book she focuses mainly on the ethical argument for what could be styled, on an analogy with Trotskyism, ‘permanent deconstruction’. In asides and addenda she also discusses the work of other poststructuralist feminists, and in the last chapter (‘Can the “Other” of philosophy speak?’), describes her own relationship with philosophy, especially that of Spinoza and Hegel. The assumption underlying these essays is that most ontological claims about gender are **excluding** and therefore **oppressive**. The implicit position is that realism is never fallibilist, but invariably rigid. Butler suggests that every theoretically based taxonomic claim has countless victims whose lives have been rendered ‘unlivable’. Her quest is for all those currently marginalised to be recognised and afforded livable lives. This requires, she believes, permanent provisionality about gender possibilities and in particular about what it means to be human. It will be easier to do justice to Butler’s argument if we first consider a crucial ontological disagreement between the feminism of the ‘second wave’ (1970s and 80s) and that of the ‘cultural turn’ which has attempted to replace it. Second wave feminism developed a **distinction between sex and gender** which was seen as liberatory at the time. ‘Sex’ meant biological sexual differentiation (bodily dimorphism and distinct, interdependent reproductive capacities); ‘gender’ meant the identities, normative attributes and social practices culturally associated with sexual difference.1 Both sex and gender were understood as real and causally powerful, but they had different ontological status. For Butler this distinction is **foundationalist** and **deeply misleading**. She explained in Gender Trouble that sexual difference is only retrospectively binary. The adults who surround the new baby at birth inspect its body through gendered spectacles. If it does not readily fit their presuppositions about the only two ways of being human, they ‘normalise’ it with knife and hormones, socially exclude it—or both. Sex is thus naturalised by gender, produced on the surface of the body as a **binary fiction** which **delimits** our idea of **what it is to be human**. Since the 1990 publication of Gender Trouble, Butler has revoked its strong idealism which verged on radical body-scepticism. Nevertheless, she continues to insist that sexual difference is the product of a norm, and gender **is** the normalising apparatus. In this she disagrees not only with (1) ‘theorists of sexual difference who argue on biological grounds’ but also with (2) structuralists and poststructuralists who argue, following Levi Strauss, that ‘sexual difference is a fundamental nexus through which language and culture emerge’ (p. 211). Some of these poststructuralists (Lacanian and post- Lacanians) consider patriarchy inevitable, while others believe it contestable. As a group, (2) are preferable in Butler’s view since for them sexual difference is, though powerful, ethereal and empty of content: ‘some of them evacuate sexual difference of every possible semantic meaning’ (p. 210). They at least are not essentialist in the old ways, for all they say is that the difference between men and women is culturally constitutive— they do not specify what it is or what it constitutes. Nevertheless, even those among group (2) who believe the Symbolic and its patriarchal law can be changed are in practice gloomy about how long it will take. Butler’s critique of Lacanian and post-Lacanian conservatism in the essay on ‘Gender regulations’ is excellent. Compared with poststructuralist French feminism, Butler’s own view is positively sociological. She holds that gender is ‘a form of social power’, a norm, rather than ‘a model that individuals seek to approximate’ (p. 48). Sexual difference is among its products, firmly situated in the field of discourse rather than material reality. Further, she distinguishes the ontological status of this norm from its effects, and describes how it is reproduced through the acts that follow it and the ‘idealisations reproduced in and by those acts’ (ibid). While the norm cannot be independent of its instantiations, it is irreducible to them. Although Butler rejects the physical reality of sexual difference, she is a realist within the sphere of discourse, and even a believer in emergence. But does Butler really reject the physical reality of sexual difference? It would be an odd position for one who sees sex change operations for transpeople as so potentially liberating that it is worth accepting pathologising diagnoses to get access to them. Like many poststructuralists, she is profoundly ambiguous about the ontological status of the body. I understand her as meaning that some people have a penis and some a vulva in much the same way as some people have a bigger nose and some smaller—there are physical differences, but their social salience is entirely contingent and constructed, and there is no sharp line between male and female reproductive organs any more than there