## 1AC

#### I affirm the resolution “The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust.”

#### Observation One: The burden of the affirmative is to prove that appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust. The resolution is a values question asking whether an action is right or wrong, not whether a ban on that action is effective. The aff just has to prove the statement true and the neg just has to prove that it is just.

#### There is no longer an ‘outside’ to capitalism. The existence of an ‘outside’ noncapitalist market required to realize surplus value is immediately and simultaneously internalized as the surplus value is transformed back into capital. An expansive totalizing economic system settles for nothing but totality – the occupation of all space and the consumption of all things

Hardt & Negri 2000 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Empire.* Harvard University Press; Pgs. 221-229. Cambridge, Massachusetts. (2000). LG

For a large portion of the twentieth century, the critique of imperialism has been among the most active and urgent arenas of Marxist theory.1 Many of these arguments are today certainly outdated and the situation they refer to is utterly transformed. This does not mean, however, that we have nothing to learn from them. These critiques of imperialism can help us understand the passage from imperialism to Empire because in certain respects they anticipated that passage. One of the central arguments of the tradition of Marxist thinking on imperialism is that there is an intrinsic relation between capitalism and expansion, and that capitalist expansion inevitably takes the political form of imperialism. Marx himself wrote very little about imperialism, but his analyses of capitalist expansion are central to the entire tradition of critique. What Marx explained most clearly is that capital constantly operates through a reconfiguration of the boundaries of the inside and the outside. Indeed, capital does not function within the confines of a fixed territory and population, but always overflows its borders and internalizes new spaces: ‘‘The tendency to create the world market is directly given in the concept of capital itself. Every limit appears as a barrier to be overcome.’’2 This restive character of capital constitutes an ever-present point of crisis that pertains to the essence of capital itself: constant expansion is its always inadequate but nonetheless necessary attempt to quench an insatiable thirst. We do not mean to suggest that this crisis and these barriers will necessarily lead capital to collapse. On the contrary, as it is for modernity as a whole, crisis is for capital a normal condition that indicates not its end but its tendency and mode of operation. Capital’s construction of imperialism and its move beyond it are both given in the complex play between limits and barriers. Marx analyzes capital’s constant need for expansion first by focusing on the process of realization and thus on the unequal quantitative relationship between the worker as producer and the worker as consumer ofcommodities.3 The problem of realization is one of the factors that drives capital beyond its boundaries and poses the tendency toward the world market. In order to understand the problem we have to start out from exploitation. ‘‘To begin with,’’ we read in the Grundrisse, ‘‘capital forces the workers beyond necessary labour to surplus labour. Only in this way does it realize itself, and create surplus value’’ (p. 421). The wage of the worker (corresponding to necessary labor) must be less than the total value produced by the worker. This surplus value, however, must find an adequate market in order to be realized. Since each worker must produce more value than he or she consumes, the demand of the worker as consumer can never be an adequate demand for the surplus value. In a closed system, the capitalist production and exchange process is thus defined by a series of barriers: ‘‘Capital, then, posits necessary labour time as the barrier to the exchange value of living labour capacity; surplus labour time as the barrier to necessary labour time; and surplus value as the barrier to surplus labour time’’ (p. 422). All these barriers flow from a single barrier defined by the unequal relationship between the worker as producer and the worker as consumer. Certainly, the capitalist class (along with the other classes that share in its profits) will consume some of this excess value, but it cannot consume all of it, because if it did there would be no surplus value left to reinvest. Instead of consuming all the surplus value, capitalists must practice abstinence, which is to say, they must accumulate.4 Capital itself demands that capitalists renounce pleasures and abstain as much as possible from ‘‘wasting’’ the surplus value on their own consumption. This cultural explanation of capitalist morality and abstinence, however, is just a symptom of the real economic barriers posed within capitalist production. On the one hand, if there is to be profit, then the workers must produce more value than they consume. On the other hand, if there is to be accumulation, the capitalist class and its dependents cannot consume all of that surplus value. If the working class together with the capitalist class and its dependents cannot form an adequate market and buy all the commodities produced, then even though exploitation has taken place and surplus value has been extracted, that value cannot be realized.5 Marx points out further that this barrier is continually exacerbated as labor becomes ever more productive. With the increase of productivity and the consequent rise in the composition of capital, variable capital (that is, the wage paid the workers) constitutes an increasingly small part of the total value of the commodities. This means that the workers’ power of consumption is increasingly small with respect to the commodities produced: ‘‘The more productivity develops, the more it comes into conflict with the narrow basis on which the relations of consumption rest.’’6 The realization of capital is thus blocked by the problem of the ‘‘narrow basis’’ of the powers of consumption. We should note that this barrier has nothing to do with the absolute power of production of a population or its absolute power of consumption (undoubtedly the proletariat could and wants to consume more), but rather it refers to the relative power of consumption of a population within the capitalist relations of production and reproduction. In order to realize the surplus value generated in the production process and avoid the devaluation resulting from overproduction, Marx argues that capital must expand its realm: ‘‘A precondition of production based on capital is therefore the production of a constantly widening sphere of circulation, whether the sphere itself is directly expanded or whether more points within it are created as points of production’’ (p. 407). Expanding the sphere of circulation can be accomplished by intensifying existing markets within the capitalist sphere through new needs and wants; but the quantity of the wage available to workers for spending and the capitalists’ need to accumulate pose a rigid barrier to this expansion. Alternatively, additional consumers can be created by drafting new populations into the capitalist relationship, but this cannot stabilize the basically unequal relationship between supply and demand, between the value created and the value that can be consumed by the population of proletarians and capitalists involved.7 On the contrary, new proletarians will themselves always be an inadequate market for the value of what they produce, and thus they will always only reproduce the problem on a larger scale.8 The only effective solution is for capital to look outside itself and discover noncapitalist markets in which to exchange the commodities and realize their value. Expansion of the sphere of circulation outside the capitalist realm displaces the destabilizing inequality. Rosa Luxemburg developed Marx’s analysis of the problem of realization, but she changed the inflection of that analysis. Luxemburg casts the fact that ‘‘outside consumers qua other-than-capitalist are really essential’’ (pp. 365–66) in order for capital to realize its surplus value as an indication of capital’s dependence on its outside. Capitalism is ‘‘the first mode of economy which is unable to exist by itself, which needs other economic systems as a medium and a soil.’’9 Capital is an organism that cannot sustain itself without constantly looking beyond its boundaries, feeding off its external environment. Its outside is essential. Perhaps this need constantly to expand its sphere of control is the sickness of European capital, but perhaps it is also the motor that drove Europe to the position of world dominance in the modern era. ‘‘Perhaps then the merit of the West, confined as it was on its narrow ‘Cape of Asia,’ ’’ Fernand Braudel supposes, ‘‘was to have needed the world, to have needed to venture outside its own front door.’’10 Capital from its inception tends toward being a world power, or really the world power. Capital expands not only to meet the needs of realization and find new markets but also to satisfy the requirements of the subsequent moment in the cycle of accumulation, that is, the process of capitalization. After surplus value has been realized in the form of money (through intensified markets in the capitalist domain and through reliance on noncapitalist markets), that realized surplus value must be reinvested in production, that is, turned back into capital. The capitalization of realized surplus value requires that for the subsequent cycle of production the capitalist will have to secure for purchase additional supplies of constant capital (raw materials, machinery, and so forth) and additional variable capital (that is, labor power)—and eventually in turn this will require an even greater extension of the market for further realization. The search for additional constant capital (in particular, more and newer materials) drives capital toward a kind of imperialism characterized by pillage and theft. Capital, Rosa Luxemburg asserts, ‘‘ransacks the whole world, it procures its means of production from all corners of the earth, seizing them, if necessary by force, from all levels of civilisation and from all forms of society . . . It becomes necessary for capital progressively to dispose ever more fully of the whole globe, to acquire an unlimited choice of means of production, with regard to both quality and quantity, so as to find productive employment for the surplus value it has realised.’’11 In the acquisition of additional means of production, capital does relate to and rely on its noncapitalist environment, but it does not internalize that environment—or rather, it does not necessarily make that environment capitalist. The outside remains outside. For example, gold and diamonds can be extracted from Peru and South Africa or sugarcane from Jamaica and Java perfectly well while those societies and that production continue to function through noncapitalist relations. The acquisition of additional variable capital, the engagement of new labor power and creation of proletarians, by contrast, implies a capitalist imperialism. Extending the working day of existing workers in the capitalist domain can, of course, create additional labor power, but there is a limit to this increase. For the remainder of this new labor power, capital must continually create and engage new proletarians among noncapitalist groups and countries. The progressive proletarianization of the noncapitalist environment is the continual reopening of the processes of primitive accumulation—and thus the capitalization of the noncapitalist environment itself. Luxemburg sees this as the real historical novelty of capitalist conquest: ‘‘All conquerors pursued the aim of dominating and exploiting the country, but none was interested in robbing the people of their productive forces and in destroying their social organisation.’’12 In the process of capitalization the outside is internalized. Capital must therefore not only have open exchange with noncapitalist societies or only appropriate their wealth; it must also actually transform them into capitalist societies themselves. This is what is central in Rudolf Hilferding’s definition of the export of capital: ‘‘By ‘export of capital’ I mean the export of value which is intended to breed surplus value abroad.’’13 What is exported is a relation, a social form that will breed or replicate itself. Like a missionary or vampire, capital touches what is foreign and makes it proper. ‘‘The bourgeoisie,’’ Marx and Engels write, ‘‘compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates the world after its own image.’’14 In economic terms, this civilization and modernization mean capitalization, that is, incorporation within the expanding cycle of capitalist production and accumulation. In this way the noncapitalist environment (territory, social forms, cultures, productive processes, labor power, and so forth) is subsumed formally under capital. We should note here that European capital does not really remake noncapitalist territories ‘‘after its own image,’’ as if all were becoming homogeneous. Indeed, when the Marxist critics of imperialism have recognized the processes of the internalization of capital’s outside, they have generally underestimated the significance of the uneven development and geographical difference implicit in them.15 Each segment of the noncapitalist environment is transformed differently, and all are integrated organically into the expanding body of capital. In other words, the different segments of the outside are internalized not on a model of similitude but as different organs that function together in one coherent body. At this point we can recognize the fundamental contradiction of capitalist expansion: capital’s reliance on its outside, on the noncapitalist environment, which satisfies the need to realize surplus value, conflicts with the internalization of the noncapitalist environment, which satisfies the need to capitalize that realized surplus value. Historically these two processes have often taken place in sequence. A territory and population are first made accessible as an outside for exchange and realization, and then subsequently brought into the realm of capitalist production proper. The important point, however, is that once a segment of the environment has been ‘‘civilized,’’ once it has been organically incorporated into the newly expanded boundaries of the domain of capitalist production, it can no longer be the outside necessary to realize capital’s surplus value. In this sense, capitalization poses a barrier to realization and vice versa; or better, internalization contradicts the reliance on the outside. Capital’s thirst must be quenched with new blood, and it must continually seek new frontiers. It is logical to assume that there would come a time when these two moments of  the cycle of accumulation, realization and capitalization, come into direct conflict and undermine each other. In the nineteenth century, the field for capitalist expansion (in material resources, labor power, and markets) seemed to stretch indefinitely, both in Europe and elsewhere. In Marx’s time, capitalist production accounted for very little of global production. Only a few countries had substantial capitalist production (England, France, and Germany), and even these countries still had large segments of noncapitalist production—peasant-based agriculture, artisanal production, and so forth. Luxemburg argues, however, that since the earth is finite, the logical conflict will eventually become a real contradiction: ‘‘The more violently, ruthlessly and thoroughly imperialism brings about the decline of non-capitalist civilisations, the more rapidly it cuts the ground from under the feet of capitalist accumulation. Though imperialism is the historical method for prolonging the career of capitalism, it is also the sure means of bringing it to a swift conclusion.’’16 This contradictory tension is present throughout the development of capital, but it is revealed in full view only at the limit, at the point of crisis—when capital is faced with the finitude of humanity and the earth. Here the great imperialist Cecil Rhodes appears as the paradigmatic capitalist. The spaces of the globe are closing up and capital’s imperialist expansion is confronting its limits. Rhodes, ever the adventurer, gazes wistfully and yearningly at the stars above, frustrated by the cruel temptation of those new frontiers, so close and yet so far. Even though their critiques of imperialism and capitalist expansion are often presented in strictly quantitative, economic terms, the stakes for Marxist theorists are primarily political. This does not mean that the economic calculations (and the critiques of them) should not be taken seriously; it means, rather, that the economic relationships must be considered as they are really articulated in the historical and social context, as part of political relations of rule and domination.17 The most important political stake for these authors in the question of economic expansion is to demonstrate the ineluctable relationship between capitalism and imperialism. If capitalism and imperialism are essentially related, the logic goes, then any struggle against imperialism (and the wars, misery, impoverishment, and enslavement that follow from it) must also be a direct struggle against capitalism. Any political strategy aimed at reforming the contemporary configuration of capitalism to make it nonimperialist is vain and naive because the core of capitalist reproduction and accumulation necessarily implies imperialist expansion. Capital can- not behave otherwise—this is its nature. The evils of imperialism cannot be confronted except by destroying capitalism itself.

