# 1NC---UK RR---Race 6

### 1NC

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#### Embracing the black hole is commodified as an empty slogan that solidifies the failure of localized politics as the locus of resistance, turning case.

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Today it appears that the greatest amount of effort is needed to achieve the smallest degree of change. Millions march against the Iraq War, yet it goes ahead as planned. Hundreds of thousands protest austerity, but unprecedented budget cuts continue. Repeated student protests, occupations and riots struggle against rises in tuition fees, but they continue their inexorable advance. Around the world, people set up protest camps and mobilise against economic inequality, but the gap between the rich and the poor keeps growing. From the alterglobalisation struggles of the late 1990s, through the antiwar and ecological coalitions of the early 2000s, and into the new student uprisings and Occupy movements since 2008, a common pattern emerges: resistance struggles rise rapidly, mobilise increasingly large numbers of people, and yet fade away only to be replaced by a renewed sense of apathy, melancholy and defeat. Despite the desires of millions for a better world, the effects of these movements prove minimal.

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE PROTEST

Failure permeates this cycle of struggles, and as a result, many of the tactics on the contemporary left have taken on a ritualistic nature, laden with a heavy dose of fatalism. The dominant tactics – protesting, marching, occupying, and various other forms of direct action – have become part of a well-established narrative, with the people and the police each playing their assigned roles. The limits of these actions are particularly visible in those brief moments when the script changes. As one activist puts it, of a protest at the 2001 Summit of the Americas:

On April 20, the first day of the demonstrations, we marched in our thousands towards the fence, behind which 34 heads of state had gathered to hammer out a hemispheric trade deal. Under a hail of catapult-launched teddy bears, activists dressed in black quickly removed the fence’s supports with bolt cutters and pulled it down with grapples as onlookers cheered them on. For a brief moment, nothing stood between us and the convention centre. We scrambled atop the toppled fence, but for the most part we went no further, as if our intention all along had been simply to replace the state’s chain-link and concrete barrier with a human one of our own making. 1

We see here the symbolic and ritualistic nature of the actions, combined with the thrill of having done something – but with a deep uncertainty that appears at the first break with the expected narrative. The role of dutiful protestor had given these activists no indication of what to do when the barriers fell. Spectacular political confrontations like the Stop the War marches, the now-familiar melees against the G20 or World Trade Organization and the rousing scenes of democracy in Occupy Wall Street all give the appearance of being highly significant, as if something were genuinely at stake. 2 Yet nothing changed, and long-term victories were traded for a simple registration of discontent.

To outside observers, it is often not even clear what the movements want, beyond expressing a generalised discontent with the world. The contemporary protest has become a melange of wild and varied demands. The 2009 G20 summit in London, for instance, featured protestors marching for issues that spanned from grandiose anti-capitalist stipulations to modest goals centred on more local issues. When demands can be discerned at all, they usually fail to articulate anything substantial. They are often nothing more than empty slogans – as meaningful as calling for world peace. In more recent struggles, the very idea of making demands has been questioned. The Occupy movement infamously struggled to articulate meaningful goals, worried that anything too substantial would be divisive. 3 And a broad range of student occupations across the Western world has taken up the mantra of ‘no demands’ under the misguided belief that demanding nothing is a radical act. 4

When asked what the ultimate upshot of these actions has been, participants differ between admitting to a general sense of futility and pointing to the radicalisation of those who took part. If we look at protests today as an exercise in public awareness, they appear to have had mixed success at best. Their messages are mangled by an unsympathetic media smitten by images of property destruction – assuming that the media even acknowledges a form of contention that has become increasingly repetitive and boring. Some argue that, rather than trying to achieve a certain end, these movements, protests and occupations in fact exist only for their own sake. 5 The aim in this case is to achieve a certain transformation of the participants, and create a space outside of the usual operations of power. While there is a degree of truth to this, things like protest camps tend to remain ephemeral, small-scale and ultimately unable to challenge the larger structures of the neoliberal economic system. This is politics transmuted into pastime – politics-as-drug-experience, perhaps – rather than anything capable of transforming society. Such protests are registered only in the minds of their participants, bypassing any transformation of social structures. While these efforts at radicalisation and awareness-raising are undoubtedly important to some degree, there still remains the question of exactly when these sequences might pay off. Is there a point at which a critical mass of consciousness-raising will be ready for action? Protests can build connections, encourage hope and remind people of their power. Yet, beyond these transient feelings, politics still demands the exercise of that power, lest these affective bonds go to waste. If we will not act after one of the largest crises of capitalism, then when?

