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#### The affirmative is caught in an exaltation of use-value that perpetuates capitalism

Baudrillard 76 (Jean, Prof of Phil at EGS, “When Bataille Attacked the Metaphysical Principle of Economy, trans David Miller)  
The central idea is that the economy which governs our societies results from a misappropriation of the fundamental human principle, which is a solar principle of expenditure. Bataille's thought goes, beyond proper political economy (which in essence is regulated through exchange value), straight to **the metaphysical principle of economy**. Bataille's target **is utility**, in its root. Utility is, of course, an apparently positive principle of capital: accumulation, investment, depreciation, etc. But in fact it is, on Bataille's account, **a** principle of **powerless**ness, an utter **inability to expend**. Given that all previous societies knew how to expend, this is, an unbelievable deficiency : it cuts the human being off from all possible sovereignty. All economics are founded on that which no longer can, no longer knows how to expend itself, on that which is incapable of becoming the stake of a sacrifice. It is therefore entirely residual, it is a limited social fact; and it is against economy as a limited social fact that Bataille wants to raise expenditure, death, and sacrifice as total social facts--such is the principle of general economy. The principle of utility (use value) blends with the bourgeoisie, with this capitalist class whose definition for Bataille (contrary to Marx) is negative: it no longer knows how to expend. Similarly, **the crisis of capital**, its increasing mortality **and its** immanent **death throes**, **are not bound**, as in the work of Marx, **to** a history, to **dialectical reversals**, **but to** this fundamental law of **the inability to expend**, **which give capital over to** the cancer of production and **unlimited reproduction**. There is no principle of revolution in Bataille's work: "**The terror of revolutions** has only done more and more (de mieux en mieux) to **subordinate human energy to industry**." There is only a principle of sacrifice-the principle of sovereignty, whose diversion by the bourgeoisie and capital causes all human history to pass from sacred tragedy to the comedy of utility. This critique is a non-Marxist critique, an aristocratic critique; because it aims at utility, at economic finality as the axiom of capitalist society. **The Marxist critique is only a** critique of capital, a critique coming from the heart of the middle and petit bourgeois classes, for which Marxism has served for a century as a latent ideology: a **critique of exchange value**, **but an exaltation of use value**-and thus a critique, at the same time, **of what** **made the** almost delirious **greatness of capital**, the secular remains of its religious quality: investment at any price, even at the cost of use value. The Marxist seeks a good use of economy. **Marxism is** therefore only a limited petit bourgeois critique, **one more step in the banalization of life toward the** "**good use**" **of the social**! Bataille, to the contrary, sweeps away all this slave dialectic from an aristocratic point of view, that of the master struggling with his death. One can accuse this perspective of being pre or post-Marxist. At any rate, Marxism is only the disenchanted horizon of capital-all that precedes or follows it is more radical than it is. What remains uncertain in the work of Bataille (but without a doubt this uncertainty cannot be alleviated), is to know whether the economy (capital), which is counterbalanced on absurd, but never useless, never sacrificial expenditures (wars, waste . ..), is nevertheless shot through with a sacrificial dynamic. Is political economy at bottom only a frustrated avatar of the single great cosmic law of expenditure? Is the entire history of capital only an immense detour toward its own catastrophe, toward its own sacrificial end? If this is so, it is because, in the end, one cannot not expend. A longer spiral perhaps drags capital beyond economy, toward a destruction of its own values; the alternative is that we are stuck forever" in this denial of the sacred, in the vertigo of supply, which signifies the rupture of alliance (of symbolic exchange in primitive societies) and of sovereignty. Bataille would have been impassioned by the present evolution of **capital in this era of floating currencies**, of values seeking their own level (which is not their transmutation), and the drift of finalities (which is neither sovereign uselessness nor the absurd gratuitousness of laughter and death). But his concept of expenditure would have permitted only a limited analysis : it is still too economic, too much the flip side of accumulation, as transgression is too close to the inverse figure ofprohibition.4 In an order which **is** no longer that of utility, but **an aleatory order of value**, pure expenditure, while retaining the romantic charm of turning the economic inside out, is no longer sufficient for radical defiance -it shatters the mirror of market value, but is powerless against the shifting mirror of structural value. Bataille founds his general economy on a "solar economy" without reciprocal exchange, on the unilateral gift that the sun makes of its energy : a cosmogony of expenditure, which he deploys in a religious and political anthropology . But Bataille has misread Mauss: the unilateral gift does not exist. This is not the law of the universe. He who has so well explored the human sacrifice of the Aztecs should have known as they did that the sun gives nothing, it is necessary to nourish it continually with human blood in order that it shine. It is necessary to challenge the gods through sacrifice in order that they respond with profusion. In other words, the root of sacrifice and of general economy is never pure and simple expenditure-or whatever drive [pulsion] of excess that supposedly comes to us from nature-but is an incessant process of challenge [Wfi]. The "excess of energy" does not come from the sun (from nature) but from a continual higher bidding in exchange-the symbolic process that can be found in the work of Mauss, not that of the gift (that is the naturalist mystique into which Bataille falls), but that of the counter-gift . This is the single truly symbolic process, which in fact implies death as a kind of maximal excess-but not as individual ecstasy, always as the maximal principle of social exchange. In this sense, one can reproach Bataille for having "naturalized" Mauss (but in a metaphysical spiral so prodigious that the reproach is not really one), and for having made symbolic exchange a kind of natural function of prodigality, at once hyper-religious in its gratuitousness and much too close still, a contrario, to the principle of utility and to the economic order that it exhausts in transgression without ever leaving behind. It is "in the glory of death" [d hauteur de mort] that one rediscovers Bataille, and the real question posed remains: "How is it that all men have encountered the need and felt the obligation to kill living beings ritually? For lack of having known how to respond, all men have remained in ignorance of that which they are." There is an answer to this question beneath the text, in all the interstices of Bataille's text, but in my opinion not in the notion of expenditure, nor in this kind of anthropological reconstruction that he tries to establish from the "objective" data of his day: Marxism, biology, sociology, ethnology, political economy, the objective potential of which he tries to bring together nevertheless, in a perspective which is neither exactly a genealogy, nor a natural history, nor a Hegelian totality, but a bit of all that. But the sacred imperative is flawless in its mythic assertion, and the will to teach is continually breached by Bataille's dazzling vision, by a "subject of knowledge" always "at the boiling point." The consequence of this is that even analytic or documentary considerations have that mythic force which constitutes the sole-sacrificial-force of writing.