**Outer space has turned into capital’s new internalized “outside”, a new domain into which it can expand for further exploitation of resources and investment of surplus capital – space development and exploration are mere “spatial fixes” for capitalism to postpone its inevitable internal contradictions: the emptying out of all productive possibility**

**Dickens 10** (Peter, Prof @ Universities of Brighton and Cambridge. “The Humanization of the Cosmos—To What End?”, Nov 01, 2010. Monthly Review, https://monthlyreview.org/2010/11/01/the-humanization-of-the-cosmos-to-what-end/)

The Cosmos: Capitalism’s New “Outside” Instead of indulging in over-optimistic and fantastic visions, we should take a longer, harder, and more critical look at what is happening and what is likely to happen. We can then begin taking a more measured view of space humanization, and start developing more progressive alternatives. At this point, we must return to the deeper, underlying processes which are at the heart of the capitalist economy and society, and which are generating this demand for expansion into outer space. Although the humanization of the cosmos is clearly a new and exotic development, the social relationships and mechanisms underlying space-humanization are very familiar. In the early twentieth century, Rosa Luxemburg argued that an “outside” to capitalism is important for two main reasons. First, it is needed as a means of creating massive numbers of new customers who would buy the goods made in the capitalist countries.7 As outlined earlier, space technology has extended and deepened this process, allowing an increasing number of people to become integral to the further expansion of global capitalism. Luxemburg’s second reason for imperial expansion is the search for cheap supplies of labor and raw materials. Clearly, space fiction fantasies about aliens aside, expansion into the cosmos offers no benefits to capital in the form of fresh sources of labor power.8 But expansion into the cosmos does offer prospects for exploiting new materials such as those in asteroids, the moon, and perhaps other cosmic entities such as Mars. Neil Smith’s characterization of capital’s relations to nature is useful at this point. The reproduction of material life is wholly dependent on the production and reproduction of surplus value. To this end, capital stalks the Earth in search of material resources; nature becomes a universal means of production in the sense that it not only provides the subjects, objects and instruments of production, but is also in its totality an appendage to the production process…no part of the Earth’s surface, the atmosphere, the oceans, the geological substratum or the biological superstratum are immune from transformation by capital. 9 Capital is now also “stalking” outer space in the search for new resources and raw materials. Nature on a cosmic scale now seems likely to be incorporated into production processes, these being located mainly on earth. Since Luxemburg wrote, an increasing number of political economists have argued that the importance of a capitalist “outside” is not so much that of creating a new pool of customers or of finding new resources.10 Rather, an outside is needed as a zone into which surplus capital can be invested. Economic and social crisis stems less from the problem of finding new consumers, and more from that of finding, making, and exploiting zones of profitability for surplus capital. Developing “outsides” in this way is also a product of recurring crises, particularly those of declining economic profitability. These crises are followed by attempted “fixes” in distinct geographic regions. The word “fix” is used here both literally and figuratively. On the one hand, capital is being physically invested in new regions. On the other hand, the attempt is to fix capitalism’s crises. Regarding the latter, however, there are, of course, no absolute guarantees that such fixes will really correct an essentially unstable social and economic system. At best, they are short-term solutions. The kind of theory mentioned above also has clear implications for the humanization of the cosmos. Projects for the colonization of outer space should be seen as the attempt to make new types of “spatial fix,” again in response to economic, social, and environmental crises on earth. Outer space will be “globalized,” i.e., appended to Earth, with new parts of the cosmos being invested in by competing nations and companies. Military power will inevitably be made an integral part of this process, governments protecting the zones for which they are responsible. Some influential commentators argue that the current problem for capitalism is that there is now no “outside.”11 Capitalism is everywhere. Similarly, resistance to capitalism is either everywhere or nowhere. But, as suggested above, the humanization of the cosmos seriously questions these assertions. New “spatial fixes” are due to be opened up in the cosmos, capitalism’s emergent outside. At first, these will include artificial fixes such as satellites, space stations, and space hotels. But during the next twenty years or so, existing outsides, such as the moon and Mars, will begin attracting investments. The stage would then be set for wars in outer space between nations and companies attempting to make their own cosmic “fixes.”