is between a big and a small nose. She remarks—oddly, and surely wrongly—that ‘one cannot apprehend sexual difference outside the racial and ethnic frames by which it is articulated’ (p. 10). Further, while sexual difference is real enough within these parameters, it is not necessarily important: other ‘constituting social forces’ ‘such as the economic or racial conditions by which one comes into being, the conditions of one’s adoption, the sojourn at the orphanage’ (p. 10) may have more power to shape the individual. There are two points elided here. Is sexual difference a human species characteristic, with the usual range of variation and with intelligible cases of incomplete or different development? My answer to this is ‘yes’, despite the existence of a small minority of intersexed people whose numbers are greatly exaggerated by strong social constructionists. Secondly, is sexual difference always and inevitably socially and psychologically highly significant? The answer to this is not so clear, and it is a different sort of question. If in some social contexts other identities and experiences tend to be more salient, this does not undermine the reality of sexual difference nor show us the extent of its causal powers. Usually, however, Butler holds that where a person fits, and whether they fit, into the ‘**contingent binary’ of gender** has a tremendous effect on their lives. People who are intersexed are regularly, as children, subjected to coercive surgery. People who are transgender are frequently refused the surgery that would free them from distress. ‘The task of all these movements [intersex, transgender and queer] seems to me to be about distinguishing among the norms and conventions that permit people to breathe, to desire, to love and to live, and those norms and conventions that restrict or eviscerate the conditions of life itself ’ (p. 8) Norms that are enabling for one group may be **destructive** for another. Butler’s idea is to empower us to seek change by showing that the normative apparatus of gender is merely conventional, and to expose the ways in which gender regulation treats some people as unreal—a lack of recognition which, she claims, is **even more devastating in its effects than oppression** (p. 30).

#### Their reliance on gender binaries to explain violence is essentialist and wrong

**Harvis**, professor of government and IR – University of Sydney, **2K**

(Darryl, “Feminist revisions of international relations,” International Relations and the Challenge of Postmodernism, p. 162-3)

Critical research agendas of this type, however, are not found easily in International Relations. Critics of feminist perspectives run the risk of denouncement as either a misogynist malcontent or an androcentric keeper of the gate. At work in much of this discourse is an unstated political correctness, where the historical marginalization of women bestows intellectual autonomy, excluding those outside the identity group from legitimate participation in its discourse. Only feminist women can do real, legitimate, feminist theory since, in the mantra of identity politics, discourse must emanate from a positional (personal) ontology. Those sensitive or sympathetic to the identity politics of particular groups are, of course, welcome to lend support and encouragement, but only on terms delineated by the groups themselves. In this way, they enjoy an uncontested sovereign hegemony oyer their own self-identification, insuring the group discourse is self constituted and that its parameters, operative methodology, ,uu\ standards of argument, appraisal, and evidentiary provisions are self defined. Thus, for example, when Sylvester calls lor a "home.steading" does so "by [a] repetitive feminist insistence that we be included on our terms" (my emphasis). Rather than an invitation to engage in dialogue, this is an ultimatum that a sovereign intellectual space be provided and insulated from critics who question the merits of identity-based political discourse. Instead, Sylvester calls upon International Relations to "share space, respect, and trust in a re-formed endeavor," but one otherwise proscribed as committed to demonstrating not only "that the secure homes constructed by IR's many debaters are chimerical," but, as a consequence, to ending International Relations and remaking it along lines grounded in feminist postmodernism.93 Such stipulative provisions might be likened to a form of negotiated sovereign territoriality where, as part of the settlement for the historically aggrieved, border incursions are to be allowed but may not be met with resistance or reciprocity. Demands for entry to the discipline are thus predicated on conditions that insure two sets of rules, cocooning postmodern feminist spaces from systematic analyses while "respecting" this discourse as it hastens about the project of deconstructing International Relations as a "male space." Sylvester's impassioned plea for tolerance and "emphatic cooperation" is thus confined to like-minded individuals, those