#### The subversiveness of a strategy of resistance can only be effective if it begins with the object and deconstructing the metaphysics of value. Baudrillard 1 (professor of phil at EGS, Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings, pg. 75//shree)

This is why use-value fetishism is indeed more profound, more “mysterious” than the fetishism of exchange value. The mystery of exchange value and the commodity can be unmasked, relatively —it has been since Marx — and raised to consciousness as a social relation. But value in the case of use value is enveloped in total mystery, for it is grounded anthropologically in the (self-) “evidence” of a naturalness, in an unsurpassable original reference. This is where we discover the real “theology” of value — in the order of finalities: in the “ideal” relation of equivalence, harmony, economy and equilibrium that the concept of utility implies. It operates at all levels: between man and nature, man and objects, man and his body, the self and others. Value becomes absolutely self-evident, la chose la plus simple. Here the mystery and cunning (of history and of reason) are at their most profound and tenacious. If the system of use value is produced by the system of ex­change value as its own ideology — if use value has no autonomy, if it is only the satellite and alibi of exchange value, though system­atically combining with it in the framework of political economy —then it is no longer possible to posit use value as an alternative to exchange value. Nor, therefore, is it possible to posit the “restitution” of use value, at the end of political economy, under the sign of the “liberation of needs” and the “administration of things” as a revolu­tionary perspective. Every revolutionary perspective today stands or falls on its ability to reinterrogate radically the repressive, reductive, rationalizing meta­physic of utility. All critical theory depends on the analysis of the object form.’0 This has been absent from Marxist analysis. With all the political and ideological consequences that this implies, the result has been that all illusions converged on use value, idealized by oppos­ition to exchange value, when it was in fact only the latter’s natur­alized form.

#### Using capitalist metaphors to describe social conditions reinforces corporatization of education and normalizes inequitable power structures.

Kip Austin Hinton 15, Assistant Professor, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, “Should We Use a Capital Framework to Understand Culture? Applying Cultural Capital to Communities of Color,” Equity & Excellence in Education, 48(2), 299-319, 2015.

Influence of an Economic Metaphor on Communities of Color

It makes sense for a neoliberal economist to embrace the prism of social or cultural capital, because economic research frequently interprets the world as a primarily economic sphere. But what about when a social justice educator embraces social or cultural capital? Many social justice advocates do not define the world in economic terms, and do not see market forces as the primary solution to oppressive systems. Capitalism promotes hegemony, not social justice. The agenda of capital has always run counter to the goals of community empowerment: “Within this transformed system, capital demanded that the household function as a factory” (Perelman, 2000, p. 74). According to Weber, the mere existence of family relationships presents an obstacle to capitalism (Collins, 1986, p. 269). Decades ago, Apple (1971) warned that schools were slipping into a marketplace orientation, prioritizing “maintenance of the same dominant world-view” (p. 27). Public institutions have indeed become more market-driven, focused on capital in a way that disempowers communities of color, making it harder to enact democratic reforms (Apple, 2006; Clawson & Leiblum, 2008). Metaphorical capital does not contribute to this directly, but rather indirectly—through metaphor.

Across metaphorical capitals, each framework is fundamentally economic. Research on funds of knowledge and community cultural wealth mimic economic vocabulary without a conception of investment or of supply and demand. Looking to the source, Bourdieu’s (1977) prominent theories are influenced by the economic work of Marx (2011). This makes it particularly notable that Bourdieu himself ignores most aspects of economic capital when he applies it to cultural interaction. Bourdieu does not theorize systems of exchange, return on investment, loans, entrepreneurship, or the actions of cultural capitalists. In fact, Bourdieu’s original concept is somewhat analogous to money, not to capital. Successive theorists have been reluctant to move beyond Bourdieu’s initial, imprecise articulations (Dika & Singh, 2002; Lin, 1999). So, although it may be unusual to come across a theory of race that ignores racism, it is common for a theory of capital to ignore capitalism.

Metaphors have influence. In a metaphor, one domain of human thought is superimposed on a different domain, creating important influence on the receiving domain (Barcelona, 2003). Lakoff (2004) and others have explained how a repeated metaphor reifies in our consciousness, even altering neural processes (Kovecses, 2010). The way any issue is framed, writes Mehta (2013), ¨ “changes the nature of the debate” (p. 292). A problem’s definition is a political consideration, deeply influencing which questions we ask, and which solutions we consider (Lakoff & Pinker, 2007; Sandikcioglu, 2003). This is illustrated by prominent metaphors in the languages of industrialized nations. We use money metaphors to think about time (spend time, living on borrowed time); we use war metaphors to think about arguments (defend a position, surrender a point). As Lakoff and Johnson (2003) explain, we do not explain arguments using a dance metaphor (p. 5), but if we did, it would influence the way we see our opponents/partners.

In the case of culture, are there limits to what education researchers are willing to characterize as capital? Derrida and Moore (1974) warn us of “deploying” metaphors “without limit”: “Consequently the reassuring dichotomy between the metaphorical and the proper is exploded” (p. 74). S. Smith and Kulynych (2002) claim social capital confuses analytical categories because capital is inextricably tied to economic discourse; this critique applies to all forms of metaphorical capital. In public consciousness, capital will not be divorced from capitalism. Deployments of metaphorical capital, therefore, impose the economic worldview of capitalism. These theories position capital and wealth as the normal ways of defining a relationship. Even if such theories were revised to reflect money instead (e.g., “cultural currency”), they would still precariously assume that human interaction can and should be explained in economic terms.

Metaphorical capital advances an economic framework that interprets educational or cultural situations as capitalist, neoliberal, and market-based. We have adopted a specific paradigm, and now that paradigm dictates policy options (P. Hall, 1993). Neoliberal solutions, including standardized testing and charter schools, already dominate education reform (Jones & Vagle, 2013). Political and social critiques are central to critical race theory—yet are marginalized by neoliberal discourse. It is significant that Friedman (1997), one of the most influential proponents of capital and capitalism, advocated privatization of all public schools through vouchers. Rather than functioning as independent fields, education and economics are deeply connected, often in destructive ways. In the past decades, education research has seen an increase in both capitalrelated social theory and the influence of economics. Privatization and corporatization have increased throughout education systems (Saltman, 2012). Aside from the direct harm caused by market-based reform (Burch, 2009; Saltman, 2000), corporatization has reinforced the economic worldview that was embodied by metaphorical capital. Education reports are filled with finance-related vocabulary: funds, investment, value-added, stakeholder, productivity, buy-in. Economic perspectives infringe on discussions about students, even when topics are ostensibly unrelated to money. “This is the extent of capitalism’s hegemony, that it has colonized our capacity to imagine alternatives” (Hickel & Khan, 2012, p. 221). Language influences thought, and educators begin to accept the market mindset. We normalize an inequitable power structure. The capitalist viewpoint becomes the normal way to see everything, and its opportunistic oppression, likewise, becomes normal. It is not surprising, then, that the assets of communities of color go unrecognized—and as I write this, I struggle to explain the limitations of a capitalist frame without reproducing that frame, with my problematic word choice, “assets.”