#### NewSpace actors have already begun their colonization of the cosmos. Asteroid mining, space travel, a beach resort on Mars – all spoils from venture capitalists’ most recent trophy hunt

Shammas and Holen 19 Shammas, V.L., Holen, T.B. One giant leap for capitalistkind: private enterprise in outer space. Palgrave Commun 5, 10 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0218-9> Shammas works at Oslo Metropolitan University, Work Research Institute (AFI), Oslo, Norway and Holen is an independent researcher in Oslo

No longer terra nullius, space is now the new terra firma of capitalistkind: its naturalized terroir, its next necessary terrain. The logic of capitalism dictates that capital should seek to expand outwards into the vastness of space, a point recognized by a recent ethnography of NewSpace actors (Valentine, 2016, p. 1050). The operations of capitalistkind serve to resolve a series of (potential) crises of capitalism, revolving around the slow, steady decline of spatial fixes (see e.g., Harvey, 1985, p. 51–66) as they come crashing up against the quickly vanishing blank spaces remaining on earthly maps and declining (terrestrial) opportunities for profitable investment of surplus capital (Dickens and Ormrod, 2007a, p. 49–78). A ‘spatial fix' involves the geographic modulation of capital accumulation, consisting in the outward expansion of capital onto new geographic terrains, or into new spaces, with the aim of filling a gap in the home terrains of capital. Jessop (2006, p. 149) notes that spatial fixes may involve a number of strategies, including the creation of new markets within the capitalist world, engaging in trade with non-capitalist economies, and exporting surplus capital to undeveloped or underdeveloped regions. The first two address the problem of insufficient demand and the latter option creates a productive (or valorizing) outlet for excess capital. Capitalism must regularly discover, develop, and appropriate such new spaces because of its inherent tendency to generate surplus capital, i.e., capital bereft of profitable purpose. In Harvey’s (2006, p. xviii) terms, a spatial fix revolves around ‘geographical expansions and restructuring…as a temporary solution to crises understood…in terms of the overaccumulation of capital'. It is a temporary solution because these newly appropriated spaces will in turn become exhausted of profitable potential and are likely to produce their own stocks of surplus capital; while ‘capital surpluses that otherwise stood to be devalued, could be absorbed through geographical expansions and spatio-temporal displacements' (Harvey, 2006, p. xviii), this outwards drive of capitalism is inherently limitless: there is no end point or final destination for capitalism. Instead, capitalism must continuously propel itself onwards in search of pristine sites of renewed capital accumulation. In this way, Harvey writes, society constantly ‘creates fresh productive powers elsewhere to absorb its overaccumulated capital' (Harvey, 1981, p. 8). Historically, spatial fixes have played an important role in conserving the capitalist system. As Jessop (2006, p. 149) points out, ‘The export of surplus money capital, surplus commodities, and/or surplus labour-power outside the space(s) where they originate enabled capital to avoid, at least for a period, the threat of devaluation'. But these new spaces for capital are not necessarily limited to physical terrains, as with colonial expansion in the nineteenth century; as Greene and Joseph (2015) note, various digital spaces, such as the Internet, can also be considered as spatial fixes: the Web absorbs overaccumulated capital, heightens consumption of virtual and physical goods, and makes inexpensive, flexible sources of labor available to employers. Greene and Joseph offer the example of online high-speed frequency trading as a digital spatial fix that furthers the ‘annihilation of space by time' first noted by Marx in his Grundrisse (see Marx, 1973, p. 524). Outer space serves at least two purposes in this regard. In the short-to medium-term, it allows for the export of surplus capital into emerging industries, such as satellite imaging and communication. These are significant sites of capital accumulation: global revenues in the worldwide satellite market in 2016 amounted to $260 billion (SIA, 2017, p. 4). Clearly, much of this activity is taking place ‘on the ground'; it is occurring in the ‘terrestrial economy'. But all that capital would have to find some other meaningful or productive outlet were it not for the expansion of capital into space. Second, outer space serves as an arena of technological innovation, which feeds back into the terrestrial economy, helping to avert crisis by pushing capital out of technological stagnation and innovation shortfalls. In short, outer space serves as a spatial fix. It swallows up surplus capital, promising to deliver valuable resources, technological innovations, and communication services to capitalists back on Earth. This places outer space on the same level as traditional colonization, analyzed in Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, which Hegel thought of as a product of the ‘inner dialectic of civil society', which drives the market to ‘push beyond its own limits and seek markets, and so its necessary means of subsistence, in other lands which are either deficient in the goods it has overproduced, or else generally backward in creative industry, etc.' (Hegel, 2008, p. 222). In this regard, SpaceX and related ventures are not so very different from maritime colonialists and the trader-exploiters of the British East India Company. But there is something new at stake. As the Silicon Valley entrepreneur Peter Diamandis has gleefully noted: ‘There are twenty-trillion-dollar checks up there, waiting to be cashed!' (Seaney and Glendenning, 2016). Capitalistkind consists in the naturalization of capitalist consciousness and practice, the (false) universalization of a particular mode of political economy as inherent to the human condition, followed by the projection of this naturalized universality into space—capitalist humanity as a Fukuyamite ‘end of history', the end-point of (earthly) historical unfolding, but the starting point of humanity’s first serious advances in space. What role, then, for the state? The frontiersmen of NewSpace tend to think of themselves as libertarians, pioneers beyond the domain of state bureaucracy (see Nelson and Block, 2018). ‘The government should leave the design work and ownership of the product to the private sector', the author of a 2017 report, Capitalism in Space, advocates. ‘The private companies know best how to build their own products to maximize performance while lowering cost' (Zimmerman, 2017, p. 27). One ethnographer notes that ‘politically, right-libertarianism prevails' amongst NewSpace entrepreneurs (Valentine, 2016, p. 1047–1048). Just as Donald Rumsfeld dismissed the opponents to the Iraq War as ‘Old Europe', so too are state entities’ interests in space exploration shrugged off as symptoms of ‘Old Space'. Elon Musk, we are told in a recent biography, unlike the sluggish Big State actors of yore, ‘would apply some of the start-up techniques he’d learned in Silicon Valley to run SpaceX lean and fast…As a private company, SpaceX would also avoid the waste and cost overruns associated with government contractors' (Vance, 2015, p. 114). This libertarianism-in-space has found a willing chorus of academic supporters. The legal scholar Virgiliu Pop introduces the notion of the frontier paradigm (combining laissez-faire economics, market competition, and an individualist ethic) into the domain of space law, claiming that this paradigm has ‘proven its worth on our planet' and will ‘most likely…do so in the extraterrestrial realms' as well (Pop, 2009, p. vi). This frontier paradigm is not entirely new: a ‘Columbus mythology', centering on the ‘noble explorer', was continuously evoked in the United States during the Cold War space race (Dickens and Ormrod, 2016, pp. 79, 162–164).

#### Defense contractors and space corporations have captured the US congress with massive lobbying to ensure their control of outer space at the expense of social programs – ensures that the wars that plagued the Earth will be exported to the heavens

Grossman 21 Grossman, Karl. "Insane U.S. Plan To Spend Billions On Weaponizing Space Makes Defense Contractors Jump For Joy—But Rest Of World Cowers In Horror At Prospect Of New Arms Race Leading To World War III | MR Online". MR Online, 2021, <https://mronline.org/2021/09/01/insane-u-s-plan-to-spend-billions-on-weaponizing-space-makes-defense-contractors-jump-for-joy-but-rest-of-world-cowers-in-horror-at-prospect-of-new-arms-race-leading-to-world-war-iii/>. Karl Grossman is an author, TV program host and full professor of journalism at the State University of New York/College at Old Westbury. For 30 years, he has hosted the TV interview program Enviro Close-Up with Karl Grossman. He is the author of six books.