who do not challenge feminist epistemologies but accept them as a necessary means of reinventing the discipline as a discourse between postmodern identities—the most important of which is gender.94 Intolerance or misogyny thus become the ironic epithets attached to those who question the wisdom of this reinvention or the merits of the return of identity in international theory.'"' Most strategic of all, however, demands for entry to the discipline and calls for intellectual spaces betray a self-imposed, politically motivated marginality. After all, where are such calls issued from other than the discipline and the intellectual—and well established—spaces of feminist International Relations? Much like the strategies employed by male dissidents, then, feminist postmodernists too deflect as illegitimate any criticism that derives from skeptics whose vantage points are labeled privileged. And privilege is variously interpreted historically, especially along lines of race, color, and sex where the denotations white and male, to name but two, serve as generational mediums to assess the injustices of past histories. White males, for example, become generic signifiers for historical oppression, indicating an ontologicallv privileged group by which the historical experiences of the "other" can then be reclaimed in the context of their related oppression, exploitation, AND exclusion. Legitimacy, in this context, can then be claimed in terms of one's group identity and the extent to which the history of that particular group has been “silenced.” In this same way, self-identification or “self-situation” establishes one’s credentials, allowing admittance to the group and legitimating the “authoritative” vantage point from which one speaks and writes. Thus, for example, Jan Jindy Pettman includes among the introductory pages to her most recent book, *Worlding Women*, a section titled “A (personal) politics of location,” in which her identity as a woman, a feminist, and an academic, makes apparent her particular (marginal) identities and group loyalties.96 Similarly, Christine Sylvester, in the introduction to her book, insists, “It is important to provide a context for one’s work in the often-denied politics of the personal.” Accordingly, self-declaration revelas to the reader that she is a feminist, went to a Catholic girls school where she was schooled to “develop your brains and confess something called “sins” to always male forever priests,” and that these provide some pieces to her dynamic objectivity.97 Like territorial markers, self-identification permits entry to intellectual spaces whose sovereign authority is “policed” as much by marginal subjectivies as hey allege of the oppressors who “police” the discourse of realism, or who are said to walk the corridors of the discipline insuring the replication of patriarchy, hierarchical agendas, and “malestream” theory. If Sylvester’s version of feminist postmodernism is projected as tolerant, perspectivist, and encompassing of a multiplicity of approaches, in reality it is as selective, exclusionary, and dismissive of alternative perspectives as mainstream approaches are accused of being. Skillful theoretical moves of this nature underscore the adroitness of postmodern feminist theory at emasculating many of its logical inconsistencies. In arguing for a feminist postmodernism, for example, Sylvester employs a double theoretical move that, on the one hand, invokes a kind of epistemological deconstructive anarchy cum relativism in an attempt to decenter or make insecure fixed research gazes, identities, and concepts (men, women, security, and nation-state), while on the other hand turning to the lived experiences of women as if ontologically given and assuming their experiences to be authentic, real, substantive, and authoritative interpretations of the realities of international relations. Women at the peace camps of Greenham Common or in the cooperatives of Harare, represent, for Sylvester, the real coal face of international politics, their experiences and strategies the real politics of “relations international.” But why should we take the experiences of these women to be ontologically superior or more insightful than the experiences of other women or other men? As Sylvester admits elsewhere, “Experience … is at once always already an interpretation and in need of interpretation.” Why, then are experience-based modes of knowledge more insightful than knowledges derived through other modes of inquiry?98 Such espistemologies are surely crudely positivistic in their singular reliance on osmotic perception of the facts as they impact upon the personal. If, as Sylvester writes, “sceptical inlining draws on substantive everydayness as a time and site of knowledge, much as does everyday feminist theorizing,” and if, as she further notes, “it understands experience…as mobile, indeterminate, hyphenated, [and] homeless,” why should this knowledge be valued as anything other than fleeting subjective perceptions of multiple environmental