Freire (1970) has been influential among scholars who rely on metaphorical capital to write about students of color. It is significant that Freire employs economic metaphors to represent the problem (Oughton, 2010): “Banking education” is his name for the method that dehumanizes students (Freire, 1970, p. 73). Freire recognizes economic power as a destructive force at play in the lives of the poor. He consistently opposes multiple elements of the neoliberal agenda, especially the prioritization of capital (Carnoy, 1998; Freire, 1998). Throughout his work, Freire offers ways to counter the commodification of students and promote true democracy (Marginson, 2006). A Freirean analysis of metaphorical capitals, then, notices the neglect of power relations and the depiction of human relationships as economic exchanges.

Hegemonic cultural values, says Gramsci (2011), are those that are accepted as inevitable. The status quo of the economic system cannot be separated from the status quo of the education system. Gramsci embraces education, believing the development of working class intellectuals will reshape the status quo. Gramsci recognizes resistance and promotes agency, in ways that are echoed by community cultural wealth. Though Gramsci opposes economism, he never claims culture, education, and economics are independent (Jessop & Sum, 2006). These are multiple facets of a single, comprehensive system of power. That is to say, there is no such thing as a non-economic policy goal. Do we choose capital as a metaphor because it is the best metaphor, or because it is the one we are familiar with? A Gramscian analysis by Torres (2013) examines the way a neoliberal framework asserts itself as common sense within educational reforms. In a capitalist system, power is allocated to the financially powerful, structuring our self-definitions. As participants in a capitalist system, capital is our common sense, our default, so it is not a surprise that we append the word even when it is unnecessary. These are “tacit, discursive endorsements of neoliberal ideology” (Ayers, 2005, p. 535). From a social justice perspective, metaphors are not arbitrary tools to assign without consequence. They make claims about truth, using rhetoric that “cannot be neutral” (Derrida & Moore, 1974, p. 41). Discourse matters, whether within controversies over Native American mascots (King & Springwood, 2001) or a politician’s description of a war as a “crusade” (Kellner, 2007). Power relations connect seemingly innocuous discursive practices to broader practices of political rhetoric, discrimination, and global financial institutions (McKenna, 2004). In an analysis of community college mission statements, Ayers (2005) concludes that “neoliberal discourse” directs attention to market concerns, so “curriculum is likely to become heavily laden with a market ideology that reinforces and reproduces power asymmetries” (p. 546). By repeating neoliberal vocabulary, frameworks of metaphorical capital have potentially weakened democracy by re-inscribing a framework of capitalism. Even when a particular study’s content works against oppression, language choices may not.

Although market-based education reforms have become more powerful, those who promulgate theories of metaphorical capital have become less likely to have academic understanding of capital itself (Dika & Singh, 2002). Cultural neglect of students of color cannot be logically separated from the economic exclusion they face, as irrelevant curriculum leads to higher pushout rates (M. Fine, 1991; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Yes, the cultures of black, Latina/o, Native ´ American, and Asian American students deserve equal footing inside classrooms, and this is true even—or especially—when those cultural practices are not easily framed as a form of capital. I am inspired by Yosso (2005) in her referral to Anzaldua’s (1990) call for a more empowering ´ theory. Yet I think of Lorde’s (1984) warning, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house,” because those tools keep a part of us stuck within “the master’s relationships” (p. 123). Wealth and capital are the capitalist’s tools, the capitalist’s relationships. These are not ethical relationships (Schweickart, 2002). The dominance of financial vocabulary empowers non-human (and inhumane) relationships, through capitalism. These are the relationships between supply and demand; between capital and commodity; between powerful and powerless; between legislation and corporation. As argued by Giroux and Giroux (2006), global capital is responsible for making the wealth and achievement gaps worse for black and Latina/o communities.

I specifically claim that this supposed metaphorical capital is not capital at all. As social justice researchers, we are not neutral; we seek ways to fight oppressive conditions. Yet by basing our metaphors on capital, our theoretical frameworks promote a worldview that is inconsistent with our own goals. Letting go of the metaphor of capital, we may find more relevant and more ethical ways to theorize culture.

#### Cap collapsing now – most recent ev

**IMT 21** (World Perspectives 2021: a global epoch of revolution is being prepared https://www.marxist.com/a-worldwide-epoch-of-revolution-is-being-prepared.htm International Marxist Tendency 30 July 2021 Accessed 8-13-2021) CSUF JmB + meza Work Week