The emphasis on the affective aspects of protests plays into a broader trend that has come to privilege the affective as the site of real politics. Bodily, emotional and visceral elements come to replace and stymie (rather than complement and enhance) more abstract analysis. The contemporary landscape of social media, for example, is littered with the bitter fallout from an endless torrent of outrage and anger. Given the individualism of current social media platforms – premised on the maintenance of an online identity – it is perhaps no surprise to see online ‘politics’ tend towards the self-presentation of moral purity. We are more concerned to appear right than to think about the conditions of political change. Yet these daily outrages pass as rapidly as they emerge, and we are soon on to the next vitriolic crusade. In other places, public demonstrations of empathy with those suffering replace more finely tuned analysis, resulting in hasty or misplaced action – or none at all. While politics always has a relationship to emotion and sensation (to hope or anger, fear or outrage), when taken as the primary mode of politics, these impulses can lead to deeply perverse results. In a famous example, 1985’s Live Aid raised huge amounts of money for famine relief through a combination of heartstringtugging imagery and emotionally manipulative celebrity-led events. The sense of emergency demanded urgent action, at the expense of thought. Yet the money raised actually extended the civil war causing the famine, by allowing rebel militias to use the food aid to support themselves. 6 While viewers at home felt comforted they were doing something rather than nothing, a dispassionate analysis revealed that they had in fact contributed to the problem. These unintended outcomes become even more pervasive as the targets of action grow larger and more abstract. If politics without passion leads to cold-hearted, bureaucratic technocracy, then passion bereft of analysis risks becoming a libidinally driven surrogate for effective action. Politics comes to be about feelings of personal empowerment, masking an absence of strategic gains.

#### 1AC’s use of Afrofuturism are delimited by the stage and commodified to perform--- *it looks like white people consuming the Black Panthers*

M.I. Jazz Freeman 18, writer on Medium, self-described “Agender Jazz Aesthete ⊙ Dedicated to the development of new humanizing praxis to combat Imperialist White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy”, 2/18/18, “Aesthetic vs. Praxis in Afro-futurism,” <https://medium.com/@amai.m.i.freeman/aesthetic-vs-praxis-in-afro-futurism-12d966efea44>

It’s not news to anyone to say that black cultural, political, and socio-economic life in America has undergone a renaissance of sorts. An upwelling of fervor, dreams, insights, rage, creativity, vision, and determination have all marked the increase of black visibility in the public arena. And yet, this new reality, a cyclical reappearance of unapologetically black social currents in the media, in the streets, and in the public imagination are all born from the profound contradictions we have been forced to acknowledge. Two terms of America’s first black president alongside ritualized police murders of black-life, a rise of white apologism for an accumulating white supremacist violence that destroys black bodies. We saw a dramatic increase in deportations, the emergence of drone warfare, and an economic crises that prompted a new wave of political movements against inequity, followed by an uprising of black lead direct actions and black revolt. It is in these various contexts that the visibility of blackness is more present than ever before. The opportunities for expression, the platforms for protest, and the historically significant struggles we find ourselves within have inspired and ignited showcases of black life — real as well as creatively re-imagined. It is not a coincidence that this era has given birth to a resurgence of Afro-Futurism.