“Rigged Game in Washington” The Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space was formed in 1992 at a meeting in Washington, D.C., and has been the leading group internationally challenging the weaponization and nuclearization of space. Its coordinator, Bruce Gagnon, in a 2021 interview with me, said: “The aerospace industry has long proclaimed that ‘Star Wars’ would be the largest industrial project in human history. Add the nuclear industry’s ambition to use space as its ‘new market,’ and one can imagine the money that would be involved. These two industry giants have put their resources together to ensure their ‘control and domination’ of the U.S. Congress. Both political parties are virtually locked down when it comes to appropriating funds to move the arms race into space and to colonize the heavens for corporate profits. Just one example is the recent approval in Congress of the creation of the ‘Space Force’ as a new service branch in the military.” “During the Trump administration (with the Democrats in control of the House of Representatives) the Space Force was ‘stood up’ as they like to say in the biz,” said Gagnon. “The Democrats could have stopped the creation of this new military branch. During the little congressional debate that did occur, the only thing the Democrats requested was to call it the ‘Space Corps’ (like the Marine Corps). It’s a rigged game in Washington when it comes to handing out money to the aerospace industry.” Gagnon continued: “In his book, [The Pentagon’s New Map: War and Peace in the 2lst Century](https://www.amazon.com/Pentagons-New-Map-Twenty-First-Century/dp/0425202399), former Navy War College Professor Thomas Barnett writes that, under globalization of the world economy, every country will have a different role. We won’t produce shoes, cars, phones, washing machines and the like in the U.S. anymore because it is cheaper for industry to exploit labor in the global south. Our role in the U.S., Barnett says, will be ‘security export.’ That means we will endlessly fight wars in the parts of the world where nations are not yet ‘fully integrated’ into corporate capitalism. Having a dominant military in space would enable the U.S. to see, hear and target everything on the Earth.” “In order to put together a global ‘Leviathan’ military capability,” Gagnon continued, “space must be militarized and weaponized. The cost of doing so is enormous and requires cuts in social and environmental spending and larger contributions from NATO member nations.” “In addition to using space technology to control Earth on behalf of corporate capital, the new Space Force will have another key job. They will be tasked with attempting to control the pathway on and off the planet Earth. In the 1989 Congressional Study entitled [Military Space Forces: The Next 50 Years](http://coat.ncf.ca/our_magazine/links/55/Articles/55_12-13.pdf), congressional staffer John Collins writes on pages 24 and 25: “[Nature reserves decisive advantage for L4 and L5, two allegedly stable [space] libration points that theoretically could dominate Earth and moon, because they look down both gravity wells. No other location is equally commanding](https://coat.ncf.ca/our_magazine/links/55/Articles/55_12-13.pdf)…. Armed forces might lie in wait at that location to hijack rival shipments on return.” Privatized Gold Rush “The Pentagon is looking to a future where space would be fully privatized and a new gold rush would ensue. Corporations and rich fat-cats like Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and Richard Branson, while ignoring the UN’s Outer Space and Moon Treaties that call the heavens the ‘province of all mankind,’ would move to control the shipping lanes from Earth into space. The Space Force would be used by these ‘space entrepreneurs’ as their own private pirate forces to ensure they controlled the extraction of resources mined from planetary bodies. This provocative vision would in the end recreate the global war system, which has been deeply embedded into the culture and consciousness here on Earth. Russia, China and other space-faring nations are not going to allow the U.S. to be the ‘Master of Space.’” Says Gagnon: “I call this the bad seed of greed, war and environmental devastation that we are poised to plant into the heavens.” “It is my hope that the global public would quickly awaken to a deep understanding and not allow corporate oligarchs or the military to encircle our planet with so much space junk that we would be forever entombed on Earth, or continue to punch a hole in the Earth’s delicate ozone layer from toxic rocket exhaust after each of their tens of thousands of coming launches, or ruin the sacred night sky with blinking satellites for 5G that will in the end be used by the Space Force for expanded ‘space situational awareness’ and targeting capabilities.” “We have reached the point in human history where we need the immediate intervention by the citizen taxpayers of the planet to ensure that our tiny orbiting satellite called Earth remains livable for the future generations,” Gagnon declared. “We can’t fall for the public relations story-line of the cowboy sailing off into space to discover the new world. We know how that movie turns out in the end—just ask the Native American people.” U.S. Army Colonel John Fairlamb (Ret.), in 2021 wrote in The Hill, the Washington, D.C., news website: “Let’s be clear: Deploying weapons in space crosses a threshold that cannot be walked back.” Fairlamb’s background includes being International Affairs Specialist for the Army Space and Missile Defense Command and Military Assistant to the U.S. Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs. “Given the implications for strategic stability, and the likelihood that such a decision [to deploy weapons in space] by any nation would set off an expensive space arms race in which any advantage gained would likely be temporary, engaging now to prevent such a debacle seems warranted,” wrote Fairlamb. His piece was headed: “The U.S. should negotiate a ban on basing weapons in space.” “It’s time,” Fairlamb wrote, “for arms control planning to address the issues raised by this drift toward militarization of space. Space is a place where billions of defense dollars can evaporate quickly and result in more threats about which to be concerned. Russia and China have been proposing mechanisms for space arms control at the United Nations for years; it’s time for the U.S. to cooperate in this effort.” As Alice Slater, a member of the boards of both the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space and the organization World BEYOND War, says: “The U.S. mission to dominate and control the military use of space has been, historically and at present, a major obstacle to achieving nuclear disarmament and a peaceful path to preserve all life on Earth. Reagan rejected Gorbachev’s offer to give up ‘Star Wars’ as a condition for both countries to eliminate all their nuclear weapons … Bush and Obama blocked any discussion in 2008 and 2014 on Russian and Chinese proposals for a space-weapons ban in the consensus-bound Committee on Disarmament in Geneva.” “At this unique time in history when it is imperative that nations of the world join in cooperation to share resources to end the global plague assaulting its inhabitants and to [avoid catastrophic climate destruction or Earth-shattering nuclear devastation,”](https://worldbeyondwar.org/time-to-negotiate-for-peace-in-space/) said Slater, “we are instead squandering our treasure and intellectual capacity on weapons and space warfare.” And yet far worse is to come—unless there is a return to the vision of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. The latter needs to be expanded, U.S. Space Force dismantled, and a full global commitment made to keep space for peace. As we go to press, Breaking Defense published an article: [“Pentagon Poised To Unveil, Demonstrate Classified Space Weapon.” This was its headline. Above the headline it stated: “Show Coverage: Space Symposium 2021”](https://breakingdefense.com/2021/08/pentagon-posed-to-unveil-classified-space-weapon/?utm_campaign=Breaking%20News&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=151302334&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-_WjJRXNH7oSN8eQo0iMMC52dIbrytHkcSOFjM1_zECxrz5zqaTLiWTN0lmaYIYa35tfuqxon2uOPfvbhS1zFeBwuIlrg&utm_content=151302334&utm_source=hs_email) The piece begins: [“For months, top officials at the Defense Department have been working toward declassifying the existence of a secret space weapon program and providing a real-world demonstration of its capabilities.”](https://breakingdefense.com/2021/08/pentagon-posed-to-unveil-classified-space-weapon/?utm_campaign=Breaking%20News&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=151302334&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-_WjJRXNH7oSN8eQo0iMMC52dIbrytHkcSOFjM1_zECxrz5zqaTLiWTN0lmaYIYa35tfuqxon2uOPfvbhS1zFeBwuIlrg&utm_content=151302334&utm_source=hs_email) It continues: [“The system in question long has been cloaked in the blackest of black secrecy veils—developed as a so-called Special Access Program known only to a very few, very senior government leaders.”](https://breakingdefense.com/2021/08/pentagon-posed-to-unveil-classified-space-weapon/?utm_campaign=Breaking%20News&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=151302334&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-_WjJRXNH7oSN8eQo0iMMC52dIbrytHkcSOFjM1_zECxrz5zqaTLiWTN0lmaYIYa35tfuqxon2uOPfvbhS1zFeBwuIlrg&utm_content=151302334&utm_source=hs_email) The August 20th article features below its headline a large illustration of—as its caption reads—“Directed energy anti-satellite weapons for the future (Lockheed Martin)” Space Symposium 2021 was to be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado between August 23 and 26. A main speaker was to be General John W. “Jay” Raymond, chief of space operations of the U.S. Space Force. Breaking Defense describes itself as “the digital magazine on the strategy, politics and technology of defense,” adding: “It’s a new era in defense, where new technologies, new warfare domains and a rapidly shifting military and political landscape have profound implications for national security.” Profound, indeed!

#### Financial frenzy will turn to bloodlust, outer space privatization is the most likely cause of armed conflict

Dickens and Ormrod 07 Dickens, Peter, and James Ormrod. Cosmic Society. Routeledge, 2007. Peter Dickens is an Affiliated Lecturer in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Cambridge and Visiting Professor of Sociology, University of Essex. James Ormrod is a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Brighton.