stimuli whose meaning is beyond explanation other than as a personal narrative?99 Is this what Sylvester means when she calls for a re-visioning and a repainting of the “canvases of IR,” that we dissipate knowledge into an infinitesimal number of disparate sites, all equally valid, and let loose with a mélange of visceral perceptions; stories of how each of us perceive we experience international politics? If this is the case, then Sylvester’s version of feminist postmodernity does not advance our understanding of international politics, leaving untheorized and unexplained the causes of international relations. Personal narratives do not constitute theoretical discourse, nor indeed an explanation of the systemic factors that procure international events, process, or the actions of certain actors. We might also extend a contextualist lens to analyze Sylvester’s formulations, much as she insists her epistemogical approach does. Sylvester, for example, is adamant that we can not really know who “women” are, since to do so would be to invoke an essentialist concept, concealing the diversity inherent in this category. “Women” don’t really exist in Sylvester’s estimation since there are black women, white women, Hispanic, disabled, lesbin, poor, rich, middle class, and illiterate women, to name but a few. The point, for Sylvester, is that to speak of “women” is to do violence to the diversity encapsulated in this category and, in its own way, to silence those women who remain unnamed. Well and good. Yet this same analytical respect for diversity seems lost with men. Politics and international relations become the “places of men.” But which men? All men? Or just white men, or rich, educated, elite, upper class, hetero-sexual men? To speak of political places as the places of men ignores the fact that most men, in fact the overwhelming majority of men, are not in these political places at all, are not decision makers, elite, affluent, or powerful. Much as with Sylvester’s categories, there are poor, lower class, illiterate, gay, black, and white men, many of whom suffer the vestiges of hunger, poverty, despair, and disenfranchisement just as much as women. So why invoke the category “men” in such essentialist and ubiquitous ways while cognizant only of the diversity of in the category “women.” These are double standards, not erudite theoretical formulations, betraying, dare one say, sexism toward men by invoking male gender generalizations and crude caricatures. Problems of this nature, however, are really manifestations of a deeper, underlying ailment endemic to discourses derived from identity politics. At base, the most elemental question for identity discourse, as Zalewski and Enloe note, is “Who am I?”100 The personal becomes the political, evolving a discourse where self-identification, but also one’s identification by others, presupposes multiple identities that are fleeting, overlapping, and changing at any particular moment in time or place. “We have multiple identities,” argues V. Spike Peterson, “e.g., Canadian, homemaker, Jewish, Hispanic, socialist.”101 And these identities are variously depicted as transient, polymorphic, interactive, discursive, and never fixed. As Richard Brown notes, “Identity is given neither institutionally nor biologically. It evolves as one orders continuities on one’s conception of oneself.”102 Yet, if we accept this, the analytical utility of identity politics seems problematic at best. Which identity, for example, do we choose from the many that any one subject might display affinity for? Are we to assume that all identities are of equal importance or that some are more important than others? How do we know which of these identities might be transient and less consequential to one’s sense of self and, in turn, politically significant to understanding international politics? Why, for example, should we place gender identity ontologically prior to class, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, ideological perspective, or national identity?103 As Zalewski and Enloe ask, “Why do we consider states to be a major referent? Why not men? Or women?”104 But by the same token, why not dogs, shipping magnates, movie stars, or trade regimes? Why is gender more constitutive of global politics than, say, class, or an identity as a cancer survivor, laborer, or social worker? Most of all, why is gender essentialized in feminist discourse, reified into the most preeminent of all identities as the primary lens through which international relations must be viewed? Perhaps, for example, people understand difference in the context of identities outside of gender. As Jane Martin notes, “How do we know that difference…does not turn on being fat or religious or in an abusive relationship?”105 The point, perhaps flippantly made, is that identity is such a nebulous concept, its meaning so obtuse and so inherently subjective, that it is near meaningless as a conduit for understanding global politics if only because it can mean anything to anybody.