The nature of perspectives The present document, which should be read in conjunction with the one we produced in September 2020, will be somewhat different to world perspectives documents that we have issued in the past. In previous periods, when events were moving at a more leisurely pace, it was possible to deal, at least in outline, with many different countries. Now, however, the pace of events has accelerated to the point where in order to deal with everything, one would need a whole book. The purpose of perspectives is not to produce a catalogue of revolutionary events, but to uncover the fundamental underlying processes. As Hegel explained in the Introduction to the Philosophy of History: “It is in fact, the wish for rational insight, not the ambition to amass a mere heap of acquisitions, that should be presupposed in every case as possessing the mind of the learner in the study of science.” We are dealing here with general processes, and can only look at a few countries which serve to illustrate most clearly those processes at this stage. Other countries will, of course, be dealt with in separate articles. Dramatic events The year 2021 commenced with dramatic events. The crisis of world capitalism is making waves that are spreading from one country and continent to another. On all sides, there is the same picture of chaos, economic dislocation and class polarisation. The new year barely began before a far-right mob stormed the US Capitol Building in Washington at the urging of former US president, Donald Trump – giving the centre of Western imperialism the appearance of a failed state. These events, coupled with the vastly larger Black Lives Matter protests last summer, show how deep the polarisation of US society has become. In addition to this, big protests in India, Colombia, Chile, Belarus and Russia demonstrated the same process: the masses’ resentment is growing, and the ruling class is failing to govern in the old ways. A global crisis like no other These world perspectives are unlike any other we have dealt with in the past. They are enormously complicated by the pandemic that is hanging like a black cloud over the entire world, subjecting millions to misery, suffering and death. The pandemic still rages out of control. At the moment of writing, there have been more than 100 million cases worldwide, and almost three million deaths. These figures are unprecedented outside a world war. And they continue to rise inexorably. This terrible scourge has had a devastating effect in poor countries around the world and has also seriously affected some of the richest countries. In the USA there are 30 million cases, and the number of deaths has gone over the half a million mark. And Britain has among the highest number of deaths per head of the population: over 4 million cases, and well over 100,000 deaths. The present crisis is therefore not like an ordinary economic crisis. This is literally a life-and-death situation for millions of people. Many of these deaths could have been avoided with proper measures early on. Capitalism cannot solve the problem Capitalism cannot solve the problem: it is itself the problem. This pandemic serves to expose the intolerable divisions between rich and poor. It has revealed the deep fault lines that divide society. The line between those who are condemned to get sick and die, and those who are not. It has laid bare the wastefulness of capitalism, its chaos and inefficiency, and is preparing class struggle in every country in the world. Bourgeois politicians like to use military analogies to describe the present situation. They say we are at war with an invisible enemy, this terrible virus. They conclude that all classes and parties must unite behind the existing government. But a yawning gulf separates words from deeds. The case for a planned economy and international planning is unanswerable. The crisis is worldwide. The virus does not respect frontiers or border controls. The situation demands an international response, the pooling of all scientific knowledge and the mobilisation of all the resources of the planet to coordinate a genuine global plan of action. Instead, we have the unedifying spectacle of the row between Britain and the EU over scarce vaccines, while some of the poorest countries are virtually denied access to any vaccines at all. But why is there a scarcity of vaccines? The problems of vaccine production – to cite just one example – are a reflection of the contradiction between the urgent needs of society and the mechanisms of the market economy. If we were really at war with the virus, governments would mobilise all their resources on this one task. From a purely rational point of view, the best policy would be to ramp up vaccine production as fast as possible. Capacity needs to be expanded, which can only be done by setting up new factories. But the big private vaccine manufacturers have no interest in expanding production massively because they would be financially worse off if they did. If they ramped up production capacity so that the whole world was supplied within six months, the newly built facilities would stand empty immediately afterwards. Profits would then be much lower compared with current scenarios, where existing plants produce at capacity for years to come. Yet another obstacle to mass production of the vaccine is the refusal of Big Pharma to relinquish intellectual property rights over “their own” vaccines (in most cases developed with massive amounts of state funding) so that other companies would be able to produce them cheaply. Pharmaceutical companies are making tens of billions in profits, but problems with both production and supply mean shortages everywhere. In the meantime, millions of lives are at risk. Workers’ lives at risk In their haste to get production (and therefore profits) moving again, politicians and capitalists resort to cutting corners. Workers are sent back to crowded workplaces without adequate protection. This is equivalent to passing a death sentence on many of these workers and their families. All the hopes of the bourgeois politicians were based on the new vaccines. But the rollout of vaccines has been bungled, and the failure to control the spread of the virus – which increases the risk of new vaccine-resistant strains developing – has serious implications, not just for human lives and health, but also for the economy. Economic crisis The present economic crisis is the most severe in 300 years, according to the Bank of England. In 2020, the equivalent of 255 million jobs were lost worldwide, four times more than in 2009. The so-called emerging economies are being dragged down with the rest. India, Brazil, Russia, Turkey are all in crisis. South Korea’s economy shrank last year for the first time in 22 years. That was despite state subsidies worth about $283 billion. In South Africa, unemployment reached 32.5 percent and GDP contracted by 7.2 percent in 2020. This is a greater contraction than in 1931 during the Great Depression, and this in spite of spending the equivalent of 10 percent of GDP in a fiscal stimulus package. The crisis is plunging millions of people ever deeper into poverty. In January 2021, the World Bank estimated that 90 million people will be pushed into extreme poverty. The Economist of 26 September 2020 wrote: “The United Nations is even gloomier. It defines people as poor if they do not have access to things like clean water, electricity, sufficient food and schools for their children. “Working with researchers from Oxford University, it reckons the pandemic could cast 490 million in 70 countries into poverty, reversing almost a decade of gains.” The United Nations’ World Food Programme put it in these terms: “Across 79 countries with WFP operational presence and where data are available, up to 270 million people are estimated to be acutely food insecure or at high risk in 2021, an unprecedented 82 percent increase from pre-pandemic levels.” This alone gives one an idea of the global scale of the crisis. In addition to the effects of the pandemic, the global ecological crisis will likely aggravate this situation, fuelling poverty and food insecurity. Capitalist exploitation of the environment threatens to put key ecological systems on the edge of collapse. We have seen an increase in conflicts over scarce water resources and environmental destruction that will inevitably lead to social instability and massive climate migration. The general instability around the world is organically linked to growing poverty. It is both cause and effect. It is the most fundamental underlying cause of many of the wars and civil wars taking place. Ethiopia is just one example of this. Ethiopia was presented as a model. In the period of 2004 to 2014 its economy was growing by 11 percent a year, and it was seen as a country to invest in. Now it has been thrown into turmoil with the outbreak of fighting in Tigray province, where 3 million people are in need of emergency food relief. This is not an isolated case. The list of countries affected by wars in the past period is very long, and the catalogue of human suffering appalling: Afghanistan: two million deaths; Yemen: 100,000 deaths; the Mexican drug wars have led to over 250,000 killed; the war against the Kurds in Turkey, 45,000 deaths; Somalia, 500,000 deaths; Iraq, at least one million deaths; South Sudan around 400,000 deaths. In Syria, the United Nations estimated the number of deaths at 400,000, but this seems too low. The real figure may never be known but is sure to be 600,000 at least. In the terrible civil wars in the Congo, probably over four million people perished. But there again, nobody knows the real figure. More recently we had the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. And so the list goes on and on. Such things are no longer considered suitable for the front pages of newspapers. But they express very clearly what Lenin once said: Capitalism is horror without end. The continued existence of capitalism threatens to create the conditions of barbarism in one country after another. A crisis of the regime From a Marxist point of view, the study of economics is not an abstract academic question. It has a profound effect on the development of consciousness of all classes. Everywhere we look now there is a crisis, not just an economic crisis, but a crisis of the regime. There are clear indications that the crisis is so severe, so deep, that the ruling class is losing control of the traditional instruments they used in the past for running society. As a result, the ruling class finds itself increasingly unable to control events. That is particularly clear in the case of the USA. But it also applies to many other countries. It is sufficient to mention the names of Trump, Boris Johnson and Bolsonaro to underline the point. USA The USA now occupies a central place in world perspectives. For a very long time, revolution in the richest and most powerful nation on earth seemed to be