These fixes could easily become the basis for a new global war, one in which a militarized outer space would be an important part. This is because there is a potential and actual contradiction between regional ‘fixes’ such as those attempted by China, India and Japan and the demands for capital to find new sources of accumulation. A regional fix is often made ‘autarchic’: a zone that, on account of active state intervention, allows limited trade with the outside world. As Harvey (2006) suggests, this may not be a problem so long as there are sufficient resources of capital and labour in the region in question for local capital to continue accu- mulation. But, if this is not the case, capital will inevitably move elsewhere. In the process, however, it confronts other capitalist enterprises over access to labour and resources. Nationally based private enterprises therefore finish up competing for shrinking opportunities for accumulation and this indeed is a recipe for potential armed conflict. As the next chapter discusses in more detail, China, Japan and India are amongst the countries now attempting to secure military presences in outer space. If Harvey’s theory is correct, these are means of protecting regional interests by ensuring that capital in these regions will have ready access to resources and labour beyond their own limits. Regional investments in outer space could thereby form an important form of future wars over resources, hostilities which could even include confrontations with the military might of the United States. Initially these conflicts might be land-based with satellites engaged in surveillance and the guid- ing of Earth-based weapons, but later they could easily be of a ‘star wars’ type with hostilities taking place in outer space. As Harvey points out, war can be seen as the ultimate and most catastrophic form of ‘devaluation’: one in which whole societies are obliterated and the prospects for a new round of investment and accumulation may be started. But regional, government-organized alliances do not have to be formed for military and surveillance purposes. Europe can also be seen as an attempted autar- chy. It is making, albeit rather gradually, its own regional fix while raising trade barriers and pressurizing developing countries to open up markets. On the other hand, its outer space policy seems quite distinctive from that of other regions. The European Space Agency (ESA) does not appear to be imperialist in intent. It is relatively collaborative, allowing access to a range of players. These include public and private sector organizations and, perhaps surprisingly, a very substantial investment from China. ESA’s Galileo system of thirty satellites circling the globe is to be used for peaceful purposes such as environmental monitoring and the satellite guidance of private vehicles. It is set to radically change how physical movements, especially on the roads, will be tracked. It will also pave the way for individualized road pricing, insurance pricing and monitoring. From a geopolitical viewpoint, however, the importance of Galileo is that it opens up the possibility of an independent force in outer space. It is will allow, for example, surveillance that cannot be controlled by the US. This is making American authorities treat the Galileo system with a high degree of suspicion (Mean and Wilsdon 2004).

#### Space exploration is a smokescreen for unending extraction of Earth’s resources, exhausting the planet past the brink of a livable climate. Inaction on emissions isn’t accidental, the billionaire class is jumping ship to board another

Jackson 21 Jackson, Tim. "Billionaire Space Race: The Ultimate Symbol Of Capitalism’S Flawed Obsession With Growth". The Conversation, 2021, <https://theconversation.com/billionaire-space-race-the-ultimate-symbol-of-capitalisms-flawed-obsession-with-growth-164511>. Tim Jackson is an ecological economist and writer. Since 2016 he has been Director of the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP) at the University of Surrey in the UK, where he is also Professor of Sustainable Development.