#### Gender can’t be an overarching theory of conflict

Catharine A. **MacKinnon**, J.D., Ph.D., Professor of Law @ University of Michigan and Visiting Professor @ University of Chicago Law School, [“Symposium on Unfinished Feminist Business: Points Against Postmodernism,” 75 Chi.-Kent. L. Rev. 687; **2K**]

**Feminism has** also **never,** to my knowledge, **had** what is called **a "monocausal" narrative,** at least I haven't. **We do not say that gender is all there is. We have never said it explains everything. We have said that gender is big and pervasive,** never not there, that it has a shape and regularities and laws of motion to it, and that it explains a lot--much otherwise missed, unexplained. It is a feature of most everything, pervasively denied. **That does not mean that everything reduces to gender**, that it is the only regularity or the only explanation for things, the single cause of everything, or the only thing there. It is also worth repeating that sexual politics, in **feminism, is not an overarching preexisting general theory that is appealed to in order to understand or explain, but a constantly provisional analysis in the process of being made by the social realities that produce(d) it.**

#### **Neoliberalism coopts feminist movements by using the abject figure as a means to produce more value by recycling waste that are women and nonwhites**

James ‘14 Robin James is an associate professor of philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She is completing a manuscript titled “Resilience and Melancholy: Pop Music, Feminism, and Neoliberalism” (Zero Books) and has published in such journals as Hypatia, the Journal of Popular Music Studies, and Contemporary Aesthetics. She is also a sound artist and a regular contributor to Cyborgology, 2014 (“Incandescence, Melancholy, and Feminist Bad Vibes: A Response to Ziarek’s Feminist Aesthetics and the Politics of Modernism,” A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, September, 25 (2): 116–129, [**https://doi.org/10.1215/10407391-2773454**](https://doi.org/10.1215/10407391-2773454), Accessed on 07/03/19, SK)

A method for overcoming melancholia (97), potentiality is a way of bouncing back from the damage wrought by modern white supremacist patriarchy. For white men, this damage manifests as what Robert GoodingWilliams calls “skeptical melancholy” (54), or alienation from embodied receptivity; for women and nonwhites, it manifests as melancholic muteness, immanence rather than alienation.8 The women writers Ziarek studies rework this damaging immanence into ecstatic incandescence, effecting “an aesthetic transformation of loss into art’s own shining possibilities” (115). This incandescence is a two-step process: the artist first performs her damage (sparking a fire) so that she can then be seen to overcome it (radiating beyond her past inertia). Neoliberalism co-opts this incandescence (or at least the most visible, legible part of its spectrum), domesticating its critical force into the means of producing aesthetic pleasure and reproducing social normativity. Potentiality has been “upgraded” into resilience.9 In resilient art, formal experimentation cultivates, or incites (to use a more Foucaultian term), shocks and feeds the resultant shockwaves back into the system.10 This feedback supports rather than destabilizes hegemonic institutions. The aesthetic damage through which modernist art established its heteronomous/ autonomous position of critique—stuttering, fragmented, degraded, aleatory, dissonant—is now the very medium of normalization.11 Neoliberal resilience, in other words, is a method or process of recycling modernist damage. For example, if modernist art invested aesthetic pleasure in the objectification of women (what Laura Mulvey famously calls scopophilia), neoliberal art invests aesthetic pleasure in women’s spectacular assumption of subjectivity—what Ziarek calls incandescence. If in modernity we liked doing damage to women, we now like to see women overcome that damage.12 This means that we expect women to perform their damage as a baseline from which “good” women then progress. That damage is the fuel for incandescent fires, so it must be constantly incited and invoked so that there’s something for incandescent women to ignite. In this way, resilience discourse normalizes traditional patriarchal damage (e.g., the damage of exclusion and objectification) as a systemic or background condition that individual women are then