### 1

**Indigeneity connotates a state of non-ontology allowing for the construction of the human that legitimizes its self into a history of elimination, jettisoned from or assimilated into the national body to cohere settler temporality**

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Admittedly, the feral is a precarious space from which to theorize, sullied with an injurability bound up in the work of liberal humanism as such, an enterprise that weaponizes a set of moral barometers to distribute ferality unevenly to differently citizened and raced bodies—ones that are too close for comfort and must be pushed outside arm’s reach. Perhaps ferality traverses a **semantic line of flight commensurate­ with** that of **savagery, barbarism, and lawlessness**, concreting into one **history of elimination**: that is, a history of eliminating recalcitrant indigeneities incompatible within a supposedly hygienic social. The word savage comes from the Latin salvaticus, an alteration of silvaticus, meaning “wild,” literally “of the woods.” Of persons, it means “reckless, ungovernable” (“Savage”). In the space-time of settler states, savagery temporarily stands in for those **subjectivities tethered to a supposedly waning form of indigeneity**, one that came from the woods and, because of this, had to be **jettisoned from or assimilated into the national body**. Here is Audra Simpson on the history of Indian “lawlessness”: Its genealogy extends back to the earliest moments of recorded encounter, when Indians appeared to have no law, to be without order, and thus, to be in the colonizer’s most generous articulation of differentiation, in need of the trappings of civilization. “Law” may be one instrument of civilization, as a regulating technique of power that develops through the work upon a political body and a territory. (2014, 144) According to Simpson, the recognition of Indigenous peoples as lawless rendered them governable, motivating the settler state (here, Canada) to curate and thus contain atrophied indigeneities—and, consequently, their sovereignties, lands, and politics—within the borders of federal law (2014, 144-45). Similarly, in The Transit of Empire Jodi Byrd traces the epistemological gimmicks through which the concept of “Indianness” came to align with “the savage other” (2011, 27). For her, this alignment provided the “rationale for imperial domination” and continues to stalk philosophy’s patterns of thinking (ibid.). Simpson, writing about the Mohawks of Kahnawake, argues that “a fear of lawlessness” continues to haunt the colonial imaginary, thereby diminishing “Indigenous rights to trade and to act as sovereigns in their own territories” (2014, 145). We might take the following lyrics from the popular Disney film Pocahontas as an example of the ways indigeneity circulates as a feral signifier in colonial economies of meaning-making: [Ratcliffe] What can you expect From filthy little heathens? Their whole disgusting race is like a curse Their skin’s a hellish red They’re only good when dead They’re vermin, as I said And worse [English settlers] They’re savages! Savages! Barely even human. (Gabriel and Goldberg 1995) **Savagery connotes a state of non-ontology**: Indigenous peoples are forced to cling to a barely extant humanity and coterminously collapse into a putatively wretched form of animality. Savagery is lethal, and its Indian becomes the prehistoric alibi through which the human is constituted as such. Indigenous peoples have therefore labored to explain away this savagery, reifying whitened rubrics for proper citizenship and crafting a genre of life tangible within the scenes of living through that are constitutive of settler colonialism as such. These scenes, however, are dead set on destroying the remnants of that savagery, converting their casualties into morally compatible subjects deserving of rights and life in a multicultural state that stokes the liberal fantasy of life after racial trauma at the expense of decolonial flourishing itself. This paper is therefore interested in the subjectivities and forms of sociality that savagery destroys when applied from without, and the political work of appropriating that savagery in the name of decolonization. Ours is a form of indigeneity that hints at a fundamental pollutability that both confirms and threatens forms of ontology tethered to a taxonomized humanity built in that foundational episode of subjection of which Simpson speaks. I am suggesting that savagery always-already references an otherworld of sorts: there are forms of life abandoned outside modernity’s episteme whose expressivities surge with affects anomalous within the topography of settler colonialism. This paper is not a historicist or nostalgic attachment to a pre-savage indigeneity resurrected from a past somehow unscathed by the violence that left us in the thick of things in the first place. Instead, I emphasize the potentiality of ferality as a politics in a world bent on our destruction—a world that eliminates indigeneities too radical to collapse into a collective sensorium, training us to a live in an ordinary that the settler state needs to persist as such, one that only some will survive. This world incentivizes our collusion with a multicultural state instantiated through a myth of belonging that actively disavows difference in the name of that very difference. We are repeatedly hurried into a kind of waning sociality, the content and form of which appear both too familiar and not familiar enough. In short, we are habitually left scavenging for ways to go on without knowing what it is we want. Let’s consider Jack Halberstam’s thoughts on “the wild”: It is a tricky word to use but it is a concept that we cannot live without if we are to combat the conventional modes of rule that have synced social norms to economic practices and have created a world order where every form of disturbance is quickly folded back into quiet, where every ripple is quickly smoothed over, where every instance of eruption has been tamped down and turned into new evidence of the rightness of the status quo. (2013, 126) Where Halberstam finds disturbance, I find indigeneity-cum-disturbance par excellence. Halberstam’s “wild” evokes a potentiality laboured in the here and now and “an alternative to how we want to think about being” in and outside an authoritarian state (2013, 126-27). Perhaps the wild risks the decolonial, a geography of life-building that dreams up tomorrows whose referents are the fractured indigeneities struggling to survive a historical present built on our suffering. Ferality is a stepping stone to a future grounded in Indigenous peoples’ legal and political orders. This paper does not traffic in teleologies of the anarchic or lawless as they emerge in Western thought; instead, it refuses settler sovereignty and calls for forms of collective Indigenous life that are attuned to queerness’s wretched histories and future-making potentialities. Indigeneity is an ante-ontology of sorts: it is prior to and therefore disruptive of ontology. Indigeneity makes manifest residues or pockets of times, worlds, and subjectivities that warp both common sense and philosophy into falsities that fall short of completely explaining what is going on. **Indigenous life is truncated in the** biopolitical **category of Savage** in order to make our attachments to ourselves assimilable inside settler colonialism’s national sensorium. Settler colonialism purges excessive forms of indigeneity that trouble its rubrics for sensing out the human and the nonhuman. In other words, settler colonialism works up modes of being-in-the-world that narrate themselves as the only options we have. What would it mean, then, to persist in the space of savagery, exhausting the present and holding out for futures that are not obsessed with the proper boundary between human and nonhuman life? This paper now turns to the present, asking: what happens when indigeneity collides with queerness inside the reserve, and how might a feral theory make sense of that collision? Deadly Presents “I went through a really hard time… I was beaten; more than once. I was choked” (Klassen 2014). These were the words of Tyler-Alan Jacobs, a two-spirit man from the Squamish Nation, capturing at once the terror of queer life on the reserve and the hardening of time into a thing that slows down bodies and pushes them outside its securitized geographies. Jacobs had grown up with his attackers, attackers who were energized by the pronouncement of queerness—how it insisted on being noticed, how it insisted on being. When the dust settled, “his right eye [had] dislodged and the side of his faced [had] caved in” (ibid.). Settler colonialism is fundamentally affective: it takes hold of the body, makes it perspire, and wears it out. It converts flesh into pliable automations and people into grim reapers who must choose which lives are worth keeping in the world. It can turn a person into a murderer in a matter of seconds; it is an epistemic rupturing of our attachments to life, to each other, and to ourselves. It is as if settler colonialism were simultaneously a rescue and military operation, a holy war of sorts tasked with **exorcising the spectre of queer indigeneity and its putative infectivity**. I rehearse this case because it allows me to risk qualifying the reserve as a geography saturated with heteronormativity’s socialities. This is a strategic interdiction that destroys supposedly degenerative queer affect worlds, untangling some bodies and not others from the future. I don’t have the statistics to substantiate these claims, but there is an archive of heartbreak and loss that is easy to come by if you ask the right people. Indeed, what would such statistics tell us that we don’t already know? What would the biopolitical work of data collection do to a knowledge-making project that thinks outside the big worlds of Statistics and Demography and, instead, inside the smaller, more precarious worlds created in the wake of gossip? I worry about ethnographic projects that seek to account for things and theory in the material in order to map the coordinates of an aberration to anchor it and its voyeurs in the theatres of the academy. The desire to attach to a body is too easily energized by a biological reading of gender that repudiates the very subjects it seeks so desperately to know and to study. What about the body? I have been asked this question, again and again. A feral theory is something of a call to arms: abolish this sort of ethnography and turn to those emergent methodologies that might better make sense of the affects and life-forms that are just now coming into focus and have been destroyed or made invisible in the name of research itself. Queer indigeneity, to borrow Fred Moten’s description of blackness, might “come most clearly into relief, by way of its negation” (2014). Perhaps decolonization needs to be a sort of séance: an attempt to communicate with the dead, a collective rising-up from the reserve’s necropolis, a feral becoming-undead. Boyd and Thrush’s Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence thinks indigeneity and its shaky histories vis-à-vis the language of haunting, where haunting is an endurant facet of “the experience of colonialism” (Bodinger de Uriarte 2012, 303). But, for me, ghostliness is differentially distributed: some more than others will be wrenched into the domain of the dead and forced to will their own ontologies into the now. Perhaps the universalist notion that haunting is a metonym for indigeneity repudiates the very life-forms that it claims to include: those who are differently queered and gendered, and, because of this, haunt waywardly and in ways that cannot be easily predicted (Ahmed 2015). This paper thus takes an imaginative turn and proceeds with something of an incantation to summon the figure of the queer Indigenous poltergeist—the feral monster in the horror story of decolonization. Queer Indigenous poltergeists do not linger inaudibly in the background; we are beside ourselves with anger, we make loud noises and throw objects around because we are demanding retribution for homicide, unloved love, and cold shoulders. We do not reconcile; we escape the reserve, pillage and mangle the settler-colonial episteme. Our arrival is both uneventful and apocalyptic, a point of departure and an entry point for an ontology that corresponds with a future that has yet to come. Sometimes all we have is the promise of the future. For the queer Indigenous poltergeist, resurrection is its own form of decolonial love. The poltergeist is an ontological anomaly: a fusion of human, object, and ghost, a “creature of social reality” and a “creature of fiction” (Haraway 1991, 149). From the German poltern meaning “[to] make noise, [to] rattle” and Geist or “ghost,” it literally means “noisy ghost,” speaking into existence an anti-subjectivity that emerges in the aftermath of death or murder (“Poltergeist”). It is the subject of Tobe Hooper’s 1982 film Poltergeist, which tells a story of “a haunting based on revenge” (Tuck and Ree 2013, 652). The film’s haunting is a wronging premised on an initial wrong: the eponymous poltergeist materializes when a mansion is constructed on a cemetery—a disturbing of spirits, if you will. José Esteban Muñoz argues that “The double ontology of ghosts and ghostliness, the manner in which ghosts exist inside and out and traverse categorical distinctions, seems especially useful for… queer criticism” (2009, 46). In this paper, the poltergeist names the form which indigeneity takes when it brings queer matter into its folds. In other words, this essay evokes haunting as a metaphor to hint at the ways in which queerness was murderously absorbed into the past and prematurely expected to stay there as an effect of colonialism’s drive to eliminate all traces of sexualities and genders that wandered astray. The poltergeist conceptualizes the work of queer indigeneity in the present insofar as it does not presuppose the mysterious intentions of the ghost—an otherworldly force that is bad, good, and undetectable all at once. Instead, the poltergeist is melancholic in its grief, but also pissed off. It refuses to remain in the spiritual, a space cheapened in relation to the staunch materiality of the real, and one that, though housing our conditions of possibility, cannot contain all of us. We protest forms of cruel nostalgia that tether ghosts to a discarded past within which queer Indigenous life once flourished because we know that we will never get it back and that most of us likely never experienced it in the first place. We long for that kind of love, but we know it is hard to come by. I turn to the poltergeist because I don’t have anywhere else to go. Help me, I could say. But I won’t. Queer indigeneity, then, is neither here nor there, neither dead nor alive but, to use Judith Butler’s language, interminably spectral (2006, 33). We are ghosts that haunt the reserve in the event of resurrection. According to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, a reserve is a “tract of land, the legal title to which is held by the Crown, set apart for the use and benefit of an Indian band” (“Terminology”). The “reserve system” is part of the dispossessory ethos through which the settler state reifies land as the sign of sovereignty itself, and thus effects the political death of indigeneity, decomposing it into nothingness, into contaminated dirt. Reserves are the products of imaginations gone wild; they are ruins that bear “the physical imprint of the supernatural” on arid land, on decaying trailers arranged like weathered tombstones (Tuck and Ree 2013, 653). They are borderlands that connote simultaneous possession and dispossession: they represent the collision between settler sovereignty (insofar as the Crown holds the legal title to the land) and indigeneity (pointing to a genre of life that is distinctly Indigenous). Reserves were—some might say they still are—zones of death that regulated and regulate the movements of Indigenous bodies, quarantining their putatively contaminated flesh outside modern life in order to preserve settler-colonial futurities. It is as if the reserve were a site of complete atrophy, where indigeneity is supposed to waste away or degenerate, where queerness has already bled out. Look at the blood on your hands! The queer Indigenous poltergeist, however, foregrounds what I call a “reserve consciousness” —an awareness of the deathliness of the reserve. A reserve consciousness might be a kind of critical phenomenology that, to use Lisa Guenther’s description of this sort of insurgent knowledge project, pulls up “traces of what is not quite or no longer there—that which has been rubbed out or consigned to invisibility” (2015): here, the so-called on-reserve Indian. It might be about becoming a frictive surface; by rubbing up against things and resisting motion between objects, we might become unstuck. Queer Indigenous poltergeists are what Sara Ahmed calls “blockage points”: where communication stops because we cannot get through (2011, 68). That is, queer indigeneity connotes an ethical impasse, a dead end that presents us with two options: exorcism or resurrection. If settler colonialism is topological, if it persists despite elastic deformations such as stretching and twisting, wear and tear, we might have to make friction to survive. I turn to the reserve because it is a geography of affect, one in which the heaviness of atmospheres crushes some bodies to death and in which some must bear the weight of settler colonialism more than others. The violence done to us has wrenched us outside the physical world and into the supernatural. Some of us are spirits—open wounds that refuse to heal because our blood might be the one thing that cannot be stolen. Does resistance always feel like resistance, or does it sometimes feel like bleeding out (Berlant 2011)? Feral Socialities I must leave the beaten path and go where we are not. Queerness, according to Muñoz, is not yet here; it is an ideality that “we may never touch,” that propels us onward (2009, 1). Likewise, Halberstam suggests that the presentness of queerness signals a kind of emerging ontology. He argues that failure “is something that queers do and have always done exceptionally well in contrast to the grim scenarios of success” that structure “a heteronormative, capitalist society” (2011, 2-3). For Muñoz, queer failure is about “doing something that is missing in straight time’s always already flawed temporal mapping practice” (2009, 174). We know, however, that this isn’t the entire story. Whereas Muñoz’s queer past morphs into the here and now of homonormativity’s carceral tempos, indigeneity’s queernesses are saturated with the trauma of colonialism’s becoming-structure. Queer death doubles as the settler state’s condition of possibility. Pre-contact queer indigeneities had been absorbed into colonialism’s death grip; however, this making-dead was also a making-undead in the enduring of ghosts (Derrida 1994, 310). If haunting, according to Tuck and Ree, “lies precisely in its refusal to stop,” then the queer Indigenous poltergeist fails to have died by way of time travel (2013, 642). Queer indigeneity might be a kind of “feral sociality”: we are in a wild state after escaping colonial captivity and domestication. When the state evicts you, you might have to become feral to endure. To be feral is to linger in the back alleys of the settler state. It is a refusal of settler statecraft, a strategic failing to approximate the metrics of colonial citizenship, a giving up on the ethical future that reconciliation supposedly promises. As an aside, I suspect that the settler state’s reconciliatory ethos is always-already a domesticating project: it contains Indigenous suffering within the spectacularized theatre of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, building a post-Residential School temporality in which Indigenous peoples have been repaired through monetary reparations and storytelling. In the melodrama of reconciliation, the settler state wins its centuries-long war against Indian lawlessness by healing Indigenous peoples of the trauma that blocked them from becoming properly emotive citizens. Queer indigeneity, however, escapes discursive and affective concealment and therefore the category of the human itself, disturbing the binary clash between the living and nonliving by way of its un-humanity, a kind of “dead living” whereby flesh is animated through death. Perhaps we must become feral to imagine other space-times, to imagine other kinds of queerness. If settler colonialism incentivizes our collusion with the humanist enterprise of multiculturalism (and it does), what would it mean to refuse humanity and actualize other subject formations? In other words, how do the un-living live? Here, I want to propose the concept of “Indian time” to theorize the **temporality and liminality of queer indigeneity as it festers in the slippage** between near-death and the refusal to die. Indian time colloquially describes the regularity with which Indigenous peoples arrive late or are behind schedule. I appropriate this idiom to argue that the presentness of queer indigeneity is prefigured by an escape from and bringing forward of the past as well as a taking residence in the future. To be queer and Indigenous might mean to live outside time, to fall out of that form of affective life. **Indian time thus nullifies the normative temporality of settler colonialism** in which death is the telos of the human and being-in-death is an ontological fallacy. It connotes the conversion of queer indigeneity into non-living matter, into ephemera lurking in the shadows of the present, waiting, watching, and conspiring. Where Jasbir Puar argues that all things under the rubric of queer are always-already calculated into the state’s biopolitical mathematic, queer indigeneity cannot be held captive because it cannot be seen—we are still emerging in the social while simultaneously altering its substance (2012). If decolonization is, according to Tuck and K. Wayne Yang’s reading of Frantz Fanon, an “unclean break from a colonial condition,” perhaps the queer Indigenous poltergeist is feral enough to will a decolonial world into a future that hails rather than expels its ghosts (2012, 20). The queer Indigenous poltergeist might have nothing else to lose.