Growth wars Ever since 1972, when a team of MIT scientists published a massively influential report on the [Limits to Growth](https://www.clubofrome.org/publication/the-limits-to-growth/), [economists have been fighting](https://science.sciencemag.org/content/366/6468/950) about whether it’s possible for the economy to expand forever. Those who believe it can, appeal to the [power of technology](https://andrewmcafee.org/more-from-less/overivew) to “decouple” economic activity from its effects on the planet. Those (like me) who believe it can’t point to the [limited evidence for decoupling](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332500379_Is_Green_Growth_Possible) at anything like the pace that’s needed to avoid a climate emergency or prevent a catastrophic decline in biodiversity. The growth debate often hangs on the power you attribute to technology to save us. Usually it’s the technophiles arguing for infinite growth on a finite planet – sometimes putting their hopes in speculative technologies such as [direct air capture](https://theconversation.com/new-co-capture-technology-is-not-the-magic-bullet-against-climate-change-115413) or dangerous ones like nuclear power. And usually it’s the sceptics arguing for a [post-growth economy](http://www.timjackson.org.uk/postgrowth). But the simple division between technophiles and technophobes has never been particularly helpful. Very few growth sceptics reject technology completely. No one at all is asking humanity to return to the cave. My own research teams at the University of Surrey have been [exploring the vital role](https://www.cusp.ac.uk/team/team/t_jackson/) of sustainable technology in transforming the economy for almost three decades now. But we’ve also shown how the dynamics of capitalism – in particular its relentless pursuit of [productivity growth](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/27/opinion/sunday/lets-be-less-productive.html) – continually push society towards materialistic goals, and undermine those parts of the economy such as [care, craft and creativity](http://www.timjackson.org.uk/pwg), which are essential to our quality of life. And now suddenly, along comes a group of self-confessed technology lovers finally admitting that the planet is too small for us. Yes, you were right, they imply: the Earth cannot sustain infinite growth. That’s why we have to expand into space. Wait. What just happened? Did somebody move the goalposts? Something is wrong. Maybe it’s me. One thing I know for sure. I’m no longer the same kid I was – the one from the debating society. This house believes that humanity should grow the fuck up. Before it spends [trillions of dollars](https://www.sciencefocus.com/space/top-10-what-are-the-top-10-most-expensive-space-missions/) littering its [techno-junk](https://www.esa.int/Safety_Security/Space_Debris/The_cost_of_space_debris#:%7E:text=Space%20debris%20is%20expensive%2C%20and%20will%20become%20even%20more%20so&text=For%20satellites%20in%20geostationary%20orbit,higher%20than%205%E2%80%9310%25.) around the solar system, this house believes that humanity should pay a little more attention to what’s happening right here and now. On this planet. The human condition Perhaps ironically, it was from space that we saw it first. In October 1957, the Soviets sent an unmanned orbital satellite called [Sputnik](https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/image_feature_924.html) into space. It was one of those odd moments in history (like the coronavirus) that dramatically reshapes our social world. Sputnik kicked off the space race, intensified the arms race and heightened the cold war. It was a huge blow to US self-esteem not to be the first nation to reach space and it was the jolt it used to kickstart the Apollo Moon shot. No one likes coming second. Least of all the most powerful people on the planet. But Sputnik also signalled the beginning of a new relationship between humanity and its earthly home. As the political philosopher [Hannah Arendt](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arendt/) remarked in the prologue to her 1958 masterpiece, [The Human Condition](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/The_Human_Condition/bGlwDwAAQBAJ), going into space allowed us to grasp our planetary predicament for the first time in history. It was a reminder that “the Earth is the quintessence of the human condition”. And nature itself, “for all we know, may be unique in providing human beings with a habitat in which they can move and breathe without effort and without artifice”. Fair point. And nothing we’ve learned in the intervening years has changed that prognosis. Mars may be the most habitable planet in the solar system, outside our own. But it’s still a very far cry from the beauty of home – whose fragility we only truly learned to appreciate fully from the images sent back to us from space. Nature photographer Galen Rowell once called William Anders’ iconic photo [Earthrise](https://www.nasa.gov/centers/johnson/home/earthrise.html) – taken from the Apollo 8 module in lunar orbit – “the most influential environmental photograph ever taken”. Earthrise brought home to us, in one astonishing image, the stark reality that this shining orb was – and still is – humanity’s best chance for anything that might meaningfully be called the “good life”. Its beauty is our beauty. Its fragility is our fragility. And its peril is our peril. In the very same year that Arendt published The Human Condition, a Shell executive named Charles Jones presented [a paper](http://www.climatefiles.com/trade-group/american-petroleum-institute/1958-air-pollution-research-program-smoke-fumes/) to the fossil fuel industry’s trade group, the American Petroleum Institute, warning of the impact of carbon emissions from fossil fuel combustion on the atmosphere. It was early evidence of climate change. It was also evidence, according to lawsuits [now being filed](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2021/jun/30/climate-crimes-fossil-fuels-cities-states-interactive) by cities and states in the US, that companies like Shell knew it was happening more than 60 years ago – three decades before James Hansen’s [scientific testimony](https://grist.org/article/james-hansens-legacy-scientists-reflect-on-climate-change-in-1988-2018-and-2048/) to Congress in 1988 brought global warming to public attention. And they did nothing about it. Worse, argue plaintiffs like the [state of Delaware](https://eu.delawareonline.com/story/news/2020/09/10/delaware-sues-exxon-chevron-and-bp-role-climate-change/3457202001/), they lied over and again to cover up this “inconvenient truth”. Why such a thing could happen is now clear. Evidence of their impact was a direct threat to the profits of some of the most powerful corporations on the planet. Profit is the bedrock of capitalism. And as I argue in [my new book](http://www.timjackson.org.uk/postgrowth), we have allowed capitalism to trump everything: work, life, hope – even good governance. The most enlightened governments in the world have turned a blind eye to the need for urgent action. Now we’re on the verge of being too late to fix it. Achieving net zero by 2050 is [no longer enough](https://theconversation.com/2050-is-too-late-we-must-drastically-cut-emissions-much-sooner-121512). We need much more, much faster to avoid ending up in an unliveable [hothouse](https://theconversation.com/hothouse-earth-our-planet-has-been-here-before-heres-what-it-looked-like-101413). Even as I write, [record-breaking temperatures](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/10/us/west-heat-wave-death-valley.html), 10-20℃ above the seasonal average, have forced citizens on the west coast of North America into [underground shelters](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/07/01/portland-heatwave-like-microwave-hairdryer-blowing/) to avoid the searing heat. [Wildfires](https://news.sky.com/story/us-wildfires-firefighters-grapple-with-raging-blazes-as-temperatures-soar-to-54c-in-californias-baking-death-valley-12354197) are raging in California’s Death Valley, where temperatures have reached an astonishing 54℃. On the storm-struck east coast, [flood waters](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jul/09/new-york-city-storm-flooding-climate-change) have inundated the New York subway system. Thousands remain homeless and hundreds are still missing, meanwhile, as [historic flooding](https://news.sky.com/story/germany-and-belgium-floods-rescuers-search-for-hundreds-of-missing-as-more-than-120-die-in-historic-disaster-12357532) across central Europe has left almost 200 people dead. In the face of the blindingly obvious, even recalcitrant presidents and politicians are at last beginning to acknowledge the scale of the peril in which our relentless pursuit of economic growth has placed the planet. And in principle they still have time to do something about it. As I and many colleagues have argued, the pandemic offers us a unique opportunity to fashion [a different kind of economy](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/news-media/press-releases/economy-environment-and-peoples-well-being-must-go-hand-hand-post-covid-eu). The 26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Convention ([COP26](https://ukcop26.org/)) in Glasgow in November 2021 could well be the place to do that. Whether that happens or not will depend as much on vision as it does on science. And on our courage to confront the inequalities of power that led us to this point. It will also depend on us going back to first principles and asking ourselves: how exactly should we aim to live in the only habitable world in the known universe? What is the nature of the good life available to us here? What can prosperity [possibly mean](http://www.cusp.ac.uk/) for a promiscuous species on a finite planet? The question is almost as old as the hills. But the contemporary answer to it is paralysingly narrow. Cast in the garb of late capitalism, prosperity has been captured by the ideology of “growth at all costs”: an insistence that more is always better. Despite [overwhelming evidence](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Jq23mSDh9U) that relentless expansion is undermining nature and driving us towards a devastating climate emergency, the “[fairytales of eternal growth](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMrtLsQbaok)” still reign supreme. It’s an ironic twist in the tale of the debate society kid I used to be that I’ve spent most of my professional life confronting those fairytales of growth. Don’t ask me how that happened. By accident mostly. I toyed with the idea of studying astrophysics. But I ended up studying Maths at Cambridge, where I confess to being baffled by the complexity of it all, until I realised that even math is just a trick. Quite literally a formula. Believe in it and you can travel to the stars and back. In your mind, at least. And there I was wandering around in zero G, when I woke up one day (in April 1986) to find that the Number four reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine had suffered a catastrophic meltdown. I suddenly realised that the very same skills I’d spent my life developing were leading humanity not towards the stars but away from the paradise we already inhabit. So yes. I changed my mind. The next day I walked into the Greenpeace office in London and asked what I could do to help. They set me working on the [economics of renewable energy](https://www.elsevier.com/books/renewable-energy/jackson/978-1-4832-5695-5) I became, accidentally, an economist. (Economics needs more accidental economists.) And that’s when it began to dawn on me that learning how to live well on this fragile planet is far more important than dreaming about the next one. Not so the space race billionaires. A handful of unbelievably powerful men, whose wealth has [exploded](https://www.forbes.com/sites/chasewithorn/2021/04/30/american-billionaires-have-gotten-12-trillion-richer-during-the-pandemic/) massively throughout the pandemic, are now busy trying to persuade us that the future lies not here on Earth but out there among the stars. Tesla founder and serial entrepreneur, Elon Musk is one of these new rocket men. “Those who attack space,” he [tweeted](https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1414782972474048516) recently, “maybe don’t realise that space represents hope for so many people”. That may be true of course in a world where huge inequalities of wealth and privilege strip hope from the lives of billions of people. But, as the spouse of a Nasa flight controller pointed out, it obscures the [extraordinary demands](https://www.salon.com/2021/07/07/no-billionaires-wont-escape-to-space-while-the-world-burns/?fbclid=IwAR3Hzv3TGOuflDjlSatFJQN0_nastGp1MCqP-AOU0PJrUQWtHIMxNcP-BEM) of escaping from Mother Earth, in terms of energy materials, people and time. Undeterred, the rocket men gaze starward. If resources are the problem, then space must be the answer. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is pretty explicit about his own expansionary vision. “We can have a trillion humans in the solar system,” [he once declared](https://www.nbcnews.com/mach/science/jeff-bezos-foresees-trillion-people-living-millions-space-colonies-here-ncna1006036). “Which means we’d have a thousand Mozarts and a thousand Einsteins. This would be an incredible civilisation.” Bezos and Musk have spent their lockdown contesting the top two places on the Forbes [rich list](https://www.forbes.com/billionaires/). They’ve also been playing “mine is bigger than yours” in their own private space race for a couple of decades now. Bezos’s personal wealth [almost doubled](https://inequality.org/great-divide/updates-billionaire-pandemic/) during the course of a pandemic that destroyed the lives and livelihoods of millions. He’s now stepping down to spend more time on Blue Origin, the company he hopes will deliver vast human colonies across the solar system. The [declared aim](https://www.spacex.com/mission/) of Musk’s rival company, SpaceX, is “to make humanity multiplanetary”. Just like [Kim Stanley Robinson](https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/our-greatest-political-novelist)’s science fiction [trilogy](https://space.nss.org/book-review-red-mars/) back in the 1990s, Musk aims to establish a [permanent human colony](https://www.cnet.com/news/elon-musk-drops-details-for-spacexs-million-person-mars-mega-colony/) on Mars. To get there, he reasons, we need very big rockets – or, in the original terminology of SpaceX, Big Fucking Rockets ([BFRs](https://techcrunch.com/2018/09/19/18-new-details-about-elon-musks-redesigned-moon-bound-big-fing-rocket/?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAJd2kjzq4ZnY7YFIEcz1ZTmBPm7MmuQ_2wfNs9erxRMlo4qDio6p9lDkDY7I00A3KvMN5ZKZkkkxZB_ldqttJgYIGM2a4zE5NLSWLYRZMI11-1xbvn31Q6uJBOOn11q5oVbllHCYDhH3ygdBFbWUXOu2H2tXqDsVhtsvMKEe5s_w)) – eventually capable of transporting scores of people and hundreds of tonnes of equipment millions of miles across the solar system. The BFRs have now given way to a series of (more sedately named) Starships. And to prove his green credentials Musk desperately wants these [starships](https://www.spacex.com/vehicles/starship/) to be reusable. So much so that SpaceX conspired to blow up four consecutive Starship prototypes in quick succession during the first four months of 2021 trying unsuccessfully to re-land them. Move fast and break things is the Silicon Valley motto of course. But eventually you’ve got to bring the goods home. [Starship SN15](https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/5/6/the-starship-has-landed-spacex-nails-reusable-craft-touchdown) finally achieved that on May 5 – three weeks after SpaceX had landed a massive [US$2.9 billion](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/16/science/spacex-moon-nasa.html) contract from Nasa, nudging Blue Origin into the space race shadows. Not wanting to be outdone, Bezos came up with what he must have hoped was the ultimate comeback. When Blue Origin’s [New Shepard](https://www.blueorigin.com/new-shepard/) rocket – which is also reusable – made its first manned space flight on July 20, he and his brother Mark would be two of the first few passengers on board. Wow, Jeff! Kudos man! Now you really show us your cojones! Nobody likes coming second. Least of all the most powerful people on the planet. But sometimes you get no choice. Out of the blue, without so much as a by-your-leave, Virgin boss, Richard Branson swooped in to steal everyone’s thunder. On July 11, nine days before Bezos’s big day, Branson became the first ever billionaire to [launch himself into space](https://theconversation.com/virgin-galactic-space-tourism-takes-off-with-bransons-inaugural-flight-164142). And for a cool US$250,000, he promised us, you too can be one of Virgin Galactic’s 600 or so breathless customers, waiting to enjoy three or four weightless minutes gazing back in rapture at the planet you’ve left behind. Apparently, Musk has [already signed up](https://www.theverge.com/2021/7/12/22573850/elon-musk-richard-branson-spaceplane-virgin-galactic). Bezos doesn’t need to. He’s made his own [virgin space flight](https://www.space.com/news/live/blue-origin-jeff-bezos-launch-updates) now. Prosperity as health The space rhetoric of the super-rich betrays a mentality that may once have served humanity well. Some would say it’s a quintessential feature of capitalism. Innovation upon innovation. A driving ambition to expand and explore. A primal urge to escape our origins and reach for the next horizon. Space travel is a natural extension of our [obsession with economic growth](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/02/10/can-we-have-prosperity-without-growth). It’s the crowning jewel of capitalism. Further and faster is its frontier creed. I’ve spent much of my professional life as a critic of that creed, not just for environmental reasons but on social grounds as well. The seven years I spent as economics commissioner on the UK’s [Sustainable Development Commission](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/) and my subsequent research at the [Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity](http://www.cusp.ac.uk/) revealed something fundamental about our aspirations for the good life. Something that has been underlined by the experience of the pandemic. Prosperity is as much about health as it is about wealth. Ask people what matters most in their lives and the chances are that this will come out somewhere near the top of the list. Health for themselves. Health for their friends and their families. Health too – sometimes – for the fragile planet on which we live and on whose health we ourselves depend. There’s something fascinating in this idea. Because it confronts the obsession with growth head on. As Aristotle pointed out in [Nicomachean Ethics](http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html) (a book named after his physician father), the good life is not a relentless search for more, but a continual process of finding a “virtuous” balance between too little and too much. Population health provides an obvious example of this idea. Too little food and we’re struggling with diseases of malnutrition. Too much and we’re tipped into the “diseases of affluence” that [now kill more people](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight) than under-nutrition does. Good health depends on us finding and nurturing this balance. This task is always tricky of course, even at the individual level. Just think about the challenge of keeping your exercise, your diet and your appetites in line with the outcome of a healthy body weight. But as [I’ve argued](https://www.timjackson.org.uk/postgrowth), living inside a system that has its sights continually focused on more makes the task near impossible. Obesity has tripled since 1975. Almost two-fifths of adults over 18 are overweight. Capitalism not only fails to recognise the point where balance lies. It has absolutely no idea how to stop when it gets there. You’d think our brush with mortality through the pandemic would have brought some of this home to us. You’d think it would give us pause for thought about what really matters to us: the kind of world we want for our children; the kind of society we want to live in. And for many people it has. In a survey carried out during lockdown in the UK, [85% of respondents](https://www.thersa.org/press/releases/2019/brits-see-cleaner-air-stronger-social-bonds-and-changing-food-habits-amid-lockdown) found something in their changed conditions they felt worth keeping and fewer than 10% wanted a complete return to normal. When life and health are at stake, the ungodly scramble for wealth and status feels less and less attractive. Even the lure of technology pales. Family, conviviality and a sense of purpose come to the fore. These are the things that many people found they lacked most throughout the pandemic. But their importance in our lives was not a COVID accident: they are the most fundamental elements of a sustainable prosperity. The denial of death Something even more surprising has [emerged](https://timjackson.org.uk/consumerism-theodicy/) during my three decades of research. Behind consumer capitalism, behind the frontier mentality, beyond the urge to expand forever lies a deep-seated and pervasive anxiety. What does day two look like, Bezos once [asked a crowd](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTwXS2H_iJo&ab_channel=AmazonNews) of the faithful, referring to his famous maxim about the need to innovate. “Day two is stasis, followed by irrelevance, followed by excruciatingly painful decline, followed by death,” he said. “And that. Is why. It is always. Day one!” His audience loved it. Musk plays out his own inner demons just as disarmingly. “I’m not trying to be anyone’s saviour,” [he once told](https://www.ted.com/talks/elon_musk_the_future_we_re_building_and_boring/transcript?language=en) TED’s head curator, Chris Anderton. “I’m just trying to think about the future – and not be sad.” Again, the applause was deafening. A well-trained therapist could have a field day with all of this. Take that miraculous day a few weeks after the Perseverance rover started sending home the most amazing selfies in the universe, when the Ingenuity helicopter made its [virgin flight](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQMTo0KuN5M) in the wafer thin atmosphere of Mars. It was the kind of outcome that could have intelligence agencies drooling over far less benign uses of the technology. But there was also something pretty existential going on. The faint whispering of the Martian wind, relayed faithfully across the solar system, doesn’t just confirm the possibilities for aerial flight on an alien planet. It’s grist to the mill of an essential belief that human beings are endlessly creative and fiendishly clever. Our visceral response to these momentary triumphs speaks to a branch of psychology called [terror management theory](https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/basics/terror-management-theory) drawn from the work of cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker. It was explored in particular in his astonishing 1973 book [The Denial of Death](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/The_Denial_of_Death/jyqGDwAAQBAJ). In it, Becker argues that modern society has lost its way, precisely because we’ve become terrified of confronting the inevitability of our own demise. Terror management theory tells us that, when mortality becomes “salient”, instead of addressing the underlying fear, we turn for comfort to the things which make us feel good. Capitalism itself is a massive comfort blanket, designed to help us never confront the mortality that awaits us all. So too are the dreams of the rocket men. When Sputnik kickstarted the first “space race” six decades ago, a US newspaper headline called it “one step toward [our] escape from imprisonment to the Earth”. Arendt read those words with astonishment. She saw there a deep-seated “[rebellion against human existence](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/The_Human_Condition/bGlwDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=hannah%20arendt%20%27rebellion%20against%20human%20existence%27&pg=PA2&printsec=frontcover&bsq=hannah%20arendt%20%27rebellion%20against%20human%20existence%27)”. It isn’t just the pandemic that locks us down, the implication is. It’s the entire human condition. The anxiety we feel is nothing new. The choice between confronting our fears and running away from them has always been a profound one. It’s exactly the choice we’re facing now. As vaccine roll-out brings a glimmer of light at the end of COVID-19, the temptation to rush into wild escapism is massive. But for all its glamour, the “final frontier” is at best an amusement and at worst a fatal distraction from the urgent task of rebuilding a society ravaged by social injustice, climate change and a loss of faith in the future. With most of us still reeling from what the World Health Organisation has called a [shadow pandemic](https://theconversation.com/domestic-abuse-and-mental-ill-health-twin-shadow-pandemics-stalk-the-second-wave-148412) in mental health, any kind of escape plan at all looks remarkably like paradise. And emigrating to Mars is one hell of an escape plan. Let’s dream of some “final frontier” by all means. But let’s focus our minds too on some quintessentially earthly priorities. Affordable healthcare. Decent homes for the poorest in society. A solid education for our kids. Reversing the decades-long precarity in the livelihoods of the frontline workers – the ones who saved our lives. Regenerating the devastating loss of the natural world. Replacing a frenetic consumerism with an economy of care and relationship and meaning. Never have these things made so much sense to so many. Never has there been a better time to turn them into a reality. Not just for the handful of billionaires dreaming of unbridled wealth on the red planet, but for the eight billion mere m ortals living out their far less brazen dreams on the blue one.