Afro-Futurism is the practice of constructing new ways of existing, retrieving the past ancestry of the black diaspora, inventing styles of presenting ourselves in the world, and projecting our visions of how we would like to see ourselves in the future. There are a number of figures who stand out in our collective memory as highly imaginative and sharply perceptive of what was their reality. Octavia E. Butler and Sun Ra are a few who have passed away only to have new generations engage and ultimately embody their work today. Despite this stirring in the cultural life of black americans, there exists a significant gulf — a distance between intentions and practices in this movement and I would like to focus my attention on those differences. In doing so, I hope to uncover some salient lessons and distinctions that lay beneath the surface of Afro-Futurism.

An indisputable element of Afro-Futurism is its aesthetic. It is this difference from the normal — what we might otherwise expect to be created or adorned by black people — that comes focused into view in such a way that suggests that it has arrived from the future. This element alone is what people are most likely to see, grasp in passing, and consume as art. It’s relatively easy to replicate if one is interested purely in the profit to be yielded from its commodification. These are the nods we see celebrities make in set stages, album covers, films, and the like. To sift out the intention and impact of Afro-Futurism from its aesthetics, there are two simple questions that prove useful:

What is the future being presented?

How do we get there?

Depending on the particular conjurer of Afro-Futurism, the utility of their vision can vary widely from others. An “afro future” can be a site of grief as much as it can be a site of hope. In summoning the figures of black ancestry, we situate our present in the context of who brought us here, honoring their past struggles, sacrifices, and joys. The perspective that comes with this sort of time-travel can aid efforts to appreciate what is in front of us today, and it can embolden us to pursue a greater life. Whether one dimension outweighs the other or balances in union together of course determines whether or not we witnesses to afro-futurism grow complacent or more courageous in the face of the status quo.

It what is commonly viewed as the opposite of the past, the futures of afro-futurism can be spaces of mourning over the goals that feel locked away from the realm of possibility today. Inversely, they can be an insightful warning or a positive suggestion for what can be or must be done today. Stated a different way, Afro-Futurism is a portal into black desires that have yet to be manifested or actualized. Now some possible political consequences become more clear as we pass over some of the intentions behind the speculative nature of Afro-Futurism. I wish now to place some Afro-Futurist media under a magnifying glass so that we can answer the two instructive questions I mentioned above.

Following the very recent Black Panther Movie release, the excitement around this blockbuster spectacle has been at its peak. The representation of black people in so visible a medium has generated a crossover appeal for Disney’s Marvel Franchise. The cast, the soundtrack, the black history evoked by its very title all draw from the cultural wellspring of black culture that has been generated over the past several decades.

At the same time, what is the future Black Panther presents us? We have Wakanda, a fictionalized black african nation that’s become the most advanced in the world. This is based on the premise that one fictional precious metal, Vibranium, was never ruthlessly extracted by exploiting wakandans, allowing them to remain untouched by white supremacy. It follows from these circumstances that Wakanda was granted with an opportunity to actualize a vision of black self-determination that produced inconceivable wealth, technology, and a preserved patriarchal monarchist hierarchy. The story is a reinvention of co-opted and dismantled black power that is a fictional doppelganger for the fate of the real-life black panthers, as the main conflict is about imperialist powers meddling with Wakandan affairs and social movements. If we peel away the impossible embellishments of the fictional story, the premise is simply that Africa would not be destitute were it not for Colonialism, Slavery, Capitalism, and Imperialism.

So how do we actualize Wakanda? We cannot. War, Slavery, Genocide, Global Imperialism ravaged Africa and fractured the diaspora permanently, changing the trajectory of every African nation. The black diaspora is ensnared globally within imperialism and there is no Wakanda to protect us. Not all of us can be wealthy. We are largely outgunned within and outside our respective nations. We have only ourselves. For these reasons I posit that the Black Panther Movie is a commodification of Afro-Futurist grief, and it grieves for those who define black liberation as the freedom to amass wealth and wield a nation state in our modern age of Globalism. It presents us with a media commodity that we want to consume because we so rarely see ourselves empowered in reality and in media. As we watch, we get exciting entertainment and time to reflect on our historic victories and losses as the film not-so-subtly reinforces the current state of affairs.