**Systems of knowledge serve to institute and replicate settler colonialism — the human is a storytelling species and knowledge systems are always already being chartered through the replication of sociogenic codes**

**Wynter and McKittrick 15**. Sylvia Wynter is a Professor Emerita at Stanford University. Katherine McKittrick is a professor in Gender Studies at Queen's University. She is an academic and writer whose work focuses on black studies, cultural geography, anti-colonial and diaspora studies, with an emphasis on the ways in which liberation emerges in black creative texts. (Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis, *Duke University Press*, 2015) vikas

To resolve the aporia of this cognitive dilemma, I turn again to Césaire’s proposed new and hybrid bios / mythoi science of the Word. Here because, as he proposed, and as earlier cited, the study of the Word / the mythoi will now determine the study of the bios / of the brain, and this will thereby enable us to gain an external (demonic ground) perspective on the always already storytellingly chartered / encoded discursive formations / aesthetic fields, as well as of, co- relatedly, our systems of knowledge. And, with this gain insight into how these **systems of knowledge**, each together with its genre- specific “truth of solidarity,” all **institute and stably replicate** our **genres of being hybridly human** with the also communitarian viability of each respective societal order. Yet **with all of the above—including, in macro terms, the instituting of our contemporary secular and “single model” liberal (now neoliberal) monohumanist Western / Westernized transnational world system—what again must be emphasized is** that **the respective “truths” of** their **knowledge systems are always already prespecified by our storytellingly chartered sociogenic replicator code** of symbolic life / death, its Word and / or Bateson- type “descriptive statement” as rigorously discursively elaborated by its “status quo system of learning” and its overall epistemological order. **This order circularly ensures that each such genre- specific regime / program of truth, will law- likely function to semantically- neurochemically induce the performative enactment of** our ensemble of **always already role- allocated individual and collective behaviors** within the reflexly and subjectively experienced terms of a cognitively closed, thereby genre- specific and fictively eusocializing, autonomously functioning, higher- level living autopoietic system. Cosmogonies of Our Planetary Life and Our Chartered Codes of Symbolic Life and Symbolic Death: Fictively Induced Modes of Inter- Altruistic Kin Recognition and Auto- Instituted Pseudospeciated Mode of Kind KM: Here Wynter elaborates on storytelling beginnings and cosmogonies. She returns to her extension of Frantz Fanon’s conception of our being hybridly human, both bios and mythoi, in order to address the unsolved phenomenon of human consciousness. She explores how our chartering / encoding genre- specific cosmogonies provide the narrative source of our fictively eusocializing subjectivities, thus enabling us to be reborn- through- initiation as always already sociogenically encoded inter- altruistically kin- recognizing members of each referent- we. At the same time, however, **the law- like reification of each fictively induced and subjectively experienced order of consciousness of each referent- we is, itself, absolutized by** what Wynter identifies as **the law of cognitive closure**. SW: Fanon put forward the idea of our skin / masks, thereby of the hybridity of our being human, in 1952. Crick and Watson cracked the genetic code in 1953. Now, I argue that Fanon’s masks enact a “second set of instructions”: that of the sociogenic code of symbolic life / death. Further, within the overall enactment of each such “second set of instructions,” the ism of gender is itself—while only one member class—a founding member class. Gender is a founding member because in order to auto- institute ourselves as subjects of a genre- specific referent- we, we must, first, co- relatedly and performatively enact each such code’s “second set of instructions” at the familial level, in terms of our gender roles. We know of this brilliant concept of the performative enactment of gender from Judith Butler.60 I am suggesting that the enactments of such gender roles are always a function of the enacting of a specific genre of being hybridly human. Butler’s illuminating redefinition of gender as a praxis rather than a noun, therefore, set off bells ringing everywhere! Why not, then, the performative enactment of all our roles, of all our role allocations as, in our contemporary Western / Westernized case, in terms of, inter alia, gender, race, class / underclass, and, across them all, sexual orientation? All as praxes, therefore, rather than nouns. So here you have the idea that with being human everything is praxis. For we are not purely biological beings! As far as the eusocial insects like bees are concerned, their roles are genetically preprescribed for them. Ours are not, even though the biocentric meritocratic iq bourgeois ideologues, such as the authors of The Bell Curve, try to tell us that they / we are.61 So the question is: **What are the mechanisms, what are the technologies, what are the strategies by which we prescribe our own roles?** What is common to all are cosmogonies and origin narratives. The representations of origin, which we ourselves invent, **are then retroactively projected onto an imagined past.** Why so? Because each such projection is the shared storytelling origin out of which we are initiatedly reborn. In this case we are no longer, as individual biological subjects, primarily born of the womb; rather, we are both initiated and reborn as fictively instituted inter- altruistic kinrecognizing members of each such symbolically re- encoded genre- specific referent- we. This is to say we are all initiatedly reborn—renatus in Saint Thomas Aquinas’s Christian term—to subjectively experience ourselves as subjects of the same encoded symbolic life kind. Why this imperative? Because **for all genre- specific subjects who are reborn from the same eusocializing origin myth and / or cosmogony, their genetically encoded individual biological life and its attendant imperative of naked self- preservation must at the same time be**, via initiation, **aversively experienced as symbolic death.** 62 This is the concomitant condition of inducing in all subjects the mimetic desire for the group- collective symbolic life of its genre- specific referent- we, its fictive mode of pseudospeciated kind. **The centrality of the ritually initiated and enacted storytelling codes, and thus their positive / negative, symbolic** life / death **semantically- neurochemically activated “second set of instructions,”** **emerges** here: these codes are specific to each kind. **The positive verbal meanings attributed to their respective modes of kind are alchemically transformed into living flesh, as its members all reflexly subjectively experience themselves, in the mimetically desirable, because opiate-rewarded, placebo terms of that mode of symbolic life prescribed by the storytelling code**. This at the same time as they subjectively experience their former “born of the womb” purely biological life as mimetically aversive, because they are doing so in now opiate- reward- blocked symbolic death, nocebo terms.63 For the preservation of which of these lives, then, do you think wars are fought? In the wake of the answer to the above, we see our chartering cosmogonies as being isomorphic with what we now define as our “cultures”— in both cases **we are talking about our hybrid sociogenic codes and their “second set of instructions.”** These are **codes that are even able to override where necessary**—this with respect to our auto- instituted, non– genetically restricted fictive modes of eusociality—**the first set of instructions of our own dna** (unlike as is the case with all other primates). The logical corollary is this: our modes of auto- institution, together with their initiatory rituals of rebirth—as iconized by the ritual of Christian baptism—are indispensable to the enacting of the human as the only living species on Earth who is the denizen of its third and hybrid bios / mythoi level of existence! Our mode of hybrid living being alone—this together with our also hitherto always genre- specific bios / mythoi enacted orders of supraindividual consciousness—is thereby to arrive on the scene all at once! With the Big Bang of the biomutational Third Event! So you see now why we still can’t solve the problem of consciousness? In spite of the most dedicated efforts of natural scientists, brain scientists, and philosophers? For what becomes clear here is that our human orders of consciousness / modes of mind cannot exist outside the terms of a specific cosmogony. Therefore, human orders of consciousness / modes of mind cannot preexist the terms of the always already mythically chartered, genre- specific code of symbolic life / death, its “second set of instructions” and thus its governing sociogenic principle— or, as Keith Ward puts it, its nonphysical principle of causality.64 To give an example: here we are, we are talking and thinking. We are, in fact, reflexly talking and thinking in terms of Darwin’s biocosmogonically chartered definitive version—in The Descent of Man (1871)—of the British bourgeoisie’s ruling class’s earlier reinvention of Man1’s civic humanist homo politicus as that of liberal monohumanist Man2 as homo oeconomicus, together with its now fully desupernaturalized sociogenically encoded order of consciousness. These are the very terms, therefore, in which we ourselves, in now historically postcolonial / postapartheid contexts, are. If in our case, only mimetically so! This at the same time as we are also struggling to think outside the limits of the purely biocentric order of consciousness that is genre- specific to the Western bourgeoisie’s homo oeconomicus. But it’s extremely difficult to do, right? You know why? Because Darwinism’s powerful, seductive force as a cosmogony, or origin narrative, is due to the fact that it is the first in our human history to be not only part myth but also part natural science. In fact, this mutation—the part myth / part natural science workings of Darwinism—draws attention to Darwin’s powerful neoMalthusian conceptual leap.65 A leap by means of which—over and against Cardinal Bellarmine—Darwin was to definitively replace the biblical Cre- ation account of the origin of all forms of biological life, including the major bios aspect of our being hybridly human, with a new evolutionary account. Why, then, say that this Darwinian account is only part science? Biologist Glyn Isaac, in his essay “Aspects of Human Evolution” (1983), provides the answer. Isaac makes us aware of the ecumenically human trap into which Darwin had also partly fallen: Understanding the literature on human evolution calls for the recognition of special problems that confront scientists who report on this topic. Regardless of how the scientists present them, accounts of human origins are read as replacement materials for genesis. They fulfill needs that are reflected in the fact that all societies have in their culture some form of origin beliefs, that is, some narrative or configurational notion of how the world and humanity began. Usually, these beliefs do more than cope with curiosity, they have allegorical content, and they convey values, ethics and attitudes. The Adam and Eve creation story of the Bible is simply one of a wide variety of such poetic formulations. . . . The scientific movement which culminated in Darwin’s compelling formulation of evolution as a mode of origin seemed to sweep away earlier beliefs and relegate them to the realm of myth and legend. Following on from this, it is often supposed that the myths have been replaced by something quite different, which we call “science.” However, this is only partly true; scientific theories and information about human origins have been slotted into the same old places in our minds and our cultures that used to be occupied by the myths. . . . Our new origin beliefs are in fact surrogate myths, that are themselves part science, part myths. 66 So the trap, you see, is that of the paradox that lies at the core of our metaDarwinian hybridity. For what I’m saying is that as humans, we cannot / do not preexist our cosmogonies, our representations of our origins—even though it is we ourselves who invent those cosmogonies and then retroactively project them onto a past. We invent them in formulaic storytelling terms, as “donor figures” or “entities,” who have extrahumanly (supernaturally, but now also naturally and / or bioevolutionarily, therefore secularly) mandated what the structuring societal order of our genre- specific, eusocial or cultural present would have to be.67 As the French cultural anthropologist Maurice Godelier also makes clear, with respect to the above: we, too, hitherto have also systematically kept the reality of our own agency—from our origins until today—opaque to ourselves. 68 Thus all our humanly invented chartering cosmogonies, including our contemporary macro (monohumanistic / monotheistic) cosmogonies, are law- likely configured as being extrahumanly mandated.69 All such sacred theological discourses ( Judaism, Islamism, Christianity, for example) continue to function in the already theo- cosmogonically mandated cognitively closed terms that are indispensable to the enacting of their respective behavior- inducing and behavior- regulatory fictively eusocializing imperative. This is especially apparent, too, in the secular substitute monohumanist religion of Darwin’s neo- Malthusian biocosmogony: here, in the biocosmogony of symbolic life / death—as that of selection / dysselection and eugenic / dysgenic codes—the incarnation of symbolic life, will law- likely be that of the ruling- class bourgeoisie as the naturally selected (eugenic) master of Malthusian natural scarcity. With this emerges, cumulatively, the virtuous breadwinner, together with his pre- 1960s virtuous housewife, and, corelatedly, the savvy investor, the capital accumulator, or at least the steady job holder.70 In effect, wealth, no longer in its traditional, inherited freehold landowning form, but in its now unceasingly capital- accumulating, global form, is itself the sole macro- signifier of ultimate symbolic life. Symbolic death, therefore, is that of having been naturally dysselected and mastered by Malthusian natural scarcity: as are the globally homogenized dysgenic non- breadwinning jobless poor / the pauper / homeless / the welfare queens. Poverty itself, therefore, is the “significant ill” signifier of ultimate symbolic death and, consequently, capital accumulation, and therefore symbolic life signifies and narrates a plan of salvation that will cure the dysselected significant ill! **The systemic reproduction of** the real- life **categories** of both signifiers **are indispensable to the continued enactment of the ruling - class** bourgeoisie’s **governing code** of symbolic life / death and the defining of liberal (now neoliberal) monohumanist Man2. This now purely secular coding of life / death is itself discursively—indeed rigorously—elaborated bioepistemologically, on the model of a natural organism, by the disciplines of our social sciences and humanities, together with their respective genre- specific and ethno- class truths of solidarity.71 Consequently, **within the laws of** hybrid auto- institution and / or pseudospeciation the (**humanities and social science**) **disciplinary truths of solidarity enact** their biocosmogonically chartered **sociogenic code** of symbolic life / death, also **imperatively calling to be discursively elaborated in cognitively** (cum psychoaffectively / aesthetically) **closed terms.**