a very distant prospect. But the USA was hit very hard by the world economic crisis and now everything has been turned upside down. 68 million Americans filed for unemployment during the pandemic, and as always it is the poorest and most vulnerable, especially the people of colour, who suffer most. The scourge of unemployment falls most heavily on the shoulders of the youth. A quarter of under-25s have been thrown out of work. Their future has suddenly been taken away. The American dream has become the American nightmare. This dramatic change has forced many people, old and young, to reconsider views that they previously considered sacrosanct and question the very nature of the society in which they live. The rapid rise of Bernie Sanders at one end of the political spectrum and Donald Trump at the other set the red light flashing for the ruling class. This kind of thing was not supposed to happen! Alarmed at the danger posed by this situation, the ruling class was compelled to take emergency measures. Let us remind ourselves that, according to the official dogma of bourgeois economists, the state was not supposed to play any part in economic life. But faced with looming disaster, the ruling class was forced to throw all the accepted economic theories into the dustbin. The same state which, according to free-market theory, should play little or no role in economic life, has now become the only thing propping up the capitalist system. In all countries, starting with the USA, the so-called free market economy is really on a life support system, like a coronavirus patient. Most of the money handed out by the state went straight into the pockets of the rich. But the ruling class feared the political consequences of yet another corporate bailout. They therefore gave grants to every resident and massively boosted unemployment benefits. This cushioned the impact of the crisis on the poorest layers. At some point, these supports will be cut back or withdrawn altogether. We have the paradox of the most terrible poverty in the richest country in the world existing side by side with the most obscene wealth and luxury. By October 2020, more than one in five American households did not reliably have enough money for food. Food banks are proliferating. Inequality and polarisation Levels of inequality have broken all records. The gulf between rich and poor has become transformed into an unbridgeable abyss. In 2020 the wealth of the world’s billionaires grew by $3 .9 trillion. The Nasdaq 100 index is 40 percent higher than before the pandemic. Listed global equities, as of February 2021 had risen in value by $24 trillion since March of 2020. The average chief executive of an S&P 500 company earns 357 times as much as the average non-supervisory worker. The ratio was around 20 in the mid-1960s. It was still 28 at the end of Ronald Reagan’s term in 1989. To quote just one example, Jeff Bezos now makes more money per second than the typical US worker makes in a week. This takes America back to the times of the capitalist robber barons that Theodore Roosevelt denounced before the First World War. And this has an effect. All the demagogy about the ‘national interest’, that ‘we must unite to fight the virus’, ‘we are all in the same boat’, stands exposed as the vilest hypocrisy. The masses are prepared to make sacrifices under certain circumstances. In times of war, people are prepared to unite to fight a common enemy, that is true. They are prepared, at least temporarily, to accept lower living standards and also, to some extent, restrictions on democratic rights. But the gulf separating the haves from the have-nots is deepening the social and political polarisation and creating an explosive mood in society. It undermines all the efforts to create a sensation of national unity and solidarity, which is the main line of defence for the ruling class. Federal Reserve statistics show that the richest tenth in the US had a net worth of $80.7 trillion at the end of 2020. That means 375 percent of GDP and far above historical levels. A five percent tax on that would yield $4 trillion, or one fifth of GDP. It would pay for all the costs of the pandemic. But the rich robber barons have no intention of sharing their plunder. Most of them (including Donald J Trump) show a marked disinclination to paying any tax at all, let alone five percent. The only solution would be the expropriation of the bankers and capitalists. This idea will inevitably gain more and more support, sweeping away the remaining prejudices against socialism and communism, even among those layers of workers who have been bamboozled by the demagogy of Trump. This is already causing concern among the serious strategists of capital. Mary Callaghan Erdoes, head of assets and wealth management for JP Morgan, drew the inevitable conclusion: “You’re going to get a very high risk of extremism coming out of this. We have to find some way to adapt, otherwise we’re in a very dangerous situation.” The assault on the Capitol The attack on the Capitol on 6 January was a graphic indication that what the USA now faces is not a crisis of government, but a crisis of the regime itself. These events were neither a coup nor an insurrection, but they glaringly exposed the raw anger that exists in the depths of society and also the emergence of deep rifts in the state. At bottom, what they indicate is that the polarisation in society has reached a critical point. The institutions of bourgeois democracy are being tested to destruction. There is a burning hatred of the rich and powerful, the bankers, Wall Street and the Washington establishment in general (“the swamp”). This hatred was skilfully channelled by the right-wing demagogue, Donald Trump. Of course, Trump himself is only the most cunning and voracious alligator in the swamp. He is merely pursuing his own interests. But in doing so, he seriously damaged the interests of the ruling class as a whole. He has played with fire and conjured up forces that neither he, nor anyone else, can control. By word and deed, Trump was destroying the legitimacy of bourgeois institutions and creating huge instability. That is why the ruling class and its political representatives everywhere are horrified by his conduct. The impeachment The Democrats tried to impeach Trump, accusing him of organising an insurrection. But they predictably failed to get the Senate to convict him, which would have barred him from standing for public office in future. Most Republican senators would have been very glad to do this. They hate and fear this political upstart. And they knew very well who was behind the events of 6 January. The Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell delivered a damning verdict on the ex-President, after voting to acquit him. In reality, he and the other Republican senators were terrified of the reaction of Trump’s angry followers if they took that fateful step. They decided that discretion is the better part of valour and, holding their noses, voted not guilty. But if this was an attempted insurrection it was a very poor one. Rather than an insurrection, it resembled a large-scale riot. The mob of angry Trump supporters burst into the Capitol with the obvious connivance of at least some of the guards. But, having easily gained possession of the Holy of Holies of US bourgeois democracy, they had not the faintest idea of what to do with it. The disorganized and leaderless mob milled around aimlessly, trashing anything they took a dislike to and shouting bloodthirsty threats against Democrat Nancy Pelosi, Republican vice-President Mike Pence and Mitch McConnell, who they accused of betraying Trump. Meanwhile, the insurrectionaries’ Commander-in-Chief had conveniently disappeared. If history repeats itself, first as a tragedy and then as a farce, this was a farce of the purest water. In the end, nobody was hanged or sent to the guillotine. Tired out by so much shouting, the “insurrectionists” went home quietly or retired to the nearest bar to get drunk and boast of their courageous exploits, leaving behind nothing more threatening than a pile of rubbish and a few bruised egos. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the ruling class, it set a dangerous precedent for the future. Ray Dalio, founder of the world’s largest hedge fund, Bridgewater Associates, had this to say: “We’re on the brink of a terrible civil war. The US is at a tipping point in which it could go from manageable internal tension to revolution.” The storming of the Capitol was a serious warning to the ruling class. And this will undoubtedly have consequences. Despite a barrage of media hostility, 45 percent of registered Republicans thought that it was justified. But this has to be compared with the far more significant fact that 54 percent of all Americans thought that the burning down of the Minneapolis police precinct was justified. And 10 percent of the whole population took part in the Black Lives Matter protests – 20,000 times more than those who stormed the Capitol. All this shows the rapid growth of social and political polarisation in the United States. The spontaneous uprisings that swept the USA from coast to coast following the murder of George Floyd, and the unparalleled events that preceded and followed the presidential elections marked a turning point in the entire situation. Changes in consciousness The stupid liberals and reformists naturally understand nothing of what is happening. They only see the surface of events, without understanding the deeper currents that are flowing strongly beneath the surface and impelling the waves. They constantly shout about fascism, by which they mean anything they dislike or fear. About the real nature of fascism, they know absolutely nothing. That goes without saying. But by constantly harping on the “danger to democracy” (by which they mean formal bourgeois democracy) they sow confusion and prepare the ground for class collaboration under the flag of “the lesser evil”. Their support for Joe Biden in the USA is a very clear example of this. What we have to take account of is that Trump’s base has a very heterogeneous and contradictory character. It contains a bourgeois wing, headed by Trump himself, and a large number of reactionary petty bourgeois, religious fanatics and openly fascist elements. But we must remember that Trump received 74 million votes in the last election and many of these were working-class people who previously voted for Obama but are disillusioned with the Democrats. When they are interviewed, they say: “Washington doesn’t care about us! We’re the forgotten people!” There are violent swings to the left and also to the right. Nature abhors a vacuum, however, and because of the complete bankruptcy of the reformists, including the left reformists, this mood of anger and frustration has been capitalised upon by right-wing demagogues, so-called populists. In the USA we have the phenomenon of Trumpism. in Brazil we saw the rise of Bolsonaro.