#### Vote NEG to endorse planned socialism, absent that capitalism is strengthened, ensuring extisential violence.

Dr. Laura Bedford 21, PhD in Criminology/Policy and Administration from Queensland, Senior Lecturer at the University of Melbourne, “In Defense of Class Struggle,” Critical Criminology, 3/19/21, Deakin University Library

The Risks of Ineffective Resistance

The ecological devastation currently taking place on the planet is not driven by the individual greed of “bullies and brutalizers,” nor is it incidental to capitalism. It is intrinsic and fundamental to the system of capitalism and its structures. Capitalism can neither be “reformed” (to be less “consumer” and more “eco”), nor can it extricate us from current social and environmental crises. Indeed, the way the market controls the economic system under capitalism means that society is, in effect, “an adjunct to the market. Instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system” (Block 2001: xxviii-xxiv). At the same time, “the goal of a disembedded, fully self-regulating market economy is a utopian project, it is something that cannot exist” (Block 2001: xxiv). This is because to achieve this utopian vision, human beings and the natural environment would both need to be turned into pure commodities and this, in turn, would end with the destruction of both (Block 2001). This is not to suggest that this tendency toward a disembedded market economy is not inherent to market capitalism, because it is (and we can see the consequences of this clearly today in Ferrell’s “ills”). The market economy can never detach completely, however, because people prevent it. They resist. This is what Polanyi (2001) refers to as the “double movement,” which acts to protect the capitalist economy from becoming disembedded, which would lead to its demise. In fact, it is this “double movement” (the dialectical tension between the tendency for the market to disembed completely and people resisting it doing so) that stabilizes and sustains the capitalist system—and which has, to date, allowed for relatively stable forms of liberal and social democracy. Polanyi (2001), however, also demonstrates that when a stalemate comes about between these opposing “movements,” this can lead to the rise of fascism, which has been the case in the past. As Block (2001: xxxviii) explains:

For Polanyi the deepest flaw in market liberalism is that it subordinates human purposes to the logic of an impersonal market mechanism. He argues instead that human beings should use the instruments of democratic governance to control and direct the economy to meet our individual and collective needs. Polanyi shows that the failure to take up this challenge produced enormous suffering in the past century. His prophecy for the new century could not be clearer.

Conclusion

As I write (in January 2020) from a smoky Melbourne, Australia, where out-of-control, supercharged, bushfres blaze through the Australian East Coast (and, as leading politicians lie about climate change, and coal mining agreements are signed with the highest bidder), the everyday acts of resistance defended by Ferrell (2019) as important to the creation of a better world and a better criminology, seem out of touch—and out of time. I agree with Ferrell (2019) that to “think about resistance and to attempt it is serious business” and we had best not get it wrong. The conditions for radical change may well come sooner than expected and we, as a society, need to be ready. Indeed, nature’s resistance may supersede any possible human resistance in exposing (unmasking) the contradiction between capitalism’s requirement for endless growth and ecological limits. This should not be news to any of us. Nearly 150 years ago, Engels wrote (1947[1877]: 96) that,

both the productive forces created by the modern capitalist mode of production and the system of distribution of goods established by it have come into crying contradiction with that mode of production itself, and in fact to such a degree that, if the whole of modern society is not to perish, a revolution in the mode of production and distribution must take place, a revolution which will put an end to all class distinctions. On this tangible, material fact, which is impressing itself in a more or less clear form, but with insuperable necessity, on the minds of the exploited proletarians—on this fact, and not on the conceptions of justice and injustice held by any armchair philosopher, is modern socialism’s confidence in victory founded.

This holds all the more true today. As humans, we may have no option but to make a choice between capitalism and ecological collapse. Already, myriad collective voices—anti-capitalist and eco-socialist voices—around the world are getting louder; people are resisting and taking action which gives great cause for optimism.