#### Western colonial frameworks render Nativeness as the raw material for settler vitality — refuse the re-scripting of Native life and death onto settler landscapes and colonial cartographies

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**Connecting Kim TallBear and Philip Deloria’s work**, **we can understand how** Western colonial scientific frameworks render ‘Nativeness’ into a material resource, already belonging to settler society, which can be mined for value; its imaginary, raw, authentic qualities are desired to make settler identity meaningful **and to construct intimate belongings** with landscape. Thinking about **desires to consume and own flesh** (or bone), **and rendering** bone **into personal property**, Alexander Weheliye’s concept of ‘pornotroping’ gets at the ways that the captive body is a “source of an irresistible, destructive sensuality” **and at the same time is** “reduced to a thing, to being for the captor” (90). Orlando Patterson also discusses the imagined intimacy between enslavers and captive bodies, **as well as a fear of danger waiting in the spiritual realm for the enslaver because of his actions**; which is assuaged through **imagining a ‘benevolent enslavement,’ thus** assuring a salvation for the enslaver. I do not mean to collapse the very differing racializing projects of antiBlackness and Indigenous dispossession into being the same thing, while also recognizing their inseparable entanglements in the mutual constitution of settler colonialism, and also acknowledging that perhaps my easy comparison here is very problematic; I do want to think about the space of settler sexualized desire for captive bodies, and connect it to a sexualized and intimate desire for captured dead bodies. How do settlers form (imagined) belongings through imagined intimacies with Indigenous dead? How does anti-Black consumption facilitate white settler intimacies with landscapes? What kinds of sexualized and intimate fantasies are being enacted through the dissection and hoarding of corpses, or the extraction of energy from human bones? When does the researcher, or witch, imagine and perform a fabricated emotional intimacy with the dead, and when is the dead body simply an object from which to extract, or dismember? I’m **reflecting on Audra Simpson’s comments** on yesterday’s panel “Colonial Unknowing and Biopolitics,” which speaking on the ruse of consent **that** settler society depicts in its relations with Indigenous peoples, I **call attention to the coercive intimacy researchers**, and perhaps witches, enforce onto the dead. I do acknowledge and hesitate at my oversimplification of histories and meanings of witchcraft, and at the same time, I do take seriously the settler colonial fantasies that very much inform the increasing popularity of witchcraft particularly amongst white queer identified settlers. To conclude, **I have begun to consider the historical and ongoing extractive projects that seek to render Indigenous bones into material resources** - **to be excavated, consumed, dismembered, and** the particular **logics of containment projected onto the dead through settler imaginaries.** I ask how are the bones of the dead consumed in order to enact queer settler belongings imagined to be subversive to the state, yet ultimately naturalizing of, and thus reinforcing to, a settler colonial project? Thinking with the work of Sylvia Wynter and Jodi Byrd, **projects of settler colonial grave excavation** reveal an important process in how meanings of ‘symbolic life and death’ are mapped onto landscape **through their centrality in establishing the normative standards of ‘Western Man’ as ‘human’ and as foundational to the parameters of US legal personhood**, furthermore, genocidal intimacies draws attention to the sexualized productions of colonial carceral geographies. Settler **belonging is** accessed through genocidal intimacies, which are both **informed by and reproductive of the carceral grounds from which** militarized settler space and racializing technologies of social death can be erected and enacted.

**The specter of extinction is a product of antiqueer, settler anxieties that arise not only from settlerism’s guilt for destroying the planet’s ability to sustain itself, but also from the settler’s need to strengthen solidarity and defer confrontation with native genocide**

**Dalley 16**. Hamish Dalley is an Assistant professor of English at Daemen College and techer in the areas of ancient and modern world literature [“The deaths of settler colonialism: extinction as a metaphor of decolonization in contemporary settler literature,” *Settler Colonial Studies*, Issue Number, No. 8]//vikas

**Considering the problem of futurity offers a useful foil to traditional analyses of settler colonial narrative**, which typically examine settlers’ attitudes towards history in order to highlight a constitutive anxiety about the past – about origins. **Settler colonialism**, the argument goes, **has a problem with historical narration that arises from a contradiction in its founding mythology.** In Stephen Turner’s formulation, the settler subject is by definition one who comes from elsewhere but who strives to make this place home. **The settlement narrative must explain how this gap** – which is at once geographical, historical, and existential – **has been bridged, and the settler transformed from outsider into indigene.** Yet the transformation **must remain constitutively incomplete, because the desire to be at home necessarily invokes the spectre of the native, whose existence** (which cannot be disavowed completely because it is needed to define the settler’s difference, superiority, and hence claim to the land) **inscribes the settler’s foreignness**, thus **reinstating the gap between settler and colony that the narrative was meant to efface.** Settler-colonial narrative is thus **shaped around its need to erase and evoke the native, to make the indigene both invisible and present in a contradictory pattern that prevents settlers from** ever **moving on from the moment of colonization.**2 As evidence of this constitutive contradiction, critics have identified in settler-colonial discourse symptoms of psychic distress such as disavowal, inversion, and repression.3 Indeed, the frozen temporality of settler-colonial narrative, fixated on the moment of the frontier, recalls nothing so much as Freud’s description of the ‘repetition compulsion’ attending trauma.4 As Lorenzo Veracini puts it, because: ‘settler society’ can thus be seen as a fantasy where a perception of a constant struggle is juxtaposed against an ideal of ‘peace’ that can never be reached, settler projects embrace and reject violence at the same time. The settler colonial situation is thus a circumstance where the tension between contradictory impulses produces long-lasting psychic conflicts and a number of associated psychopathologies.5 Current scholarship has thus focused primarily on settler-colonial narrative’s view of the past, asking how such a contradictory and troubled relationship to history might affect present-day ideological formations. Critics have rarely considered what such narratological tensions might produce when the settler gaze is turned to the future. Few social formations are more stubbornly resistant to change than settlement, suggesting that a future beyond settler colonialism might be simply unthinkable. Veracini, indeed, suggests that settler-colonial narrative can never contemplate an ending: that settler decolonization is inconceivable because settlers lack the metaphorical tools to imagine their own demise.6 This article outlines why I partly disagree with that view. I argue that **the narratological paradox that defines settler-colonial narrative does make the future a problematic object of contemplation.** But **that does not make settler decolonization unthinkable per se**; as I will show, **settlers do often try to imagine their demise** – but they do so **in a way that reasserts the paradoxes of their founding ideology, with the result that** the radical potentiality of decolonization is undone even as it is invoked. I argue that, notwithstanding Veracini’s analysis, there is a metaphor via which the end of settler colonialism unspools – **the** quasi-biological **concept of extinction**, which, when **deployed as a narrative trope, offers settlers a chance to consider and disavow their demise**, just as they consider and then disavow the violence of their origins. This article traces the importance of the trope of extinction for contemporary settler-colonial literature, with a focus on South Africa, Canada, and Australia. It explores variations in how the death of settler colonialism is conceptualized, drawing a distinction between historio-civilizational narratives of the rise and fall of empires, and a species-oriented notion of extinction that draws force from public anxiety about climate change – an invocation that adds another level of ambivalence by drawing on ‘rational’ fears for the future (because climate change may well render the planet uninhabitable to humans) in order to narrativize a form of social death that, strictly speaking, belongs to a different order of knowledge altogether. As such, **my analysis is intended to draw the attention of settler colonial studies toward futurity and** the **ambivalence of settler paranoia**, while highlighting a potential point of cross-fertilization between settler-colonial and eco-critical approaches to contemporary literature. That ‘extinction’ should be a key word in the settler-colonial lexicon is no surprise. In Patrick Wolfe’s phrase,7 settler colonialism is predicated on a ‘logic of elimination’ that tends towards the extermination – by one means or another – of indigenous peoples.8 This logic is apparent in archetypal settler narratives like James Fenimore Cooper’s The Last of the Mohicans (1826), a historical novel whose very title blends the melancholia and triumph that demarcate settlers’ affective responses to the supposed inevitability of indigenous extinction. Concepts like ‘stadial development’ – by which societies progress through stages, progressively eliminating earlier social forms – and ‘fatal impact’ – which names the biological inevitability of strong peoples supplanting weak – all contribute to the notion that settler colonialism is a kind of ‘ecological process’ 9 that necessitates the extinction of inferior races. What is surprising, though, is how often the trope of extinction also appears with reference to settlers themselves; it makes sense for settlers to narrate how their presence entails others’ destruction, but it is less clear why their attempts to imagine futures should presume extinction to be their own logical end as well. The idea appears repeatedly in English-language literary treatments of settler colonialism. Consider, for instance, the following rumination on the future of South African settler society, from Olive Schreiner’s 1883 Story of an African Farm: It was one of them, one of those wild old Bushmen, that painted those pictures there. He did not know why he painted but he wanted to make something, so he made these. […] Now the Boers have shot them all, so that we never see a yellow face peeping out among the stones. […] And the wild bucks have gone, and those days, and we are here. But we will be gone soon, and only the stones will lie on, looking at everything like they look now.10 In this example, the narrating settler character, Waldo, recognizes prior indigenous inhabitation but his knowledge comes freighted with an expected sense of biological superiority, made apparent by his description of the ‘Bushman’s’ ‘yellow face’, and lack of mental self-awareness. What is not clear is why Waldo’s contemplation of colonial genocide should turn immediately to the assumption that a similar fate awaits his people as well. A similar presumption of racial vulnerability permeates other late nineteenth century novels from the imperial metropole, such as Dracula and War of the Worlds, which are plotted around the prospect of invasions that would see the extinction of British imperialism, and, in the process, the human species. Such **anxieties draw energy from a pattern of settler defensiveness that can be observed across** numerous **settler-colonial contexts.** Marilyn Lake’s and Henry Reynold’s account of **the emergence of transnational ‘whiteness’ highlights the paradoxical fact that while white male settlers have been arguably the most privileged class in history,** they have **routinely perceived themselves to be ‘under siege’, threatened with destruction** to the extent **that their very identity of** ‘**whiteness was born in the apprehension of imminent loss**’. 11 The **fear of looming annihilation serves a powerful ideological function in settler communities, working to foster racial solidarity, suppress dissent, and legitimate violence against indigenous populations who**, by any objective measure, **are far more at risk of extermination than the settlers who fear them.** Ann Curthoys and Dirk Moses have traced this pattern in Australia and Israel-Palestine, respectively.12 This scholarship suggests that **narratives of settler extinction are acts of ideological mystification, obscuring the brutal inequalities of the frontier behind a mask of white vulnerability** – an argument with which I sympathize. However, this article shows how there is more to settler-colonial extinction narratives than bad faith. I argue that we need a more nuanced understanding of how they encode a specifically settler-colonial framework for imagining the future, one that has implications for how we understand contemporary literatures from settler societies, and which allows us to see extinction as a genuine, if flawed, attempt to envisage social change. In the remainder of this paper I consider extinction’s function as a metaphor of decolonization. I use this phrase to invoke, without completely endorsing, Tuck and Yang’s argument that to treat decolonization figuratively, as I argue **extinction narratives** do, is necessarily to **preclude radical change, creating opportunities for settler ‘moves to innocence’ that re-legitimate racial inequality.**13 The counterview to this pessimistic perspective is offered by Veracini, who suggests that progressive change to settler-colonial relationships will only happen if narratives can be found that make decolonization thinkable.14 This article enters the debate between these two perspectives by asking what it means for settler writers to imagine the future via the trope of extinction. Does extinction offer a meaningful way to think about ending settler colonialism, or does it re-activate settler-colonial patterns of thought that allow exclusionary social structures to persist? I explore this question with reference to examples of contemporary literary treatments of extinction from select English-speaking settler-colonial contexts: South Africa, Australia, and Canada.15 The next section of this article traces key elements of extinction narrative in a range of settler-colonial texts, while the section that follows offers a detailed reading of one of the best examples of a sustained literary exploration of human finitude, Margaret Atwood’s Maddaddam trilogy (2003–2013). I advance four specific arguments. First, extinction narratives take at least two forms depending on whether the ‘end’ of settler society is framed primarily in historical-civilizational terms or in a stronger, biological sense; the key question is whether the ‘thing’ that is going extinct is a society or a species. Second, biologically oriented extinction narratives rely on a more or less conscious slippage between ‘the settler’ and ‘the human’. Third, this slippage is ideologically ambivalent: on the one hand, it contains a radical charge that invokes environmentalist discourse and climate-change anxiety to imagine social forms that re-write settler-colonial dynamics; on the other, it replicates a core aspect of imperialist ideology by normalizing whiteness as equivalent to humanity. Fourth, **these ideological effects are mediated by gender**, insofar as **extinction narratives invoke issues of biological reproduction, community protection, and violence that function to differentiate and reify masculine and feminine roles** in the putative de-colonial future. Overall, my central claim is that extinction is a core trope through which settler futurity emerges, one **with crucial narrative and ideological effects that shape** much of the contemporary **literature emerging from white colonial settings.**