#### Collapse creates sustainable living

**Powers ’11** (William is a senior fellow at the World Policy Institute. He has worked for more than a decade in development aid and conservation in Latin America, Africa, and Washington.) World Policy Journal, "Finding Enough: Confessions of a secular missionary," Project Muse, AM)

In October 2011, I visited the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of International Affairs to give a talk entitled "What's Your 12 × 12?" In the audience were professionals and intellectuals from more than a dozen developing countries. I was expecting a wholesale rejection of the "voluntary simplicity" concept. After all, these were all successful developing-country elites who were benefiting from rapid economic growth and increasing prosperity. But the **overwhelming consensus** in the room was that reducing consumption is more than a survival imperative. It **is actually a more desirable way to live**. One audience member, a thirty-something man from China, described the contentedness of his childhood, growing up in a 10-foot-by-15-foot house -- the solidarity it brought, the freedom from clutter and distraction. Others spoke of the need to ratchet up living standards, but only to a point that would allow for an intelligent, holistic balance between doing and being -- just enough, and not more, food, shelter, fresh air, family and friendship. At a certain point in my "development" career, I began to question the whole notion of impoverishment. Indeed, most of the so-called "impoverished beneficiaries" of my programs seemed better off than me. They wore bigger smiles. They engaged more easily in the moment. Through their kinship networks and close relationship with the land, they achieved a greater sense of meaning and purpose. I talked with these folks everywhere from the Gambian coast to the Amazon, and the vast majority told me they would not trade their lifestyle -- with its simplicity and rootedness -- for mine, despite the obvious difference in wealth and mobility. I do not mean to glorify material destitution. I've spent many hours with some of the millions of people for whom a 12 × 12 would represent an unattainable level of prosperity -- luxury, even. They live zero-by-zero, with no lush organic gardens, no gently flowing creek, no shelter at all. They live in what you might call the Fourth World -- those anarchic, failed places where community and basic necessities have been decimated by war, famine, and natural disaster. So, when discussing relatively "poorer" countries, I always make a clear, explicit distinction between people living in a state of material destitution and people living healthy subsistence lifestyles. There's a point where one's material life is in balance -- possessing neither too much nor too little. Roughly one-fifth of humanity has too much and is overdeveloped; another fifth or so has too little, and is underdeveloped. Neither of these groups experiences general well-being. The former can rarely experience the simple joy of being. The latter are so destitute that they can't sustain their bodies physically. Fortunately, the third group -- those with enough -- is by far the largest. It is what I redefine as "sustainably developed," ranging from subsistence livelihoods like the Mayans of Guatemala to the economic level of the average Western European in 1990. By this rough calculation, **60 percent of the world lives sustainably**. In other words, if everyone lived as they did, our one planet would suffice to feed, clothe, shelter, and absorb the waste of everyone.

#### When confronted with the ethical injunction of the aff, respond with “I would prefer not to”—vote neg on presumption

Baudrillard 98 (Jean, Ex-Prof of Media and Philosophy @ EGS, Paroxysm, p 60//shree)

JB: The paradox of liberation is that the people liberated are never the ones you think: children, slaves, women or colonial peoples. It’s always the others liberating themselves from them, getting rid of them in the name of a principle of freedom and emancipation. Hence the dramatic concern of children to ensure that parents don’t stop being parents, or at least that they do so as late as possible. Hence the collective concern to beg the State not to stop being the State, to force it to take on its role, whereas it’s constantly trying to relinquish that role—and with good reason. The State is constantly ‘liberating’ the citizens, urging them to look after themselves—something they generally don’t want to do at all. In this sense, we’re all potential Bartlebys: ‘I would prefer not to’. Be free! Be responsible! Take responsibility for yourself!—‘I would prefer not to’. Preferring not to, rather than willing something (Philippe Lancon, Liberation). Preferring not to any more. Not to run any more, or compete, or consume, and not, at any price, to be free. This is all part of the pattern of a repentance of modernity, of a subtle indifference which senses the dangers of a responsibility and an emancipation which are too good to be true. Hence the currently triumphant sentimental, familial, political and moral revisionism, which can take on the more violent aspect of a ‘reactionary’ hatred of oneself or others, the product of the disillusionment that follows liberatory violence. This opposite tide, this ‘regressive’ resublimation, is the contemporary form—and, so to speak, the consequence—of the repressive desublimation analysed by Marcuse. Decidedly, freedom isn’t simple, and liberation even less so.

#### Put away your general hyperreality answers—reality can exist, our K is about the disappearance of its metaphysical principle

Baudrillard 5 (Jean, Prof of Phil at EGS, Intelligence of Evil, p 18-9//shree)

That which is real exists; that is all we can say (but existence isn’t everything—it is, even, the least of things). Let us be clear about this: when we say reality has disappeared, the point is not that it has disappeared physically, but that it has disappeared metaphysically. Reality continues to exist; it is its principle that is dead. Now, reality without its principle is no longer the same at all. If, for many reasons, the principle of representation, which alone gives it a meaning, falters, then the whole of the real falters. Or, rather, it exceeds its own principle and enters upon an unrestrained expansion no longer governed by any rule. Objective reality—reality related to meaning and recuperation—gives way to ‘Integral Reality’, a reality without limits in which everything is realized and technically materialized without reference to any principle or final purpose [destination] whatever. ‘Integral Reality’ involves, then, the murder of the real, the loss of any imagination of the real. The imaginary, which we happily associated with the real as its friendly shadow, vanishes in the same process. ‘Integral Reality’ has no imaginary. Just as liberation no longer has anything to do with the play of freedom—the freedom of a subject wrestling with himself, which implies, among other things, that one remains free to be free (which is not the case in the present circumstances of unconditional liberation); just as verification puts an end to the workings of truth (for truth, if it exists, is something to be fought over, whereas verification transforms it into a fait accompli), so we have moved from reality as a principle and as concept to the technical realization of the real and its performance. And yet there are no proof of this reality’s existence—and there never will be—any more than there are proofs of the existence of God. It is, like God, a matter of faith. And when you begin to believe in it, this is because it is already disappearing. It is when one is no longer sure of the existence of God, or when one has lost the naïve faith in a self-evidence reality, that it becomes absolutely necessary to believe in it. We invested reality with the whole of our imaginary, but it is this imaginary that is vanishing, since we no longer have the energy to believe in it. Even the will has gone out of it. The passion for reality and the passion for truth have gone. All that remains is a duty of reality, a duty of truth. Henceforth we must believe in it. As doubt sets in everywhere, as a product of the failure of the systems of representation, reality becomes an absolute imperative; it becomes the foundation of a moral order. But neither things nor people obey a reality principle or a moral imperative.