responsible for overcoming. “Undoing [. . .] feminism while simultaneously appearing to be engaging in a wellinformed and even well-intended response to feminism” (McRobbie 1), resilient incandescence is quintessentially postfeminist. We, the audience, use our identification with the resilient heroine as a way to disidentify with and (supposedly) transgress the imperatives of modernist patriarchy. This is why, as Ziarek explains, audiences have a “sympathetic identification with subversive femininity, with the mother avenging the murderous sacrifice of her daughter for political ends, rather than with the murderous father/king” (104). We enjoy women’s spectacular subjectivization (i.e., their overcoming of scopophilic objectification) because this distances us from unfashionable patriarchal formations and tastes (i.e., this latter scopophilia). In postfeminist neoliberalism, “bearing witness to both the destruction of women’s artistic capacities and women’s revolutionary aspirations” (5) becomes a source of aesthetic pleasure not because it’s revolutionary, but because it’s normative. To use Jack Halberstam’s term, we like our women to “go gaga” because this incandescence, this “unpredictable feminine” (114) methodology allows us to eke even more light out of otherwise exhausted enlightenment modernity. If we’ve reached, as Ziarek discusses, the so-called end of art and the end of history (and the end of tonality and the end of representation and, well, the end of modernity), then the only way to find more resources is, like Pixar’s wall-e, by sifting through our vast piles of waste. And in that waste heap is abject femininity (what musicologist Susan Cook calls the feminized “abject popular”). Femininity is abject because its exclusion from patriarchy is what constitutes patriarchy as a coherent system. In both Ziarek’s aesthetics of potentiality and in resilience discourse, women artists do the cultural work of remaking abjection or constitutive exclusion into ecstatic radiance.13 In the former case, that work is revolutionary; in the latter case, that work normalizes. Resilience discourse transposes feminist revolution into a nationalist, patriarchal, white supremacist practice. Take, for example, Katy Perry’s “Firework,” in which the lyrics trace the affective journey from dejection to radiant exceptionality. The song begins by asking listeners to identify with feelings of irrelevance, weakness, loneliness, and hopelessness; it posits and affirms damage, suffering, and pain. But then Perry’s narrator argues that in spite and perhaps because of this damage, the listener has precisely the means to connect to others, to make a difference, to have hope: “[T]here’s a spark in you / You just gotta ignite the light and let it shine.” She uses the metaphor of fireworks (and their association with u.s. Independence Day celebrations) to describe the listener’s self-transformation from black dust to shining light: you may feel like trash, but if you can just light yourself on fire, that trash will burn with a dazzling radiance that lights up the sky, just as it lights up audiences’ faces. Here, Perry transforms abjection—feeling like trash, unmoored, socially dead—into incandescent triumph. In the song, the addressee’s personal triumph evokes u.s. nationalist narratives of overcoming colonization (i.e., the Declaration of Independence, celebrated on the Fourth of July). Feminine incandescence—the transformation of waste and melancholy into glowing potential—is no longer revolutionary. Not only parallel to u.s. nationalism, it is the very means for reproducing normativity. In resilience discourse, wild and crazy femmes—like, say, Ke$ha— reproduce normativity in the same way that deregulatory economic practices do (see Cardenas). Unlike Kant’s genius, who gives laws and generates order (i.e., regulation, giving a law) out of unruly materiality, the incandescent, “gaga” femme amplifies what feels like disorder by “resignif[ying] damaged bodies and objects previously expelled from the realm of meaning” (6). And to do this, incandescent femme geniuses use a specific type of experimentation, what Ziarek calls “a dynamic model of interrelation between literary form and material elements of the work of art” (6). This “dynamic interaction” between large-scale form and material details produces “effects” that are “unpredictable and unforeseeable” (Adorno qtd. in Ziarek 114). Experimental methods produce aleatory results.14 Neoliberalism, however, has