oth **informed by and reproductive of the carceral grounds from which militarized settler space** and racializing technologies of social death **can be erected and enacted.**

#### The 1AC’s analysis of Marxism is grounded in Eurocentric thought reifying colonialism

Robinson 20 [Rowland Robinson is a PhD holder at the University of Waterloo. “Settler Colonialism + Native Ghosts: An Autoethnographic Account of the Imaginarium of Late Capitalist/Colonialist Storytelling” 2020 <https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/bitstream/handle/10012/15632/Robinson_Rowland.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>] // aaditg

The very last of these points, the question of universality, also opens up a door onto what has become my primary issue with so most of Marxism, of almost any variant—Althusserian, Gramscian, Jamesonian, Fisherian, Leninist, Maoist etc.—which is quite often and quite simply that it is profoundly eurocentric. What Marxism tends to miss in this regard—whether Althusserian, Gramscian, Jamesonian, Fisherian, Leninist, Maoist—is that this is a problem that Marxism is not really equipped to grapple with because, at the heart of things, Marxism, or at least orthodox Marxism, deeply holds to 54 the abstractly “progressive” powers and qualities of this thing that we call modernity precisely because it is a product of modernity, born at the necrotic heart of the colonial order of things. In this regard, I do not believe that there has been a meaningful shift away from eurocentrism, though certainly efforts have been made. Indeed, in my experience outside of academia, in on the ground activist work, in interactions with leftists of a myriad of different Marxist tendencies (Marxism-Leninism, Trotskyism, Maoism, various “leftcommunisms” etc.), the apparent default response amongst many to any attempted critique of eurocentrism within Marxism is to assume that those of us making the critique are saying that Marxism is a “white thing.” On the surface, this is quite obviously not the case, based purely on the historical record of 20th-Century revolutionary Marxist movements, nor do I think it is what anyone putting out a real analysis of the issue means to imply either. Regardless, watching an endless parade of Twitter arguments, the fact that that is not what I or others are saying does little to stop Marxists, in particular Marxist-Leninists from parading out images of their favourite “Revolutionaries of Colour”: Hồ Chí Minh, Thomas Sankara, José María Sison, Huey P. Newton, Mao Zedong, Kim Il Sung etc. This, because no one who is really thinking through these issues is calling Marxism a white thing, does not actually do anything to diffuse the critique of eurocentrism. In reality, what these two things are—the claim that people are saying Marxism is white”, and the parade of images of ROC as a supposed counter-point—is actually, simply put, an ideologically placed thought terminator designed to short-circuit critique. This, of course, is far from the only thought terminator used by many Marxist activists and theorists to diffuse attempts at critique. A popular one, and one which I have had levelled at myself more than once over the years, is the proposition that critique of Marxism represents the work of some nefarious apparatus of the colonial-capitalist state, such as COINTELPRO12, the CIA, FBI, or, for those of us up here in Canada, the RCMP or CSIS. For example, as I write this a quite popular claim, bordering on conspiracy theory, amongst certain segments of the cyberspace left is the american CIA, via its Paris-based front organization the Congress for Cultural Freedom, had a hand in translating into the Anglophone world the writings of certain postmodern/poststructuralist theorists, such as Derrida and Foucault, in the hopes that this would coax the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist rightwards and away from radical critique (Rockhill 2017). While I cannot speak to the role that the CIA may actually have had in this, the assumption seems to be that other scholars, theorists, and, also, activists would not have reached a point of critiquing Marxist assumptions without the cynical 56 guiding hand of the CIA. This functions as a thought terminator by allowing those Marxists who choose to deploy it to simply point at a source of critique and yell “agent!” That said, working within the Marxist tradition, there have been a number of important attempts to think again and beyond eurocentrism. I believe that amongst these various efforts, Robert Biel in his text Eurocentrism and the Communist Movement (2015) is absolutely correct when he says, speaking of Marxism, or what he thinks should be its “more neutral name” historical materialism, that: The reality is that it is embodied in a particular movement which originated and developed in a definite set of geographical and historical conditions. These inevitably influenced, and imposed limitations upon, the concrete form in which the theory was first put forward (2015:4). Here Biel’s assessment of the geo-historical location and timing of Marxism’s birth, and the marks that it has left on its body of theory, cleaves quite closely to what the late Cedric J. Robinson much more expansively noted in his classic text Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition. Speaking of what he identifies as Marxism’s “ominous limitations, Robinson says: However, it is still fair to say that at base, that is at its epistemological substratum, Marxism is a Western construction—a conceptualization of human affairs and historical development which is emergent from the historical experiences of European peoples mediated, in turn, through their civilization, their social orders, and their cultures. Certainly its philosophical origins are indisputably Western. But the same must be said of its analytical presumptions, its historical perspectives, its points of view. This most natural consequence though has assumed a rather ominous significance since European Marxists have presumed more frequently than not that their project is identical with world-historical development. Confounded it would seem by the cultural zeal which accompanies ascendant civilizations, they have mistaken for universal verities the structures and social dynamics retrieved from their own distant and more immediate pasts. Even more significantly, the deepest structures of ‘historical materialism’ … have tended to relieve European Marxists from the obligation of investigating the profound effects of culture and historical experience on their science. The ordering ideas which have persisted in Western civilization … have little or no theoretical justification in Marxism for their existence (1983:2) However, even the best-case examples of contemporary Marxist attempts to confront their school of thought’s congenital eurocentrism, such as in Biel’s important work, I have issues with the accounting of the problem. For example, Biel ultimately largely boils the endemic issue of eurocentrism in Marxism down to a question of its political economy (2015:171). While in a sense I do agree that the political economy of most Marxists is somewhere between one hundred and one hundred fifty years out of date, the question of eurocentrism is not simply one that can be solved by the correct reading and application of dependency theory or world-systems analysis. While certainly taking up that theoretical line—updated as it should be for the early 21st century, is important, and especially when paired with a serious concern for the question of imperialist parasitism— the manner in which it is focused upon by Biel actually, in my opinion, obscures the other, often deeper ways that Marxism has been marked by a profound eurocentrism since its original formulations. Indeed, despite the recent efforts of the canadian Maoist philosopher Joshua Moufwad-Paul, working through the late Samir Amin, to portray Marxism as a “modernity critical of modernity,” and leaning heavily on the concluding pages of Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth in order to declare “the need to establish a new Enlightenment that will be free from the predations of Europe” I find little hope for this within the onto-epistemological framing of the Marxist project (2018). Indeed, elsewhere Moufwad-Paul falls back on old Marxist tropes I have no taste for in order to circumvent Black theorist Alexander G. Weheliye’s criticism of all theoretical traditions of european origin as “white European thinkers [who] are granted a carte blanche” (2014:6). Namely, Moufwad-Paul consciously falls back on that old Marxist claim that “it is only the Marxist tendency that can account for and surmount this carte blanche, thus necessarily generating theoretical offspring critical of its erroneous aspects, because of what it is: a science” [emphasis original] (2019). As I have said already, I am critical of the claims to not only Marxism’s longrunning project of positioning itself as a science, as well as generally scientistic outlooks in general, a lingering remnant of my Gramscianism. However, the claim to Marxism’s scientificity, made explicit in Moufwad-Paul’s body of work, brings into quite clear focus the problems of Marxism’s onto-epistemological eurocentrism. Take for instance this paragraph, in which he quite boldly writes: Moreover, claims that there are other knowledges that have been excluded by the dominant scientific narrative does not prove that science-qua-science is incorrect––as the artefacts the latter produces immediately demonstrates. At best such claims only demonstrate that the colonial-capitalist monopoly on scientific investigation has excluded just as much as it has appropriated and that it could stand to learn more from the research of others: we know this is correct since environmental scientists have discovered that there are indeed suppressed knowledges of numerous Indigenous populations that prove the possibility of living sustainable lives. At worst, however, claims about excluded knowledge traditions can lead to unqualified endorsements of culturalist mystification. Just because a truth claim is made by a colonized or formerly colonized population does not make it correct, no more than the various anti-scientific truth claims made by colonizing populations (i.e. Six Day Creationism, anti-vaccination, “chem-trails”, ethnonationalism, conservative conceptions of gender and sex, etc.), and thus it is not always wrong that science excludes some knowledges. Indeed, science necessarily has to exclude those truth claims that are proven wrong regardless of their origin. This does not mean that scientific investigation, because of the influence of the ideological instance, might not wrongly exclude truths due to a scientist’s devotion to various social dogma, only that other times the exclusion is correct. Only Christian fundamentalists would argue that we are not better off for the exclusion of Six Day Creationism from the discipline of biology (2019). In a single arch here Moufwad-Paul concedes that primitive Savages, such as Indigenous populations, may actually have some sort of useful knowledge about the world in the form of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or TEK—a currently buzzworthy area of discussion within philosophy, the social sciences and environmental studies—yet, in a stunningly oblivious move demonstrating the deep eurochauvinist and racial-colonialist contours of his own Marxist “science”, simultaneously colours non-european traditional knowledges and epistemologies with the same brush of “culturalist mystification” as conservative christian supremacists seeking to overturn the current liberal-bourgeois secular order to replace it with their own. In labelling traditional Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies, and methodologies “culturalist mystification” MoufwadPaul not just side-steps, but actively pushes to the side, the fact that “science,” as a “structured and systematic production of knowledge,” is, by most accounts, something that “all societies and all groups, everywhere and anytime, are engaged in” although “not all of them are institutionalized to the same degree” (Reiter 2018:3). Moufwad-Paul’s characterization of non-european knowledges, epistemologies, and methodologies is, I think it is safe to argue, deeply problematic. This is because, as Bernd Reiter notes, colonialism “erased many local scientific traditions by declassifying them as primitive and folklore and substituting what was perceived as Southern superstition with Northern science” (2018:3). However, this is, as I have already noted, something which Moufwad-Paul appears to not even notice, much less concern himself with. Indeed, in labelling traditional Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies, and methodologies “culturalist mystification” he commits the very same colonial error that Reitmer speaks of, saying: To some authors, the very power of colonialism rested on its ability to name and categorize the world according to its heuristic schemata and interest, thus inventing, and enforcing, such binaries as modern/traditional, progressive/backward, and civilized/primitive (2018:3). “Culturalist mystification” is a labelling of traditional Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies, and methodologies that can only arise from the imperial gaze of modernity/coloniality, and thus invests in, constructs, and reifies a colonial epistemological hierarchy and binary, and by extension implies other imperial hierarchies and binaries, and core-periphery like relationship (Escobar 2011; Lugones 2007). Given his philosophical commitment to epistemologically and methodologically situating Marxism as a science, and demonstrated euro-colonial myopia, I suspect that even if these problems were presented to him, he would not be able to recognize that the knowledge production of euro-western science, much less that of Marxism’s supposedly scientific outlook and methodology, is made possible by the coloniality of power/knowledge (Dussel 2002; Quijano 2008)