#### Denying that reality exists metaphysically doesn’t translate to violence

Baudrillard 5 (Jean, Prof of Phil at EGS, Intelligence of Evil, p 22-3//shree)

Any question of reality, of its obviousness and its principle, is deemed unacceptable and condemned as negationist. The charge against you: what do you make of the reality of misery, suffering and death? Now, it isn’t about taking sides on material violence or on the violence of misfortune—it is about a line you are forbidden to cross, the line marking a taboo on reality, a taboo also on even the slightest attempt at interfering with a clear division between good and evil, on pain of being regarded as a scoundrel or an imposter. The affirmation or contestation of reality, of the reality principle, is, then a political choice, and almost a religious one, in that any infringement of this principle is sacrilegious—the very hypothesis of simulation being perceived, deep down, as diabolical (it takes up where heresy left off in the archaeology of the thinking of evil). The reality-fundamentalists equip themselves with a form of magical thinking that confuses message and messenger: if you speak of the simulacrum, then you are a simulator; if you speak of the virtuality of war, then you are in league with it and have no regard for the hundreds of thousands of dead. Any analysis other than the moral is condemned as deluded or irresponsible. Now, if reality is a question of belief and all the signs that arrested to it have lost their credibility, if the real has fallen into fundamental discredit and its and its principle is everywhere reeling, it is not we, the messengers of the simulacrum, who have plunged things into this discredit, it is the system itself that has fomented this uncertainty that affects everything today—even the sense of existence. What looms on the horizon with the advent of globalization is the constitution of an integral power, of an Integral Reality of power and an equally integral and automatic disintegration and failure of that power. A dramatic form of reversibility. A sort of turnabout, revenge and devastating irony, a kind of negative reaction on the part of the world itself against globalization. All the forces denied an expelled by this very process which thereby become the forces of evil, rebel. Power itself fights against becoming total: it passes the buck, it disinvents itself; in the end it works secretly against itself. To speak evil is to describe the growing hegemony of the powers of good and, at the same time, their inner faltering, their suicidal crumbling, their reversion, their outgrowth and separation into a parallel universes once the dividing line of the Universal has been crossed.

## Case

### Space Industrial Complex

#### Their faith in a post-labor and post-racial future enabled by technology produces a surrogate human affect that conceals the role of racialization in making human freedom possible. This technoliberalism claims to transcend difference while neglecting that racial logics are constitutive of both the very concept of technology and technological innovation.

Atanasoski & Vora 19 [Neda, Prof. Feminist Studies & Critical, Race, and Ethnic Studies & Legal Studies @ UC Santa Cruz, and Kalindi, Assoc. Prof Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies and Dir., Feminist Research Institute, *Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*, pp. 28-9//ak47]

This chapter assesses the shifting contours of US racial liberalism and white supremacy through readings of philosophical, cultural, media, and political accounts of US labor and automation in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. We excavate the suppressed racial imaginary that produces the subjects and objects of present-day “technoliberalism” as a political form that elaborates the logics of liberalism and reinvigorates the imbrications of liberalism and fascism at the heart of the US formation as a racial state. By technoliberalism, we mean the ideology that technology advances human freedom and postracial futurity by asserting a postlabor world in which racial difference, along with all human social difference, is transcended. Yet, as we argue, what is essential about the automation of both factory and domestic labor for technoliberalism is its production of the surrogate human effect—that is, a racial and gendered relation emerging at the interstices of new technologies and the reconfigurings of US geopolitical dominance. By displacing the centrality of racialized and gendered labor relations in its articulation of a postracial present enabled by automation and artificial intelligence, technoliberalism reproduces the violent racial logics that it claims to resolve through techno-scientific innovation. In this sense, technoliberalism is an update on the liberal progress narrative that conceals ongoing conditions of racial subjugation and imperial expropriation. Racial liberalism has long been viewed as a central tenet of governance and empire in the United States. Jodi Melamed has argued that, In contrast to white supremacy, the liberal race paradigm recognizes racial inequality as a problem, and it secures a liberal symbolic framework for race reform centered in abstract equality, market individualism, and inclusive civic nationalism. Antiracism becomes a nationally recognized social value and, for the first time, gets absorbed into U.S. governmentality. Importantly, postwar liberal racial formation sutures an “official” antiracism to U.S. nationalism, itself bearing the agency for transnational capitalism.2 The technoliberal form espouses antiracism as a central premise even as it affirms the racial order structuring technological modernity. As the grammar of technoliberalism, the surrogate human relation innovates the logics of racial hierarchy by producing a fantasy of a postracial world enabled through technology that functions as service. Put otherwise, technoliberalism’s postracial imaginary produces human freedom as an effect of a postlabor world, which is an updated variation of the racial liberalism that has been a part of US governance from the inception of the nation. By insisting on the continuing importance of racial and gendered histories of labor that expand the category of labor and the worker far beyond the myth of the factory worker as the only subject of labor, we can see that technoliberalism not only fails to be antiracist, but is in fact an affirmation of US racial logics governing what forms of labor are visible as such, and what forms are not. Because of the technoliberal assertion that we are entering a postlabor world that is implicitly anti-racist because it is human-free, it is urgent to assess the ways in which technology has innovated upon capital’s dependence on racialized and gendered labor. 3

### A New Hope

#### The aff’s left accelerationism died before it began because its rhetorical appeal to direct action, collective desire, and communist futurism were sequestered into theoretical and academic debates that were defanged by the academy and fascism. When Mark Fisher died, the aff died with him.

**Irvill et al, 17** (John Irvill, independent scholar; Thomas Dunn, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and the Director of the Basic Course at Colorado State University; Heather Koehler, Post Doc at Emory Vaccine Center, “Requiem for Left Accelerationism,” https://medium.com/@syffr/requiem-for-left-accelerationism-4048d8bec72e)