systematized the aleatory; deregulatory practices are designed to control background conditions so that “dynamic interactions” between form and material produce a range of superficially random outcomes.15 Deregulation turns experimentation into the means of capitalist/hegemonic production. Brilliant gaga ecstasy is what fuels economic and social reproduction.16 So even though incandescent potentiality might be “the very opposite of the traffic in women” (Ziarek 119) figured as the exchange of commodities (e.g., in Irigaray and Rubin), it is quite consistent with neoliberal political and aesthetic economies. Who radiates with potentiality more than the resilient, entrepreneurial postfeminist woman? In the same way that feminized, blackened receptivity was the solution to modernist anxieties about alienation (e.g., the aforementioned Gooding-Williams), feminized, racially nonwhite resilience is taken as a solution to the problem of the “end of art.” Having transgressed all limits and prohibitions—for example, emancipating dissonance, making music out of noise—modernist art had no means of establishing its opposition to society/social normativity. Similarly, capitalism had colonized the globe, exhausting its ability to profit through simple expansion; with no new markets, with nothing else new to conquer, it needed a new method for generating surplus value. As Jeffery Nealon and others argue, capitalism has become a logic of investment and intensity. Instead of expanding and assimilating, it recycles waste and increases efficiencies. Thus, traditionally non- or devalued “women’s work” becomes the fastest growing sector of the service-and-care-work economy. And women’s art-making practices become the hottest new thing in the art world: think of all the “feminist art” retrospectives and exhibits that have taken place in the past five or so years. Modernism’s constitutive outside becomes neoliberalism’s bread and butter; or, the abject is now central to the means of capital, political, and aesthetic production.17 Because it so clearly describes what gets co-opted and domesticated, Ziarek’s account of modernist feminist aesthetics provides the foundation for theorizing neoliberal postfeminist art and politics. But it also provides a possible avenue for contemporary feminist aesthetic and political responses to resilience. It points us to some of the feminist frequencies that resilience discourse obscures: the melancholic end of the spectrum, so to speak, rather than the incandescent. How might we upgrade Ziarek’s theory of melancholic art so that it functions like a queered resilience, resilience gone wrong, resilience that puts us “out of phase” with social normativity?18 In Ziarek’s text, melancholia is a symptom of abjection, or constitutive exclusion.19 But what if we rethink melancholy so that it’s not pathological or failed inclusion (i.e., abjection), but pathological or failed resilience? Resilience incites melancholic damage, feeding it back into the system as the raw material in a tale of incandescent overcoming. But what if this melancholy isn’t overcome, but intensified? When plugged back into the system, would it produce antisocial effects? (That is, effects that don’t help reproduce society.) Can melancholy be kindling that won’t spark when lit or that sparks and burns too cool or too hot, too fast or too slow? If classical melancholy involves “hanging on” to what ought to be excluded (e.g., women’s art), neoliberal melancholy would manifest as insufficient resilience, incandescence that radiates at the wrong frequency, so that, for example, we couldn’t hear or see it. Instead of turning silence into speech and writing, melancholic art would queer silences. Jonathan Katz’s essay “John Cage’s Queer Silences” begins with the line “John Cage never quite came out of the closet.” Cage never positively claimed his identity as a formerly damaged (closeted) but now unrepressed sexual subject. In other words, he didn’t transpose his homosexuality into the terms that would interpolate him into resilient citizenship. Instead of openly proclaiming his gay identity, he remained queerly silent. His silence is “queer” because it doesn’t conform to the in/out or mute/vocal binaries that structure the closet’s epistemology. As Katz explains, “Cage himself, while never denying his sexuality, preferred instead to duck the question: when asked to characterize his relationship with Merce, he would say, ‘I cook and Merce does the