**Their reading of debate spilling out to political movements is a politics of legalistic vouyrism which requires a positioning of colonial others to be objects acted upon. Don’t believe their claims that Cooper City’s reading of cap is a radical rupture in politics**

**Nayar 17** (Jayan Nayar, Associate Professor and Director of the International Development Law and Human Rights LLM Program at the School of Law at the University of Warwick, February 2017, “Some Thoughts on the “(Extra)Ordinary”: Philosophy, Coloniality, and Being Otherwise,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* Volume 42 Issue 1) gz

Indeed, it is a peculiar enterprise that we “critical intellectuals” engage in.2 We assume an audacious capacity to **contemplate the “world”** and read its signs and to interpret our present and **imagine better futures**. We think, perhaps, this a worthwhile social endeavor; the “thinker,” we might hope, serves as a catalyst to identify, to instigate, and to provoke otherwise merely latent potentialities of suppressed insurgencies against the ossification of the future in unsatisfactory and captured presents.3

With this self-assumed sense of purpose, perhaps it is understandable that many of us seek out the “street” for our thinking;4 it is here that we search for the extraordinary “event” that marks, as we see it, a rupture, the moment of catharsis, a transformation, the “new” born into the world. We see this tendency to philosophize the street clearly in recent intellectual work of the critical “post-Enlightenment” philosophers.5 Reading “uprisings,” “resistance,” and “revolutions”, interpreting the happenings of irruptions in the squares and bazaars of anger, ascribing meaning to voice as voiced in a multitude of vernaculars in multiple locales as these events are gazed upon and made audible to consuming eyes and ears, and investing hope and dispensing disappointment, indeed, we observe that much political–legal thought is so moved by the (variously conceived of) “political” projects to open up possible pathways of “rupturing” the present. In this fashion, the street has indeed come to be the primary locale from which philosophical contemplations are undertaken in this “age of resistance” as Costas Douzinas has named our present time:

A sequence of uprisings will dominate the world political landscape in the next period. Ours is an age of resistance. The possibility of radical change has been firmly placed on the historical agenda.6

What inspires such fervor, such ecstatic celebration of the street, is a perceived, hoped for, *emergence*,7 here, the extraordinary event is the harbinger of hope, marking the (possible, nascent) becoming of a “political subject” as the one who emerges into the street, and out from the street, breaking free from the shackles of extant sovereign-biopolitical diagrams, heralding (with “fidelity”), as Alain Badiou would have it come to be, the “rebirth” of history.8 The street, thus, portends history. This, we see, is thinking fixed on the spectacular, the heroic, and the extraordinary of “radical change.” It is this philosophical tendency—to **appropriate the street** as the ecstatic site of extraordinary becoming—that is my concern in this essay. It is this heroic orientation of thought that is the subject of my critique.

In what follows, I consider the philosophical–political heritage from which the preoccupation with thinking the extraordinary of the street originates and question the implications of such thinking. I argue that such thinking betrays the **continued coloniality of critical post-Enlightenment philosophy**.9 My intention is to provide a different reading of the “extraordinary” that emerges in the street—as a physical place of embodied presence rather than a reified space of philosophical aspiration—informed by what I argue to be a decolonial understanding of the presents (and presence) of already being in the world. The essay is organized as follows.

First, I trace the foundations of what I name **the “ontology of abandonment and resurrection”** which, I argue, founds critical Eurocentric political–legal philosophy. Central here is the invention of the mythologies of the event and of “becoming.” I argue that for the philosopher of the European (post-)Enlightenment, betrayed by the idea and abandoned by the “revolutionary subject,” the quest for a new evental becoming is all consuming. I demonstrate that the street presents precisely such an opportunity for rescue, the irruptions there witnessed serving to revive the heroic moment of “becoming subject” through the event. But this, I argue, is a philosophy that **perpetuates, still, colonial categories of being**. Against this philosophy of the extraordinary, I suggest a twofold correction: firstly, an emphasis on the persistent ordinariness of the perceived extraordinary of the street in order that the many worlds of resistance against the normalities of coloniality are deinvisibilized to philosophy; secondly, and consequently, a cognition of the resilient extraordinariness of the “ordinary” everyday, so that the worlds of being-otherwise to “Europe” are returned to the philosophical register as present and real possibilities of being. What is intended by this “decolonial” correction, as I elaborate below, is to return philosophy from the street to the everyday locations, material conditions, and experiences of embodied beings in the world.10 In this task of rupturing the coloniality of philosophy, I suggest, we philosophers of rupture are ourselves implicated.

On the Ontology of Abandonment and Resurrection (and Disappointment)

We begin by directing our attention to the constitutive categories of the European (post-)Enlightenment. By this, I mean the fundamental concepts that found the ground from which (Eurocentric) political–legal philosophy is thought and the premises from which “critical” discoveries are imagined to be made;11 examples relevant to the present discussion include (human)being, sovereignty, the political, constituent and constituted power, and subjectivity. Variously, the attempt to reclaim some emancipatory meaning and content for these foundational categories of (presumed) human beingness in the world characterizes much of the preoccupation of critical philosophy. What we are concerned to do here is to reveal the coloniality of the ontological foundations of this cosmology of the “modern,” whereby the radical, “enlightened” potentiality of human beingness was projected as the Idea of Europe onto the world. I suggest that we can best understand this past, and present, of post-Enlightenment political–legal philosophy as being founded upon an ontology of abandonment and resurrection. The so-called French Revolution, as a philosophical invention, is a good place to start in this connection.

It would appear that no critical, transformative, engagement with the worlds of politics, of law, of democracy, of hope for better human futures, in short, is possible, without some return and due reference to the “French Revolution” as the ruptural moment of European human imagination and enactment presented, as it often is, as an original, and originary, Event in history. This is the moment of the great birth of “man”-post-God, “degodded” as Sylvia Wynter put it,12 as “subject” and “citizen,” a being sovereign, author in and of the world. In this construction of the “*Idea*” of being in history is the French Revolution, for the post-Enlightenment philosopher of the European tradition, a constitutive Event, for with it, through it, is consolidated the advent of man as a necessary rupture from emptiness and darkness into fullness and belonging, the emergence from the abandonment and void of godlessness into the secular “word” and world of reasoned Enlightenment. This is a momentous becoming indeed. With the *invention* of the French Revolution, as event (quite aside and distinct from the temporal happenings and outcomes in France from 1789 and onward),13 the citizen thus replaces the “believer,” the “children of revolutionary sovereignty” thus replace the “children of God,” the violent “eventual” revolutionary-becoming thus replaces the portend of the (im)possible secular resurrection of the human-as-citizen into the world of words and meaning absent mediation by the divine ascription of placements.14 Indeed, a becoming into the world through an extraordinary event—**a secular resurrection** as it were—is necessary to birth the “rupture” and bring into “being” the modern promise of salvation, necessary to relegate the claim of God (and his priests) on humanity to the fringes of “premodern” superstition.15 Simply put, the French Revolution—as invented by the repetitions of political–legal philosophers—marks the recurrent moment and provides the repeated enunciation for a spectacular send-off for (the Western version of the Judeo-Christian) God by the **philosophy of a new (En)Light(enment)** and the “liberation” and “freedom” of sovereign man thereby rebirthed.16 Thus was invented the ontology of (colonial-)modern beingness that so many take as given:

* That human beingness is the possibility of becoming—being out of nonbeing. We see this defined by the duality of the believer and the heathen under Occidental Christianity, traced to an earlier distinction between the (political-)sociality/civilization of *bios* and the “naturality” of *zoe* in more “classical” Grecian rationalizations.17
* That beingness—as being self as self with others—is, as such, haunted by the inherent and perpetual threat of abandonment to nonbeing from *bios-community* to *zoe-bare life*. It is the (constantly strived for) universal potentiality and responsibility of man therefore to become into the “public” as (ethical-)political subject.18
* That this becoming, out of nonbeing (zoe-bare life) into the world of political-being-subject, is a process filled with ontological labor pains; theories of “social contract” enacted out of the extraordinary event thus serves as the modern philosophical vehicle for this transformation from the extraordinary moment to the normalized future.

This is all well and good, no doubt significant for an understanding of the evolving cosmologies and philosophoscapes of the emerging “European man” out of his ages dark; the actual in the “ideal” of this emancipation of the modern subject was, however, something quite different.19

A decolonial telling of the philosophical biography of the political subject begins with remembering that we are not merely recounting a “European-modern” philosophical tale here. The birthing of the modern universal subject of the political was **coeval with its coconstitutive colonial underside**; it was an ontological birth whose origins lay in the **violent gestations, both material and cosmological, of the colonial ordering of the world**. I don’t intend to repeat the readings of the history of History through a colonial–modern lens; this has amply been done effectively elsewhere.20 My aim is more to draw out the constituting premises that connect the current preoccupation of extraordinary becoming of (Westernized) man with prior colonial philosophies of being that sought to deny and thereby annihilate the manifold actuals of *already-(other-)beingness* that constitutes the worlds of being (variously)human.

We recall that the foundational assumptions and constitutive philosophical categories of being, sovereignty, subject, and political were invented **alongside the material enforcement of colonial–modern politics and law**.21 From the very beginning, the universal Man of the Enlightenment was **constructed on a whole array of geo- and body political disqualifications**;22 for all the assertions of the sovereignty of man, it was the bordering of “population” that marked the advent of the “sovereignty” of (biopolitical) “government.”23 This, to stress the point, was no “exception” but the very actuality of colonial–modernity.24 “Indeed, a matter of anguish for the Eurocentric philosopher of the Enlightened subject is the continuing realisation that the inflicted and perpetuated suffering upon the majority of the human population is a matter of **everyday and ordinary reality**, that the ‘exclusions’ and depravations that are daily witnessed as defining the ‘actual’ of human-beingness under national and global orders of (b)ordered populations are a **constitutive feature of the condition of (colonial-)modernity.”**

Aside from the dire actualities of the biopolitics of “populationization,” the effects of “individualization” that has ensnared the subject perhaps pose a greater disappointment to the philosopher. The problem, simply put, is a crisis of the “present”: the apparent complacent condition of being that has come to define the settled present of a domesticated subject. As Zygmunt Bauman observed, the “imagination” that underpins the “postpolitical,” “postmodern” consensus of neoliberal “liquid modernity,” the result of the global consolidation of capitalism, is one whereby the much vaunted subject is concerned more with the “mining” of “disengaged” happiness and less with any historic mission for an enlightened humanity.25 It would appear, the enticements of consumerism and entrepreneurism, more than some resurrection of a political subject into history defines the (post)modern condition of being. And the consequence of this emptying out of “the political” from the subject? Precarious beingness and being “precariat” now are now recognised as the “normal” conditions of modern subjectivity.26

Through all this, the philosopher, it would appear, stands abandoned by her subject. The abdication by the subject of her “historic” responsibility of becoming-being-in-the-political is an ongoing disappointment for any critical political–legal philosopher who takes the universal promise of the “Enlightenment” seriously; it is after all the repudiation, by embodied actual beings, of the philosophically ascribed role of the political subject to be the maker of history. Rescue is necessary therefore; recovery of the foundational promise of the Enlightenment is, for the philosopher of rupture, imperative. And so, we understand the reasons for the following refinements to the original birth story of the political subject that we find in much current critical thinking:

* That to be denied being-(in the) political, is to be either in abjection or in stupor, in ontological nothingness as inexistent, or meaninglessness as a commodity, a thing not worthy of the legacy of the idea of Europe. The former is the state of “rightless” exclusion that concerned Arendt and her philosophical progeny, it is the condition of abandonment that preoccupies post-Agambenian philosophers of biopolitical sovereignty. The latter is the perceived condition of the contemporary biopolitical subject object of governmentality—the “counted” and the “accounted-for,” self-disciplining, held docile, and domesticated to be nothing useful other than as “entrepreneurial citizen consumers”—that is the object of disappointment if not contempt. And so, the crisis of the present necessitates efforts to revive, if not rescue, even resurrect, the political subject from either abandoned deprivations or hedonistic automatonity and consumptive banality.
* That becoming subject, therefore, is the continuing ontological potentiality of ruptural emancipation. Becoming subject, thus, is an ever incomplete project of becoming–being in history.

With this critical reformulation of the idea, we arrive at the present problem to “invent,” as Badiou put it, the “problem of the present”;27 it becomes the task of the philosopher to identify the critical moments whereupon might history be glimpsed in events of rupture, of becomings. We see variously therefore that the intention to reclaim some presumed emancipatory content to these related foundational assumptions of human beingness permeate through the vast majority of critical thinking on the subject of the subject in the political. The question that is addressed in such contemplations of the present is: how to rescue the emancipatory potentiality of the subject from the normalizations, and banalizations, of the present?28 As Badiou poses it,

“How are we to be faithful to changing the world *within the world itself*?” This becomes: How are we to weave in the world the political truth whose historic condition of possibility was the event, without it being able to be the realization of this possibility? How are we to inscribe politically, as active materiality under the sign of the Idea, a reawakening of History?29

And so we understand the particular preoccupation of the contemporary critical philosopher with the street.