## Framing

#### The Role of the Ballot is to support critiques of capitalism – we must change how we interact with the system before we can construct a political movement designed to tear it down

Giroux 20. [Henry Armand Giroux is an American and Canadian scholar and cultural critic. One of the founding theorists of critical pedagogy in the United States, he is best known for his pioneering work in public pedagogy, cultural studies, youth studies, higher education, media studies, and critical theory. 6-19-2020. Accessed 12/30/2020. “Racist Violence Can’t Be Separated from the Violence of Neoliberal Capitalism” [https://socialistproject.ca/2020/06/racist-violence-neoliberal-capitalism](https://socialistproject.ca/2020/06/racist-violence-neoliberal-capitalism//vg)

It should be clear that questions of economic and social justice cannot be addressed by a neoliberal pedagogy that enshrines self-interest and privatization while converting every social problem into individualized market solutions or regressive matters of personal responsibility. Under neoliberalism’s disimagination machine, individual responsibility is coupled with an ethos of greed, avarice, and personal gain. One consequence is the tearing up of social solidarities, public values, and an almost pathological disdain for democracy. This radical form of privatization is also a powerful force for the rise of fascist politics because it depoliticizes individuals, immerses them in the logic of social Darwinism, and makes them susceptible to the dehumanization of those considered a threat or disposable. Just as the spread of the pandemic virus in the United States was not an innocent act of nature, neither is the rise and pervasive grip of inequality. What is clear is that neoliberal support for unbridled individualism has weakened democratic pressures and eroded democracy and equality as governing principles. Moreover, as a mode of public pedagogy, it has undercut social provisions, the social contract, and support for public goods such as education, public health, essential infrastructure, public transportation, and the most basic elements of the welfare state. As a form of pedagogical practice, neoliberalism has morphed into a form of pandemic pedagogy that sacrifices social needs and human life in the name of an economic rationality that values reviving economic growth over human rights. As a lived system of meaning and values, self-reliance and rugged individualism are the only categories available for shaping how individuals view themselves, and their relationship to others and to the planet. The individualization of everyone and the reduction of social problems to private troubles is paralleled by sanctioning a world marked by borders, walls, racism, hate, and a rejection of government intervention in the interest of the common good. Most importantly, neoliberal individualization personalizes power, creating a depoliticized subject whose only obligation as a citizen is defined by consuming and living in a world free from ethical and social responsibilities. In many ways, it does not just empty politics of any substance, it destroys its emancipatory prospects. The neoliberal strategists use education not only to mask their abuses and the effects of their criminogenic policies, they also – in a time of crisis, when dissatisfaction of the masses might lead to chaos, revolts, and dangerous levels of resistance – move dangerously close to creating the conditions for a fascist politics. The noted theologian Frei Betto is right in stating that under such conditions, “…they cover up the causes of social ills and cover up their effects with ideologies that, by obscuring causes, fuel mood in the face of the effects. That’s why neoliberalism is now showing its authoritarian face – building walls that divide countries and ethnic groups, executive power over legislature and judiciary, disinformation about digital networks, the cult of the homeland, the brazen offensive against human rights.” Neoliberalism and its regressive notion of individualism and individual responsibility has undermined the belief that human beings both make the world and can change it. The pandemic has ushered in a crisis that undermines that belief and opens the door for rethinking what kind of society and notion of politics will be faithful to the creation of a socialist democracy that speaks to the core values of justice, equality, and solidarity. Under such circumstances, private resistance must give way to collective resistance, and personal and political rights must include economic rights. If inequality is to be defeated, the social state must replace the corporate state, and social rights must be guaranteed for all. There can be no adequate struggle for economic justice and social equality unless economic inequality on a global level is addressed along with a movement for climate justice, the elimination of systemic racism, and a halt to the spiraling militarism that has resulted in endless wars. This can only take place if the anti-democratic ideology of neoliberalism, with its collapse of the public into the private and its institutional structures of domination, are fully addressed and discredited. Étienne Balibar is right in stating that the triumph of neoliberalism has resulted in the “death zones of humanity.” Following Balibar, what must be made clear is that neoliberal capitalism is itself a pandemic and a dangerous harbinger of an updated fascist politics. Overcoming Pandemic Pedagogy The kinds of societies that will emerge after the pandemic is up for grabs. In some cases, the crisis will give way to authoritarian regimes such as Chile, Hungary, and Turkey, all of which have used the urgency of COVID-19 as an excuse to impose more state control and surveillance, squelch dissent, eliminate civil liberties, and concentrate power in the hands of an authoritarian political class. As is well documented, history in a time of crisis also has the potential to change dominant ideologies, rethink the meaning of governance, and enlarge the sphere of justice and equality through a vision that fights for a more generous and inclusive politics. It is crucial to rethink the project of politics in order to imagine forms of resistance that are collective, inclusive and global, and capable of producing new democratic arrangements for social life, more radical values, and a “global economy which will no longer be at the mercy of market mechanisms.” This is a politics that must move beyond siloed identities and fractured political factions in order to build transnational solidarities in the service of an alternative radically democratic society. Making the pedagogical more political means challenging those forms of pandemic pedagogy that turn politics into theater, a favorite tactic of Trump. In this case, the performance works to suspend disbelief, hold power accountable, and unravel one’s sense of critical agency. Pandemic pedagogy does more than undermine critical thinking and informed judgments; it dissolves the line between the truth and lies, fantasy and reality, and in doing so, destroys the foundation for understanding, engaging, and promoting that social and economic justice. The endgame under the rubric of a pandemic pedagogy is not simply the destruction of the truth, but the elimination of democracy itself. Central to developing an alternative democratic vision is development of a language that refuses to look away and be commodified. Such a language should be able to break through the continuity and consensus of common sense and appeal to the natural order of things. At stake here is the need to reclaim both critical and redemptive elements of a radical democracy in order to address the full spectrum of violence that structures institutions and everyday life in the United States. This is a language connected to the acquisition of civic literacy, and it demands a different regime of desires and identifications to enable us to move from “shock and stunned silence toward a coherent visceral speech, one as strong as the force that is charging at us.” Of course, there is more at stake here than a struggle over meaning; there is also the struggle over power, over the need to create a formative culture that will produce informed critical agents who will fight for and contribute to a broad social movement that will translate meaning into a fierce struggle for economic, political, and social justice. Agency in this sense must be connected to a notion of possibility and education in the service of radical change. Reimagining the future only becomes meaningful when it is rooted in a fierce struggle against the horrors and totalitarian practices of a pandemic pedagogy that falsely claims that it exists outside of history. Václav Havel, the late Czech political dissident-turned-politician, once argued that politics follows culture, by which he meant that changing consciousness is the first step toward building mass movements of resistance. What is crucial here in the age of multiple crises is a thorough grasp of the notion that critical and engaged forms of agency are a product of emancipatory education. Moreover, at the heart of any viable notion of politics is the recognition that politics begins with attempts to change the way people think, act, and feel with respect to both how they view themselves and their relations to others. There is more to agency than the neoliberal emphasis on the “empire of the self,” with its unchecked belief in the virtues of a form of self-interest that despises the bonds of sociality, solidarity, and community. The US is in the midst of a political and pedagogical crisis. This is a crisis defined not only by a brutalizing racism and massive inequality, but also by a constitutional crisis produced by a growing authoritarianism that has been in the making for some time. The recent attacks by the police on journalists, peaceful protesters, and even elderly people marching for racial justice, echoes the violence of the Brownshirts in the 1930s. Let’s stop the futile debate about whether or not the US is in the midst of a fascist state and shift the register to the more serious question of how to resist it and restore a semblance of real democracy. Under such circumstances, education should be viewed as central to politics, and it plays a crucial role in producing informed judgments, actions, morality, and social responsibility at the forefront not only of agency, but politics itself. In this scenario, truth and politics mutually inform each other to erupt in a pedagogical awakening at the moment when the rules are broken. Taking risks becomes a necessity, self-reflection narrates its capacity for critically engaged agency, and thinking the impossible is not an option, but a necessity. Without an informed and educated citizenry, democracy can lead to tyranny, even fascism. Trump represents the malignant presence of a fascism that never dies and is ready to re-emerge at different times in different context in sometimes not-so-recognizable forms. The COVID-19 crisis and the pandemic of inequality and racism have revealed elements of a fascist politics that are more than abstractions. The struggle against a fascist politics is now visible in the rebellions taking place across the United States. While there are no political guarantees for a victory, there is a new sense that the future can be changed in the image of a just and sustainable society. There is a new energy for reform taking place in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd. Massive protests for racial, economic, and social justice are emerging all over the globe. As I have argued in The Terror of the Unforeseen, at stake here is the need for these protests to transition from a pedagogical moment and collective outburst of moral anger to a progressive international movement that is well organized and unified. Such a movement must build solidarity among different groups, imagine new forms of social life, make the impossible possible, and produce a revolutionary project in defense of equality, social justice, and popular sovereignty. The racial, class, ecological, and public health crisis facing the globe can only be understood as part of a comprehensive crisis of the totality. Immediate solutions such as defunding the police and improving community services are important, but they do not deal with the larger issue of eliminating a neoliberal system structured in massive racial and economic inequalities. David Harvey is right in arguing that the “immediate task is nothing more nor less than the self-conscious construction of a new political framework for approaching the question of inequality, through a deep and profound critique of our economic and social system.” This is a crisis in which different threads of oppression must be understood as part of the general crisis of capitalism. The various protests now evolving internationally at the popular level offer the promise of new global anti-fascist and anti-capitalist movements. In the current moment, democracy may be under a severe threat and appear frighteningly vulnerable, but with young people and others rising up across the globe – inspired, energized and marching in the streets – the future of a radical democracy is waiting to breathe again. •