dishes.’” Cage answers the question, but in terms that aren’t directly and efficiently legible as a response: cooking and dishwashing seem to have little connection to sexuality. Cage’s silences aren’t just a political response to sexual normativity; they’re also musical responses to increasingly deregulatory (read: neoliberal) compositional methods like “open works” and chance processes. For example, 4′33″ can be read doubly, as both resilience and queer silence. Insofar as it recoups extraneous concert-hall noise and places it at the center of the musical work/performance, 4′33″ is a paradigmatic example of what Ziarek calls modernist experimentation and what I call deregulatory resilience. As much as philosophers love to cite this work as an example of something, however, it’s hard to find examples of people enjoying the work, at least at the level of affect, that is, rocking out to it while exercising or driving down the highway. The affective surplus value we expect from resilience (e.g., glowing radiance) is absent here. The compositional practice of resilience fails to adequately perform the cultural/affective labor with which it is usually tasked. Instead of amplifying affective and aesthetic pleasure, 4′33″ completely undercuts them by giving us the wrong kind of excess. Cage shows us that silence is full of sounds we can’t hear because they radiate at frequencies we can’t (or won’t) hear, that are queerly out of phase with our ability to perceive them.20 Melancholic practices don’t accomplish the kind of work from which neoliberal capital and white supremacist patriarchy can extract adequate surplus value, so we don’t experience them as affectively profitable or pleasurable. Neoliberal melancholy might feel superficially like modernist ressentiment—the Nietzschean “bad conscience” that Ziarek describes as a “reactive rather than creative affect [. . .], a frustrated and powerless will riveted to past injuries rather than engaged in the creation of new political or artistic forms of life” (96). But neoliberal melancholy is something quite different from modernist ressentiment, and more like (to use Sara Ahmed’s term) killjoying—which is another way to think about “bad vibes.” In Nietzsche, ressentiment, or bad conscience, is quintessentially modern: it is the Enlightenment’s will-to-truth, what Gooding-Williams calls the “skeptical melancholy,” that Nietzsche’s perhaps all-too-neoliberal subject must overcome. Neoliberal melancholy is not founded in skepticism, in mind/ body dualisms, or in other such problematics; it isn’t part of the Enlightenment episteme. Killjoying is invested in the same affective, aesthetic, and political episteme as resilience (e.g., what Ahmed calls “the promise of happiness”), but it queers these investments. “Riveted to past injury,” modernist melancholics can’t perform resilience; in Nietzsche’s terms, they say “no” instead of “yes.” Neoliberal melancholics perform resilience, but in a way that intensifies damage rather than overcomes it. They say “yes,” they affirm, but this amplifies rather than overcomes damage.21 For example, melancholy could be the affirmation of the wrong frequencies, the frequencies resilience discourse tunes out. In this way, melancholy isn’t the absence of resilience, or the opposite of resilience, but misfired resilience; “transformation” is not “blocked” (Ziarek 96), but unsuccessful. Neoliberal melancholy goes through the motions but doesn’t “glow” with joy.22 Instead of either accelerating or decelerating, melancholy is the experience of being, as an acoustician might put it, “out of phase” or “phased out” of social normativity. In sum, feminist responses to resilience, or neoliberalism, shouldn’t try to seek an “outside” or a “new beginning”; modernist critical strategies generally support neoliberalism. Instead, they need to figure out how to work within resilience discourse. Melancholy might be one such way. I have tried to show how Ziarek’s book, because of its narrow focus on modernist feminist aesthetics, provides a productive foundation for theorizing neoliberal feminist aesthetics, the feminist aesthetics that respond to “capitalist realism.” The central terms of her analysis—damage, incandescence, melancholy—are key factors in neoliberal politics and aesthetics. What Ziarek’s book shows us is the gendered dimension of these politics and aesthetics and how neoliberalism co-opts women’s resistance strategies, plugging them back into racist, patriarchal projects.