We witness the incessant search by philosophers of radical hope for such evental and heroic happenings; so is the world scoured for ruptural articulations, so are peoples’ struggles ascribed meaning vis-a-vis the constitutive categories of modern political–legal philosophy. From the past are the French and American Revolutions (and their enunciations of universal subject beingness) tracked through to the Russian and Chinese Revolutions (less so the Haitian and Mexican), the revolts of 1968, and now (jumping a few decades) to the antiglobalization movements post Seattle, the Occupy movements, the “Arab Spring,” all grist to the mill of the philosopher in search of signs that faith in the subject of the political may be redeemed, that history itself may be reawakened. For the purpose of the Idea, therefore, are the instances of irruptions sought to be revisited, read repeatedly, and referred to in their many and varied interpretations as (potential) instances of becoming—as Badiouian event, as Rancieriean “dissensus,” as **Zizekian** “truth–**event**/act,” as Douzinasian “resistance/insurrection.”30 The extraordinary is a constant preoccupation, we see.

Yet, notwithstanding the philosophical investment in the event, life, when viewed through the lens of the heroic, inevitably disappoints. The event, in its materiality, is **never quite as pure** as its philosophical version, **never quite enough** to transform “History” sufficient for the philosopher’s satisfaction;31 moments of exalted extraordinary emancipation seemingly tire into languid returns to imperfection and corruption, domesticity, even “failure.” **Zizek**, for example, **is quite clear:**

[W]e should avoid the temptation simply to admire the sublime beauty of uprisings that are *doomed to fail*.… What new positive order should replace the old one, once the sublime enthusiasm of the uprising has waned? It is here that we encounter the fatal weakness of the current protests. They express an authentic rage that remains unable to transform itself into even a minimal positive programme for socio-political change. They express a spirit of revolt without revolution.32

If only people who struggle, erupt, and promise such excitement to the philosopher could be truer to their calling, possess greater fidelity to their evental cause, be firmer in their resolve to fulfil the revolution. Still, despite the many inadequacies and failures of these uprisings, as Zizek judges them, the “radical emancipatory core” of such expressions of irruption is affirmed.33 Indeed for the Eurocentric “secular” philosopher, this fidelity to the idea is a matter of philosophical salvation/damnation. Without the extraordinary resurrection of some mythologized subject birthed through the extraordinary event, the post-Enlightenment philosopher of (becoming-)being is left devoid,34 absent a cosmology of human beingness that is able to withstand the abandonment of God, that makes such “degodding” meaningful. And so we witness: a foundational ontology of abandonment and resurrection informs the philosophical “discoveries” of critical post-Enlightenment philosophers of the street.

To us who are nonbelievers of this parochial faith system, however—for those of us non-Europeans less entranced by the advent of the secular subject of becoming born out of the Enlightenment of Europe—a different reading of the philosophical “situation” of the present presents itself. With this unenchanted understanding of history, we turn now to see and read differently the street in the (extra)ordinariness of struggle.

On the Ordinariness of the Extraordinary

Unintended it might be, but radical readings of spectacular extraordinary becoming are **premised still on prior constructions of human beingness based on a colonial–modern ontologic–epistemology of being/nonbeing**. For the post-Enlightenment philosopher—**Badiou is exemplary**—what is assumed is that to “be” outside the political is to be **abandoned to inexistence**, whereby **the political has come to be the ontological standard of a postdivine, secular normality of human beingness proper, a life desired, a life full**; as such “inexistence” (nonbeing) in political subjectivity is the **underlying abandonment that defines the condition of the captured present** that requires recovery and rescue.35 **The recovery and rescue of Eurocentric philosophy**, that is, the ascription of extraordinary becoming to events of irruption serves precisely, it appears to me, to enable such a rescue, whereby the philosopher assumes that what is witnessed in these instances is the extraordinary ruptural assertion of the idea, of the subject, claiming a belonging in the political, out of absence, out of inexistence, out of nothingness, into (extraordinary-)being, **a “liberated” entity—the subject—as the new in history**. Badiou, again, is illustrative: “We shall then say that a *change of world* is real when an inexistent of the world starts to exist in this same world with maximum intensity.”36 The emergence of a new out of inexistence is the heroic core of post-Enlightenment political–legal philosophy.

A simple counteraffirmation serves as our point of departure for **a decolonial correction to “white ignorance.”**37 We can state it simply thus: **prior to** the apparent extraordinary moment which draws the (critical) philosopher’s gaze to rest upon the manifestations and expressions of rebellious life, persists the **daily maneuvrings of communities in struggle in their encounters with the totalizing desires of appropriative power**. In this view, what is witnessed as the extraordinary becoming of the new into the world is but the **material and exigent appearance of persistent, if largely “invisible” being(-otherwise)** whose everyday is the **ordinary struggle against extant orders of asserted normalities**. It is this that I here term *already-(other-)being* that **underpins a decolonial philosophy**. And it is this presence, and persistence that is **lost to critical Eurocentric philosophers of rupture**; we see this, for example, in the philosopher’s apparent discovery of dissensus.

We observe the following: the critical philosopher’s discoveries of ruptural becomings is informed repeatedly, to use Santiago-Gomez’s phrase, of a **“point-zero” perspective** on human life worlds.38 By this is meant a perspective whereby it is the “discovery” of the “other” (as imagined) by the philosopher that begets the worlds of meaning from whence history, as a projection of the idea, marches on. This we observe is commonplace in much recent thinking and writing on resistance and dissensus. For example, in concluding his analysis of the Tunisian uprisings which marked the start of the so-called Arab Spring, Illan Wall reflects thus:

In terms of strategies of resistance then, I want to underline the importance of learning to live together without loyalty, without the everyday presupposition that the state is naturally and inexorably there. It is the interruption of everyday authority that is crucial.…this inoperativity is already there.…Let me suggest then, that the point of articulation between the critical legal theory of dissensus and the Tunisian events is the question: how to unwork sovereign power on an everyday basis, without reinstituting the same logics once more?39

Wall’s is a thoughtful, and respectful reading of resistance, rooted and influenced by Jean-Luc Nancy’s notion of “inoperativity”; indeed, he is mindful not to “appropriate the politics of the “postcolony” and put it to work for some “European” project.”40 However, as with all Eurocentric viewings of the worlds of “rupture/resistance,” the point-zero perspective is marked here. What I mean by this is that the analysis assumes a (dissensual) moment, an event, from which the extraordinary emergence/becoming of a new is discovered; a perspective that identifies dissensus in moments of “emergence” out of perceived absence or inexistence after all is one which assumes a prior “consensus,” a normality from which then the “interruption” is thought to be witnessed. From this point zero, then are “strategies of resistance” postulated, futures anticipated, as a new in the world.

But let us pause. For whom this normality of consensus from which dissensus is celebrated? From whose location of thought this reading of the new of interruption? For whom, and from which moment on, the novelty of this discovery? Even as Wall’s account of the Ben Ali regime is nuanced, an assumption of a prior normality of the political as a consensus still persists here. A decolonial view instead, I suggest, **begins precisely from a demystification of that assumption of *consensus*** and a **recognition of the many undersides of persistent refusal** against such presumptions of normality. I explain below.

Wall’s view and imagination suffers from a **common inability** of the well-intentioned Eurocentric philosopher to see a different normality when gazing upon the world, to comprehend that the “interruptions of everyday authority,” and the nonreification of the state, are perhaps, for social majorities the world over, the persistent **everyday unsentimental normalities** of their ordinary being even as they appear subservient; for them, the “importance of learning to live together without loyalty, without the everyday presupposition that the state is naturally and inexorably there” may rather be better understood and realized than assumed by the critical philosopher who earnestly exhorts such rupture based on some discovery of the extraordinary event. Indeed, such exuberance at fixing a meaning of extraordinariness to the eruptional manifestation of persistent refusals, however, “incompletely” as Wall claims to do, might well be to **impoverish rather than enrich** understandings of the extraordinariness of the normalities of resistance, it might **continue invisibilizing** the rich tapestry of actually present consciousness and experiences of (already-)being that **refuse the consensus of the present as assumed by the critical post-Enlightenment philosopher**. Let us be frank. **Nothing is added** to the actualities or the materialities of life and struggle by the philosophical *naming* of an eruption of anger or refusal as event or dissensus, neither are extant orderings of the political as bordered normalities of governmentality challenged by the invented duality of consensus/dissensus; **all such ascriptions do is to attach to a given time and place particular abstracted categories based on presumed universal truths of beingness**. In doing so, the pasts, presents, and infinite futures that define the materialities of life and struggle are conveniently **subsumed under the celebratory reification of an instant that is read as “evental,”** marking a **progressive node in history as promised by the heroic mythology of the European Enlightenment**; in this, Wall does not escape from the “appropriation” of the postcolony for the European project.

**A decolonial philosophical perspective** might understand resistance and struggle differently, grounded as it is in the experiences of past and present struggles of ordinary human beingness **outside of the privileging gaze of the post-Enlightenment philosopher**: notwithstanding both the material infliction of violence and the ideological–biopolitical constructions of subject-ontologies, subjected human populations remain in their majority **stubborn in their multiplicities of already being as other to the totalizing ascription of being-subject that is the biopolitical project of the sovereign assertion**.41 What is significant in this other ontology of being—not fixated with tropes of abandonment and resurrection—is its **rootedness in the histories and materialities of everyday resistance to the coloniality of power**.42

**Settler colonialism expropriates native bodies through a process of proletarianization and racialization which turns the starting point for their western labor movement**