**A brief moment of euphoric illusion in between the depression**. **For all the** remarks, art, conferences, uses, exhibitions, **classes, seminars** and music **dedicated to accelerationism**, **the underlying philosophy of a new revived left never actually materialized**. Instead, what it received was critiques. Denunciations of imperialism, “white” hegemonic efforts and ignorance plagued its interlocutors. Not unwarranted, these claims grew to the classic standard critique of the left-melancholics and theorists of world long past. **The critiques never really understood the point of the position, nor did they chose to give up their critical reflexes for what might be hastily called the “accelerationist drive**”. Instead, genealogies, traces of what the position might entail, where it came from, tried to get to grips with it. **Even the proponents often had to go back to check up on their theorists of preference, so as to appease an academy that looked relentlessly backwards, rather than forwards**. Of course, **the academic establishment would only reject it, or appropriate it with some caveats, so as to represent themselves as in the know without compromising themselves, without committing**. **Politics becomes a fashionable crusade. Art, or the institutions pretending to pass for its name, followed suit**. **Para-academia appropriated it too, but only naively, showing no engagement with what originally gave rise to the term**. A term that Mark Fisher, back in 2008 would describe as “left-landianism”. The position originated within that blogging network, that circuit of people interested with ideas beyond the confines of the left-liberal academy. Alex Williams described the position, Benjamin Noys coined the term, Reza Negarestani critiqued it, Owen Hatherley dialogued with it and Mark Fisher helped bring it to life. Within the 2008 blog network of ideas, the prospect of a “**left-landianism” or “left-accelerationism” might have seen as something that was aim to be dissipated, ignored and only entertained by bloggers in the fringes of an establishment that always remain self-satisfied and assured that all possible political positions laid in the p**ast. However, it was Mark Fisher (k-punk) that raised the idea. By enabling the dialogue with others, he remained sympathetic to accelerationist positions despite being ruthlessly critical of it when needed. These were the days of dialogue within micro-cultures. Mark Fisher gave them voice to be more than just a discussion board in the fringes. For a second there, left-accelerationism seemed to be bound to break into the mainstream. Hashtags, books, histories, every element was in place for it to succeed. And yet, it did not. As with any philosophical or political stance, left-accelerationism provided a backbone to a movement. **This movement never came.** The “radicality”, a term so overused in contemporary theory so as to be a useless corpse, it unlocked was lost in the followers and fanatics. Left-accelerationism tried and failed to grasp too much, with an anxiety visible in its manifestos and ameliorated in its longform pieces. In the latter, the commitments and ramification showed. **While paying lip-service to local and global movements, synthetic freedoms and critiquing movements for their myopia, the left-accelerationists’ Gramsciam localism, its proponents largely British and bounded by the politics of their nation, showed**. **Left-accelerationism excited and frustrated at the same time**. Its moment never came. **Signifiers were switched due to associations to a nihilism with Landian undertones that no-one actually espoused in that camp: postcapitalism, acid communism, hegemony, but not left-accelerationism**. It implied too much and did too little. **It did left-accelerationism no favours that its proponents were largely on the fringes: theorists, philosophers, artists**. **Left-accelerationism’s praxis was non-existent.** Its speculations, however positive, never materialized. **Its designs remained stuck fetichizing a cognitive mapping of a past that never saw the light of day, merely the darkness of the night**. Ideas of fully automated luxury communism were floated around, and were even warned against by left-accelerationism’s opponents. **But its futures, merely local, academic and largely seen as something to flirt with, but never espouse, were defenestrated by a lack of actual practitioners with some chance of constructing a hegemony.** The space reserved for its non-existent engineers, designers, traders, bankers or subjects was eventually filled by activism, that which moves without thought, or with little to none regard of it. **With mere sloganeering, left-accelerationism’s popular modernism was crushed by its lack of praxis.** **To declare death is to confirm the lack of pulse**. **Wherever the world is moving towards, it’s moving too quickly for left-accelerationism to even** grasp; its hyperstitional practices made obsolete by an updating that, while not made explicit in those blogs of 2004, was executed by opponents. This reduction towards nothing, something that has been known but never talked -merely left aside-, had largely been felt but not acknowledged. With another lost future in the trash, the vocal and material mouthpiece, libidinal interlocutor and fosterer of left-accelerationism, **Mark Fisher left the world in the beginning of 2017**. Left-accelerationism’s story begins with him, back in those blog days, those conferences and talks, where fiery exchanges gave energy to a small segment of the zombie left. **Now, where nothing remains, it is worth screaming into the void. Left-accelerationism died with Mark Fisher.**

### Thanos

#### Their hope for the debate space represents a relationship of cruel optimism to the ballot—a hopeful attachment to the logic of a problematic system of economic exchange that kills the potential for successful politics—the ballot, the source of subjectification and violence, is invested with optimism rather than productive progress.

Berlant 06 (Lauren, Professor of Literature at the University of Chicago, “Cruel Optimism” in *differences* 17.3)

When we talk about an object of desire, we are really talk- ing about a cluster of promises we want someone or something to make to us and make possible for us. This cluster of promises could be embed- ded in a person, a thing, an institution, a text, a norm, a bunch of cells, smells, a good idea—whatever. To phrase “the object of desire” as a cluster of promises is to allow us to encounter what is incoherent or enigmatic in our attachments, not as confirmation of our irrationality, but as an explanation for our sense of our endurance in the object, insofar as prox- imity to the object means proximity to the cluster of things that the object promises, some of which may be clear to us while others not so much. In other words, all attachments are optimistic. That does not mean that they all feel optimistic: one might dread, for example, returning to a scene of hunger or longing or the slapstick reiteration of a lover or parent’s typi- cal misrecognition. But the surrender to the return to the scene where the object hovers in its potentialities is the operation of optimism as an affective form (see Ghent). “Cruel optimism” names a relation of attachment to compro- mised conditions of possibility. What is cruel about these attachments, and not merely inconvenient or tragic, is that the subjects who have x in their lives might not well endure the loss of their object or scene of desire, even though its presence threatens their well-being, because whatever the content of the attachment, the continuity of the form of it provides something of the continuity of the subject’s sense of what it means to keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world. This phrase points to a condition different than that of melancholia, which is enacted in the subject’s desire to temporize an experience of the loss of an object/scene with which she has identified her ego continuity. Cruel optimism is the condition of maintaining an attachment to a problematic object in advance of its loss.¶ One might point out that all objects/scenes of desire are prob- lematic, in that investments in them and projections onto them are less about them than about the cluster of desires and affects we manage to keep magnetized to them. I have indeed wondered whether all optimism is cruel, because the experience of loss of the conditions of its reproduction can be so breathtakingly bad. But some scenes of optimism are crueler than others: where cruel optimism operates, the very vitalizing or ani- mating potency of an object/scene of desire contributes to the attrition of the very thriving that is supposed to be made possible in the work of attachment in the first place. This might point to something as banal as a scouring love, but it also opens out to obsessive appetites, patriotism, a career, all kinds of things. One makes affective bargains about the costliness of one’s attachments, usually unconscious ones, most of which keep one in proximity to the scene of desire/attrition.¶ To understand cruel optimism as an aesthetic of attachment requires embarking on an analysis of the modes of rhetorical indirection that manage the strange activity of projection into an enabling object that is also disabling. I learned how to do this from reading Barbara Johnson’s work on apostrophe and free indirect discourse. In her poetics of indi- rection, each of these rhetorical modes is shaped by the ways a writing subjectivity conjures other ones so that, in a performance of phantasmatic intersubjectivity, the writer gains superhuman observational authority, enabling a performance of being made possible by the proximity of the object. Because the dynamics of this scene are something like what I am describing in the optimism of attachment, I will describe the shape of my transference with her thought.