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An Alternative Reading: Settler Colonies and the Exploitation of the Native By focusing on an ideal form of settler colonialism, SCS directs much of its analytical focus to the Anglo-Saxon settler colonial world, in particular, to North America and Australia. There are important exceptions, including for example, the excellent collection edited by Elkins and Pedersen (2005), Saranillio’s (2013) focus on Asian settler colonisation, or the 2018 special issue of Settler Colonial Studies on Algeria (Barclay et al. 2018), but these remain outliers. The near absence of studies of South American or African settler colonies is striking, as has been remarked on by a host of different scholars including Kelley (2017), Vimalassery et al. (2016) and Speed (2017). These authors also make the connection between these silences and the identification of elimination as the specific characteristic of settler colonial regimes. Kelley (2017:269) points out that the African encounter with settler colonialism was primarily marked by exploitative processes. He demonstrates this not only through the case of enslaved African population, discussed above, but also through the centrality of exploitation in the case of settler colonialism in South Africa. He shows convincingly how, in the construction of white settler social relations in the country, **“the expropriation of the native from the land was a fundamental objective, but so was proletarianization. They wanted the land and the labour, but not the people—that is to say, they sought to eliminate stable communities and their cultures of resistance”.** The attempted elimination of collective peoplehood, Kelley shows, is here a political goal pursued through exploitation, unsettling the sharp division theorised by Wolfe and Veracini. Following a similar critique with a focus on South American settler regimes, Speed (2017:784) argues they have remained largely outside of the framework of SCS precisely because Spanish settlers did not either exploit or eliminate but did both, in different ways, depending on time and place. The issue of labour alongside that of land defines much of these experiences, as does indigenous labour resistance: “In places like Mexico and Central America, such labour regimes … were often the very mechanisms that dispossessed indigenous peoples of their lands, forcing them to labour in extractive undertakings on the very land that had been taken from them”. As these cases show, here are **settler colonies that were deeply dependent on the labour of the indigenous population and although displacement and expropriation were definitely a central part of their modus vivendi, as was the undermining of collective indigenous claims over the land, so was the exploitation of their labour.** Furthermore, as O’Brien (2017) points out, even within SCS’ favoured settings, such as North America, the overemphasis on elimination as foundational can have complicated consequences. She points out—alongside others discussed above—**that an important distinction should be made between “logics” of political elimination and actual elimination.** Failing to do so can overstate the power of settler regimes and fail to capture the ongoing importance of indigenous resistance. O’Brien (2017:254) instead argues that “Indigenous resistance to colonial power … continues to override the logic of elimination”. This critique is not only important in terms of understanding different forms of settler colonial regimes, but also in reflecting on processes of de-colonisation. It is striking, for example, that **settler colonies based primarily on the exploitation of the indigenous population more often achieved their independence from both the settler state and the metropolis**. Acknowledging this, Mamdani (2015:596) notes that “[f]or students of settler colonialism in the modern era, Africa and America represent two polar opposites. Africa is the continent where settler colonialism has been defeated; America is where settler colonialism triumphed”. While taking seriously the unfinished nature of this triumph, pointed out above, and the ongoing nature of indigenous resistance, the difference in outcomes so far can be accounted for through the different treatment by the settler colonial regimes of the indigenous populations. It was the very dependence of settler colonial regimes in Africa on native labour, which laid the foundation for their destruction. It was the ability of indigenous resistance movements in Algeria and Southern Africa to shut down the settler economy as well as challenge the colonial states militarily that made decolonisation possible.2 This is also a reality that settlers themselves understood. As Lockman (2012) argues, it was, in part, **the example of resistance by indigenous labour in other settler colonial settings, in particular in South Africa, that convinced Labour Zionists in Palestine to reject a model based on the exploitation of the indigenous population and opt for its exclusion instead (see below).** In fact, some scholars, such as Fieldhouse (1982) in hisThe Colonial Empires, made the existing variety of labour regimes central to the study of settler colonialism. He took the presence of settlers, and the establishment of European societies within the colonial territories, as the determining characteristics of “colonies of settlements” as opposed to “colonies of occupation”. Fieldhouse then divided settler colonies in three categories: “pure”, “mixed”, and “plantation” settlements, which denote, respectively, settler societies based on imported settler labour, those constructed around a significant but minoritarian settler population where indigenous labour continued to play a central role, and those where imported enslaved populations worked on plantations for small settler minorities. Importantly, Fieldhouse’s approach (and that of others after him, such as Shafir 1996) demonstrates the danger of supposing a hermetic separation between different models. Instead, **settler colonies have a variety of different strategies at their disposal, which can include exploitation, elimination, or both.** One strategy can morph into another through such processes as the development of new strategic necessities for the colonial powers, interactions with indigenous resistance, or changing economic relations with the metropolis. Fieldhouse (1982:181) shows how the French colonisation of Algeria started as a colony of occupation in the North of the country. It was only in response to the 1834 Algerian revolt that France annexed more of the country and established French settlements in an attempt to pacify the indigenous peoples. In South Africa, Fieldhouse (1982:188–189) argues that the interaction between Boer and British colonisation, indigenous resistance, and the discovery of precious metal and diamonds in the second half of the 19th century, changed the nature of the settler colonial enterprise from pure to mixed. **The question of labour** (and therefore exploitation**) is then a crucial aspect in the organisation of settler colonialism**. This is true both in terms of the relationship between the settler colonial power and the native populations, but also in terms of social relations within the settler colonial polity. In **fact, the labour movement within settler colonies has often been at the forefront of the imposition of racial segregation through colour bars, limits on racialised migration, and “whites-only” policies.** The reasons behind this tendency will be discussed in greater detail below, but for now it will suffice to point out that from the late-19th century onwards, white working class movements across the settler colonial world organised over the question of limiting, excluding, or containing the use of indigenous and/or racialised workers. They furthermore rebelled against the settler states, or united with indigenous workers for collective improvement to their labour rights. In the United States, **white workers organised against the competition of African American workers in the aftermath of emancipation, as well as the barring of Chinese migration to California, which successfully passed into law in the late 19th century** (see Day 2016; Karuka 2019). Similar campaigns where waged in both South Africa and Australia against the immigration of Asian workers in the early 20th century. In fact, the formation of the Australian Labour Party took place on the basis of taking the “white Australia” campaign into parliament (Hyslop 1999; Shafir 1996). Perhaps the most emblematic example of these labour campaigns for the exclusion of racialised workers is that for the colour bar in South Africa (and later for the imposition of Apartheid) by the white workers' movement. In a strange mixture of internationalist rhetoric and settler colonial racism the white miners in 1922 raised the slogan: “Workers of the World, Unite and Fight for a White South Africa” (Reddy 2016:101). In the case of the Zionist colonisation of Palestine**, the labour movement even became the social actor behind which the entire settler polity united.** As Shafir (1996) has shown, Zionist colonial strategy in Palestine transformed, under the leadership of the Labour Zionist movement in the early decades of the 20th century, from a settler colonial project based primarily on exploited Palestinian labour to one which emphasised their exclusion and reliance on “Hebrew labour” instead. The change was brought about by the campaigns led by the settler labour movement, colonial responses to Palestinian resistance, and the material problems faced by the Zionist movement in attempting to attract new settlers to Palestine. More will be said about this in the fifth section of this paper. For now it will suffice to point out that the Labour Zionist movement fought for this form of settler organisation against Palestinian workers as well as against settler bosses and their project for a settler economy based on the exploitation—not the elimination—of the natives. The guiding principle of this movement was that to make settlement effective Jewish workers needed to be granted higher wages and living standards, while indigenous workers needed to be excluded from the labour market all together. It is this logic of full separation, that Sayegh (2012:214), described as lying at the root of the Zionist project in Palestine: “[R]acial self-segregation, racial exclusiveness and racial supremacy”. A series of important points emerge from this alternative view of settler colonialism. Firstly, the exclusive Wolfe-an focus on elimination of the native as opposed to exploitation, although of central importance within some periods and locales of settler colonialism, does not allow one to develop an effective general axiomatic analysis of the settler colonial form and its social relations. Secondly, the racial organisation of labour—whether settler, enslaved, or indigenous—and the struggle over its organisation between settlers and indigenous populations, as well as between settlers themselves, are a crucial aspect of settler colonialism, both in its eliminatory and/or exploitative forms (on which more below). Thirdly, the participation of settler labour movements in the colonial project, particularly in the process of control and/or expulsion of racialised, enslaved, and/or indigenous population appears as a key characteristic across the settler colonial world.

**The alternative is refusal – a political depression that recognizes reconciliation will never be enough and creates harmful optimism to the political. Instead, embrace an affective pessimism that grounds alternative futures. The question is not whether Native people want the world, but if the world wants Native people**

**Belcourt 2016** (Billy-ray Belcourt is from the Driftpile Cree Nation. He is a 2016 Rhodes Scholar and is reading for an M.St. in Women's Studies at the University of Oxford. He was named by CBC Books as one of six Indigenous writers to watch,Political Depression in a Time of Reconciliation, Jan 15, 2016, <http://activehistory.ca/2016/01/political-depression-in-a-time-of-reconciliation/)//NotJacob//recut> anop

**It’s tough: knowing that you might not get the world you want and the world that wants you back, that your bones might never stop feeling achy and fragile from the wear and tear of mere existence, from the hard labour of getting through the day.** Ours are bodies that have been depleted by time, that have been wrenched into a world they can’t properly bend or squirm into because our flesh is paradoxically both too much and not enough for it. **In the wake of both eventful and slowed kinds of premature death, what does it mean that the state wants so eagerly to move Indigenous bodies, to touch them, so to speak?** **Reconciliation is an affective mess: it throws together and condenses histories of trauma and their shaky bodies and feelings into a neatly bordered desire; a desire to let go, to move on, to turn to the future with open arms, as it were.** **Reconciliation is stubbornly ambivalent in its potentiality, an object of desire that we’re not entirely certain how to acquire or substantiate, but one that the state – reified through the bodies of politicians, Indigenous or otherwise – is telling us we need.** In fact, Justice Murray Sinclair noted that the launch of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report on December 15, 2015, puts us at the “threshold of a new era in this country.”[1] **I am interested in how life might be lived willfully and badly in the face of governmental forms of redress when many of us are stretched thin, how reconciliation, though instantiating a noticeable shift in the national affective atmosphere,[2] doesn’t actually remake the substance of the social or the political such that we’re still tethered to scenes of living that can’t sustain us.** What I am trying to get at is: **reconciliation works insofar as it is a way of looking forward to being in this world, at the expense of more radical projects like decolonization that want to experiment with different strategies for survival.[3] This way of doing things isn’t working and, because of that, optimism is hard to come by**. According to cultural theorist Ann Cvetkovich, **political depression emerges from the realization “that customary forms of political response, including direct action and critical analysis, are no longer working either to change the world or to make us feel better.”[4] It is the pestering sense that whatever you do, it won’t be enough; that things will continue uninterrupted, teasing you because something different is all you’ve wanted from the start. To be politically depressed is to worry about the temporal reach of neoliberal projects like reconciliation, to question their orientation toward the future because the present requires all of your energy in order to feel like anything but dying**. **Political depression is of a piece with a dispossessory enterprise that remakes the topography of the ordinary such that the labour of maintaining one’s life becomes too hard to keep up. We have to wait for the then and there in the here and now; how do we preserve ourselves until then?** As Leanne Simpson points out, reconciliation has been reparative for some survivors, encouraging them to tell their stories, to keep going, so to speak.[5] **But, what of the gendered and racialized technologies of violence that created our scenes of living, scenes we’ve been forced to think are of our own choosing? Optimism for the work of reconciliation disappeared in the face of multiple crises: of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, of HIV infection rates, of mass incarceration, of diabetes, of suicide. Reconciliation, at once a heuristic and a form of statecraft, fakes a political that doesn’t actually exist as such, one that not only presupposes that we – Indigenous peoples, that is – are willing to stay attached to it, but that we are already folded into it, that we’ve already consented to it. What does it mean, for example, to consent to a nation-to-nation relationship if there are no other options to choose from? Reconciliation wants so badly to be a keyword of sorts, to contain so much inside its semantic confines, to be “wide-reaching in its explanatory power**.”[6] I’m not surprised things have started to leak all over the place. **Decolonization might need something of an affective turn: I think there are ways of being attuned to our bodies such that we can gauge if our visceral responses are trained or not, parasitic or not. In short: what do our tears signal, what do his** – Justin Trudeau’s – signal? We cry because pain holds our world together. I don’t want pain to hold our world together anymore. **Perhaps admitting we are politically depressed is one of the most important things we could do in this day and age. When survival becomes radical and death becomes part and parcel of the ordinary itself, political depression might be our only point of departure. But, political depression is also about dreaming up alternatives that can sustain your attachments to life**. Cvetkovich reminds us that we need **“other affective tools for transformation” because hope and blind allegiance have failed too many of us too often**.[7] **I am interested in the generative work of pessimism, how being fed up propels us onward, and keeps us grounded in the now, such that we can make it to the future, even if that’s just tomorrow**. As Kim TallBear put it, we’ve been living in a post-apocalyptic world (in its ecological ruins and in the face of its crisis-making politics) for quite some time,[8] one that exhausts our bodies to the point of depression and death and one that slowly removes us from the non-normative or the astray.[9**] We are stuck in the thick of things, left clinging to an impasse without an exit strategy.** We might need reconciliation today, but Indigenous peoples need a more capacious world-building project for tomorrow, one that can bear all of us and the sovereignties built into our breathing. **We should not be asked: do you want the world today? Instead, we should be asking: does the world want us?**

**The counterinterpretation is that you should evaluate the 1AC as an object of study**

**[a] Sociogeny – debate may not spill over to political change but it has the potential to reproduce affirmations and negations that trigger neurohcmeical responses via reward and punishment mechanisms privilege certain research methods as valuable in the way debaters view the world.**

#### [b] Objectivity – consequence based plan focus shifts the focus of debate from our investments in settler colonialism to a plan text, which is incoherent because debate is a communicative activity and their inter sidesteps discussions of genocide.

#### [c] Temporality – the affs models teaches violence can be wished away through administrative tinkering propogating desires within debate to play as activits without reimagnign the social structures that cause violence in the first place. Viewing the ballot as an mechanism to restore ethicality fails – they still dogmatically adhere to these protocols even though they know debate doesn’t caus emateiral change. That creates an process where nativeness is confined to death as their promise of a fiated political horizon relies on a politics of futurity.

### Case t/l

T/l the 1AR wil try to make a root cause argument and it will fail

[a] ontology proves that certain policies like Indian Removal were not done for profits but rather for the onoltogical state of idnignoeity

[b] root cause claims are not OFFENSIVE – een if they win cap created conditions for settelrism that doesn’t mean solving cap solves the structure of set col

### AT – Rotb

[a] no impact to being a propandist

[b] our interp is better because their args are built upon reps which is the theis of our nterp

Don’t vote any offense that’s not intrinsic to the plan text bc they only get to weigh the total of cap a right to strike solves not any of th external movement building stuff

AT – carol

[a] I hv impact turned the analysis fo the aff loll

AT – Greene

[a] this ev is not about debate its about Army Information and Education Group so don’t give them this argument

[b] sociogeny impact turns – settler research rpacties first

### Solvency

No inherency arg – private sector workers alr can srike yet no demands hv hapedn and we ahevt

Aff doesn’t solve their impacts -strikes don’t allow for communal organizing bc the demands of the proleriat is still grourned in captialsit stctures so they dotn change anything

No internal link between the school of war stuff and popular anti imperialism

#### **The Affirmative’s analysis of labor strikes reliant on unions is an insufficient solution that only re-entrenches capitalism**

Eidlin 20 [Barry Eidlin is an assistant professor of sociology at McGill University and a former head steward for UAW Local 2865. “Why Unions Are Good — But Not Good Enough” Jacobinmag 1-6-2020 https://www.jacobinmag.com/2020/01/marxism-trade-unions-socialism-revolutionary-organizing]//aaditg

Labor unions have long occupied a paradoxical position within Marxist theory. They are an essential expression of the working class taking shape as a collective actor and an essential vehicle for working-class action. When we speak of “the working class” or “working-class activity,” we are often analyzing the actions of workers either organized into unions or trying to organize themselves into unions. At the same time, unions are an imperfect and incomplete vehicle for the working class to achieve one of Marxist theory’s central goals: overthrowing capitalism. Unions by their very existence affirm and reinforce capitalist class society. As organizations which primarily negotiate wages, benefits, and working conditions with employers, unions only exist in relation to capitalists. This makes them almost by definition reformist institutions, designed to mitigate and manage the employment relationship, not transform it. Many unions have adapted to this conservative, managerial role. Others have played key roles in challenging capital’s power. Some have even played insurgent roles at one moment and managerial roles at others. When unions have organized workplace insurgencies, this has sometimes translated into political pressure that expanded democracy and led to large-scale policy reforms. In the few revolutionary historical moments that we can identify, worker organization, whether called unions or something else, has been essential. Thus, labor unions and movements have long been a central focus of Marxist debate. At its core, the debate centers around the role of unions in class formation, the creation of the revolutionary working-class agent. The debate focuses on four key questions. First, to what degree do unions simply reflect existing relations of production and class struggle, or actively shape those relations? Second, if unions actively shape class struggle, why and under what conditions do they enhance or inhibit it? Third, how do unions shape class identities, and how does this affect unions’ scope of action? Fourth, what is the relation between unions and politics? This question is comprised of two sub-questions: to what degree do unions help or hinder struggles in the workplace becoming broader political struggles? And how should unions relate to political parties, the more conventional vehicle for advancing political demands? The following is a chapter from The Oxford Handbook of Karl Marx (Oxford University Press, 2019). It assesses Marxist debates surrounding trade unions, oriented by the four questions mentioned previously. It proceeds historically, first examining how Marx and Engels conceived of the roles and limitations of trade unions, then tracing how others within Marxism have pursued these debates as class relations and politics have changed over time. While the chapter includes some history of labor unions and movements themselves, the central focus is on how Marxist theorists thought of and related to those movements. Marx and Engels wrote extensively about the unions of their time, although never systematically. The majority of their writings on unions responded to concrete labor struggles of their time. From their earliest works, they grasped unions’ necessity and limitations in creating a working-class agent capable of advancing class struggle against the bourgeoisie. This departed from previous variants of socialism, often based in idealized views of rebuilding a rapidly eroding community of artisanal producers, which did not emphasize class organization or class struggle. Writing in The Condition of the Working Class in England about emerging forms of unionism, Engels observed that even though workers’ primary struggles were over material issues such as wages, they pointed to a deeper social and political conflict: What gives these Unions and the strikes arising from them their real importance is this, that they are the first attempt of the workers to abolish competition. They im­ ply the recognition of the fact that the supremacy of the bourgeoisie is based wholly upon the competition of the workers among themselves; i.e., upon their want of cohesion. And precisely because the Unions direct themselves against the vital nerve of the present social order, however one-sidedly, in however narrow a way, are they so dangerous to this social order. At the same time, Engels saw that, even as union struggles “[kept alive] the opposition of the workers to the … omnipotence of the bourgeoisie,” so too did they “[compel] the admission that something more is needed than Trades Unions and strikes to break the power of the ruling class.” Here Engels articulates the crux of the problem. First, unions are essential for working-class formation, creating a collective actor both opposed to the bourgeoisie and capable of challenging it for power. Second, they are an insufficient vehicle for creating and mobilizing that collective actor. Marx and Engels understood that unions are essential to working-class formation because, under capitalism, the system of “free labor,” where individual workers sell their labor power to an employer for a wage, fragments relations between workers and makes them compete with each other. As described in the Communist Manifesto, the bourgeoisie “has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous ‘cash payment,’” leaving workers “exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.” While workers organized based on other collective identities, such as race, ethnicity, or religion, only unions could unite them as workers against the source of their exploitation — the bourgeoisie. Unions serve “as organized agencies for superseding the very system of wage labor and capital rule.” But just as unions could allow the proletariat to take shape and challenge the bourgeoisie for power, Marx and Engels also saw that they were a partial, imperfect vehicle for doing so for two reasons. First, unions’ fundamentally defensive role, protecting workers against employers’ efforts to drive a competitive race to the bottom, meant that they limited themselves “to a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it.” Thus, even militant trade unions found themselves struggling for “a fair day’s work for a fair day’s wage” without challenging the bourgeoisie’s fundamental power, particularly the wage labor system. And some layers of the trade union officialdom were content to fight for privileges for their small segment of the working class, leaving most workers behind. Second, unions’ focus on wages and workplace issues tended to reinforce a division between economic and political struggles. This division was explicit with the more conservative “old” unions in Britain, which “bar[red] all political action on principle and in their charters.” But even with more progressive formations, such as the early nineteenth century’s Chartists, or the late nineteenth century’s “new” unions, Marx and Engels saw that the transition from workplace struggles to politics was not automatic. For one, it varied across national contexts. Engels observed that French workers were much more likely to mobilize politically, while English workers “fight, not against the Government, but directly against the bourgeoisie.” But beyond national variation, they saw a recurring pattern of division, separating economic and political struggles by organization. Reflecting on the early to mid-nineteenth century English working-class movement, Engels noted a threefold divide between “socially-based” Chartists, “politically-based” Socialists, and conservative, craft-based trade unions. While the Chartists were “purely a working-men’s [sic] cause freed from all bourgeois elements,” they remained “theoretically the more backward, the less developed.” Socialists may have been more theoretically sophisticated, but their bourgeois origins made it difficult to “amalgamate completely with the working class.” Although young Engels thought an alliance of Chartism and socialism was underway, the alliance proved elusive. By the 1870s, Marx opined that politically, the English working class was “nothing more than the tail of the great Liberal Party, i.e., henchmen of the capitalists.” Likewise, Engels had soured on the English working class. Both saw promise in the militant worker protest in the United States at the time, seeing the seeds of a nascent labor party. But that too fell short. Thus, unions failed in Marx and Engels’s central task: the formation of “a political organization of the working class as a whole.” Marx and Engels’s sober analyses of unions’ concrete difficulties in moving from economic to political struggles stood at odds with many of their theoretical pronouncements, where this transition seemed inevitable. While they noted in the Manifesto that the “organization of the proletarians into a class, and, consequently, into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves,” they also asserted that “it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier.” In The Poverty of Philosophy, Marx asserted that “in the struggle . . . this mass [of people transformed by economic conditions into workers] becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself.” If they were attuned to the challenges of class formation, and the contradictory roles unions could play in that process, they never drew out the theoretical implications of their concrete analyses. Nonetheless, in Marx and Engels’s work we can detect in embryonic form many of the core questions that would orient subsequent Marxist debates about trade unions’ role in class formation and class struggle. Marx and Engels saw that unions were inherently products of their historical period, limited by existing relations of production. At the same time, as organizational expressions of the working class, unions could play a key role in reshaping relations of production. As for enhancing or inhibiting class struggle, they saw that unions’ focus on concrete, practical workplace questions such as wages and working hours was a necessary step in developing the proletariat’s fighting capacity, but also constrained workers within a capitalist framework, limiting their ability to fight for broader demands such as abolition of the wage system. Similarly, different types of union organization could create different class identities, from craft unions’ narrow exclusion to the “new” unions’ broader inclusivity. As for the relation between unions and politics, they understood unions’ necessary but limited role in mobilizing the working class around political demands. Still, these core insights remained fragmentary. Later theorists would flesh them out. Unions After Marx and Engels: Aristocracy or Revolutionary Agent? The problems Marx and Engels identified in their later writings on trade unions intensified after their deaths. Formations they found promising, like the US Knights of Labor, and the “new unions” in Britain, either foundered or soon resembled the conservative “old unions” they challenged. The International Workingmen’s Association, or First International, to which Marx and Engels devoted much time and energy, dissolved by 1876. On the European continent, Bismarck’s Anti-Socialist Law, in effect from 1878 to 1890, drove most German unions underground save for an elite layer of skilled workers, leaving the bulk of the industrial working class unorganized. In France, unions were more politically radical than in England or Germany, but numerically smaller and weaker. Meanwhile, Europe and North America’s capitalist class, far from entering into crisis, proved resilient, growing and consolidating its power. For Marxists, questions of explaining capitalism’s durability and working-class weakness and conservatism loomed large, sparking debate on why these problems existed and how to solve them. Some like Eduard Bernstein proposed revising Marx’s idea of the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie. In his vision of “evolutionary socialism,” unions combined with parliamentary parties and cooperative associations would gradually expand democratic control over the economy, displacing capitalists. Karl Kautsky disagreed, warning that “the more capitalism passes over from free competition to monopoly . . . the more indispensable it will be that the trades unionists are inspired with socialist discernment and socialist enthusiasm.” While he was optimistic that unions would “constitute the most energetic factors in surmounting” capitalism, the reality of the workers’ organizations of his time suggested otherwise. To explain working-class conservatism, some drew on observations from Marx and Engels themselves to argue that employers in core industries had managed to “bribe” a stratum of skilled workers with super-profits. This resulted in a conservative “labor aristocracy” that aligned with its industry to protect its privileges rather than building a broad working-class movement of skilled and unskilled workers. Lenin expanded the idea to the global stage, arguing that imperialists’ colonial possessions generated the super-profits with which to bribe their respective labor aristocracies. For Lenin, this helped explain not only working-class conservatism in general, but European workers’ movements’ rejection of international solidarity in favor of alliances with their national bourgeoisies in the run-up to World War I. While it is true that some skilled workers did form conservative organizations to protect their privileges, the idea that this resulted from these layers being “bribed” by their national bourgeoisies does not withstand scrutiny. Most difficult for the labor aristocracy theory to explain is the fact that, in many cases, the most skilled workers formed the core of broader left movements, organizing for class-wide demands. Critics argue that how workers were organized to struggle against their national bourgeoisies, not the mere fact of skill-based wage differentials, better explains why unions took radical or conservative turns. Other theorists blamed working-class conservatism on workers’ organization itself. For syndicalists like Georges Sorel, formal organization was an obstacle to workers’ ability to realize their revolutionary potential. Likewise, based on his experience operating in and observing the German SPD, Robert Michels reached the conclusion that “who says organization, says oligarchy.” Both argued that over time, workers’ organizations, whether parties or unions, shied away from activities that might advance workers’ interests, but at the expense of jeopardizing the organization’s existence. Sorel saw salvation in the mythical vision of the general strike, while Michels remained pessimistic about escaping the “iron law of oligarchy.” Based on her experience with the German SPD, Rosa Luxemburg was also wary of organization’s conservatizing effects. She emphasized the need for workers’ self-activity, particularly through mass strikes. But unlike Sorel, she understood that the success of seemingly “spontaneous” mass action depended on the prior organization of leadership layers. In this, her theory of how to build organizations to unite workers against capital resembled Lenin’s, even though her “spontaneist” position is often counterposed to his “elitism.” Many emphasize Lenin’s argument that unions were insufficient vehicles for forging the revolutionary agent capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, which required unions to ally with political parties of intellectuals, often from outside the working class. But this focus on Lenin’s “centralism” ignores the extent to which Lenin appreciated the fundamental importance of mass action by workers in creating revolutionary consciousness and organization. Both Lenin and Luxemburg saw workers’ core problem as overcoming “economism.” This meant separating the struggle against capital into distinct economic and political components, with unions bargaining over economic questions and parliamentary parties handling political questions. This undermined labor by taking as given the laws governing the economy, obscuring the fact that these laws were part of a political system that facilitated capital’s rule. In focusing on workplace demands, unions risked reinforcing the political-economic divide. Luxemburg insisted on the importance of mass action because it brought economic struggles against individual employers into the political sphere, as states and organized capitalists would have to respond to worker demands. Lenin emphasized the importance of party intellectuals not conspiring to seize power on their own but as a complement to mass action, helping to connect the economic and political dimensions of class struggle. Lenin understood — as did Luxemburg — that the transition between economic and political struggle was not automatic. Rather, workplace economic struggles created new possibilities for challenging capital’s political rule, the outcome of which depended on the structure and character of workers’ organization. Building on Lenin and Luxemburg’s insights, Gramsci focused on uniting not only the political and economic, but also ideological dimensions of class struggle. While he was critical of the bureaucratic unions of his time, he saw them as an important site for engaging in workers’ struggle for control of industry. Drawing on lessons from the Turin general strike of 1920, he advocated fusing unions with factory councils as a means of exercising worker sovereignty on the shop floor and producing a “new working-class leading stratum.” For Gramsci, parties played a key role in welding together this leading stratum of “organic” intellectuals, based within the working class, and party-based “traditional” intellectuals — Lenin’s “professional revolutionaries.” Building workers’ revolutionary consciousness was not something that could only be brought from outside or emerge purely from mass action. Rather, it was the product of an organizational infrastructure made up of parties, unions, and factory councils, within which that consciousness could take shape and find political expression. Like Gramsci, Trotsky focused on the role of unions in organizing workers to challenge capital in the workplace. He observed that “the danger of the trade unions [to capital] is that they do put forward — for the moment, gropingly, indecisively and half-heartedly — the principle of a workers’ government.” That principle would be advanced through a “class-conscious minority” in the workplace, akin to Gramsci’s organic intellectuals. Trotsky developed an analysis of the organizational barriers that caused the principle of workers’ government to be put forth so indecisively. He argued that this was due to the trade union bureaucracy, which he saw as “drawing closely to and growing together with the state power.” For him, establishing workers’ government required challenging and overthrowing that bureaucratic layer within the labor movement. The debates surrounding working-class organization in the decades after Marx’s and Engels’s deaths wrestled with a fundamental problem. Unions and socialist parties did develop organizational interests that inhibited their ability to fight for workers’ interests. But even though mass action did erupt and play a transformative role on occasion, the syndicalist vision of “constant class activity” proved difficult to sustain in practice. This suggested that some form of organization was necessary to protect the gains of past struggles. Moreover, the mere fact of mass action proved insufficient for forging working-class identities and advancing workers’ interests. The translation between economic and political struggles required leadership and organization. But building organizations that did not fall prey to conservatism and bureaucratization remained a challenge.

**[1] Materiality DA – workers with 4 children can’t afford to join these long-term movements – they need relief – the plan trades off with material violence that decimates the working class.**

**[2] Co-option DA – anti-capitalist movements empirically get co-opted – Occupy Wall Street turned into a hash tag and a label – no ground-breaking revolution will occur.**