As a social scientist, it is an exciting time to explain and investigate why we have arrived here, “now,” the locus of the problem, and the ways that democratic participation is being reformulated to extend praxis within a counterhegemonic transformation, even as formal democratic participation and its possibilities have become attenuated in the West. The form of the struggle does, as Ferrell (2019) suggests, prefigure the society that comes into being. We need to recognize, however, that capitalism is the central cause of our current condition of “endless wars, nightmarish consumerism, ever-widening gap between rich and poor— and most signifcantly, ecological crisis” (Kovel 2007). We must also recognize the key protagonists of our current lovelessness, whose private interests undermine the interests of the collective: the global financial oligarchy, co-opted governments and political elites, multi-national corporations and their shareholders, and scholarly or media apologists for a continuation of business-as-usual approaches and technocratic solutions within the capitalist system. In contrast, as Fromm (1961: 63) argues, Marx’s socialism

is a protest against this very lovelessness, against man’s exploitation of man, and against his exploitativeness towards nature, the wasting of our natural resources at the expense of the majority of men today, and more so of the generations to come. The unalienated man, who is the goal of socialism … is the man who does not ‘dominate’ nature, but who becomes one with it.

The revolution will not be easy and class struggle will proceed on many fronts. The hegemon requires both political legitimacy and access to the means of coercion (e.g., surveillance, police, military). As political legitimacy is eroded, repression and social control will take on increasingly direct coercive forms. This is a very important area for criminologists to explore. It also makes it vital that the path and outcome of struggle for a “better future” be carefully considered and focused. I argue that as we seek to resist and overcome oppression (as activists, defenders, resisters, revolutionaries or scholars), we need to come together to teach and learn and act, to identify as best we can the source of the problems facing the world today, and to imagine (and yes, as Ferrell (2019) suggests, prefigure!) what a better world might look like. But we also need to plan—and test—how we might arrive there collectively. This is not to suggest that we have to agree with each other blindly or follow a step-by-step guide. Neither does it mean that we have a crystal ball. It just means we should articulate a plan and act based on current real circumstances. Failing to do so runs the risk of weakening overall resistance. It also runs the risk of galvanizing and activating the forces of state repression and fascism at home and abroad, at the same time as we are drawn further into an uncertain ecological future.

#### The injection of the 1AC presents a distorted signifier---that fractures momentum and supplies fuel to capitalist resistance.

Dr. Giorgos Charalambous 21, Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of Nicosia, "Reclaiming Radicalism: Discursive Wars and the Left," Triple C Journal, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2021, pg. 225-228. [italics in original]

To reconcile substantive and positional understandings of the radical left, the positional distance between a radical and a centre-left can be seen as a more radical or subversive espousal of equality and also liberty and fraternity; as far as this effectively translates into anti-capitalism, draws from a broadly Marxist and critical influence and seeks systemic alternatives, whether through reform or insurrection. A radical left is thus left of the centre at a distance approaching the extreme end of the spectrum rather than the centre, but it is also an anti-capitalist left or a left critical of capitalism, seeking to turn emancipatory visions into practice. The radical left is not only a left broadly inspired by the socialist ideal, but its very radicalism is fuelled by its socialist heritage. It also reaches far in organisational format and mobilisation repertoires (intellectuals, trade unions, social movements, parties, militant research collectives, solidarity movements, churches and more), and is substantively a plural left, both in terms of ideas and structures. It is about reforms and extra-institutional action, verticality and horizontality, internationalism, the rights of oppressed communities, private and public sector workers, blue collars and white collars, immigrants, intellectuals, students, feminists, environmentalists, queers, indigenous people, anarchists and statists.

What reclaiming radicalism entails is reconstituting and capitalising on the centrality and importance of these defining features as opposed to the obsolete, divisive or epiphenomenal ones within the public sphere. This may appear as an explicitly rhetorical task, if not also a self-evident truth. In reality it entails a number of political imperatives:

* To deconstruct current understandings of, and reactions to, extremism, indicating the real extremisms (of the nominal centre) and uniting behind an understanding of them as such. Accordingly, it must be recalled that in many countries, the extreme right is a historical outgrowth, at some times a political breakaway and at others a collaborator of nominally centrist spaces. In this direction it is pertinent to maintain and defend positional distance and thus the advocacy of ‘extreme measures’ as today necessary for even the most basic aspects of the human condition; while fighting with full force extremism’s anti-humanist and anti-democratic strain.
* To aim at disseminating radical framings of civil disobedience and attempt to strike a long-term equilibrium between social movements and politicians on this issue. This engenders the expectation, demand and promotion of social activism among radical left party politicians: that is to say, their solid and institutionalised fusion with the masses at every possible opportunity, as a way forward in dealing with personalistic and vertical political structures and bringing the militant left back into focus.
* To formulate and propagate visions of a better world, endorsing the search for utopias: in essence, to reacquire teleology. Without as tangible a plan as possible as to what the world should look like, ontological lines of distinction from other spaces can more easily be blurred in political discourse. It is thus important to consolidate utopian thinking in the collective radical imaginary, to speak away from the terminology of *laissez-faire* and through the concepts of critical political economy – scarcity and abundance, leisure as freedom, full employment, socialism as process, worker councils, collectivised production (see Gindin 2018).
* To draw clear lines of demarcation between anti-democracy on one side and emancipation through reconfiguring liberal democracy on the other side. This does not mean a total rejection of political liberalism but the root and branch change of liberal economic policies, which fuel the democratic deficits of politics.
* To effectively communicate the lens of internationalism, explicitly rejecting ethnic, cultural or other demographic particularism, either in what concerns the forces of production or beyond them. This means distinguishing with the utmost clarity the universality ingrained across all different traditions of the radical left, away from the particularism that extreme right nationalism and ethno-populism evoke. To achieve this demarcation of sides, although nationalism must be accepted as a progressive force where it exists that way, it cannot be a tool for claiming political legitimacy. In this vein, civic understandings of nationalism on the radical left must always be traced down to their founding stones – egalitarianism, anti-imperialism and anticapitalism.
* To avoid elevating the features of populist strategies above their historicity. Their status as a space within a space should be maintained as a given. Also, their contribution to the domain and field of anti-capitalist and progressive struggle can only be partial rather than holistic. Opposition to capitalism is much wider and more complex than populist stratagems can provide for as a politics of resistance.
* To constantly strive to claim a plural and inclusive people. For the radical left, this means above all to accept and effectively communicate the pluralism of its thought and practice, to turn it into a good thing rather than identify it as a vulnerability or lack of cohesion. Radicals should present such pluralism as a positive sign of multiple ongoing radical experimentations and evidence of democratic debate and deliberation across different ideological currents. Such diversity is also an indication that a socialist future can only be a pluralist one. Any divergences over teleology or strategy then must not a priori constitute lines of division. Rather the issue at hand is how to utilise political affinity; how distinct modes of mobilisation and ideological thinking can serve points of convergence on policy and political goals.

Ontology and epistemology are interrelated, as established by the Kuhnian explanation of scientific revolutions. Reclaiming radicalism is inevitably a project that involves both discourse and action: it is a performance as much as it is a grounded practice. While radicals do best to engage with conceptual issues in the study and talk of the collective actors representing them, political behaviour will always feed back into terminology and the castigation of collective democratic and social struggles. In lieu of further elaboration between these two aspects of politics, let us summarise how: when electoral campaigns evoke national sovereignty simplistically and through sloganeering, nationalism resonates more easily as a defining feature of the left. When alliances occur with nationalist and right-wing forces, alleged affinities between the two parts of the alliance will gain face validity. Only if carefully balanced in electoral rhetoric and supported by radical programmatic positions and untarnished actions on the ground will socialism avoid taking ‘the back seat’ in questions of self-determination. For left populism, if the discursive strategy of constructing a counterhegemonic, sovereign people is aligned with the politics of personalised organisations or sectarianism, it is cancelled out. This is both because of the negation of the people’s central role as a collective whole over individual identities and due to the fact that fragmentation is opposite of what left populism is about – mass unity of a relatively heterogeneous crowd.

Similarly, when government participation (as in Italy and France during the late 1990s, or Greece in the 2010s) leads to endorsing welfare retrenchment or foreign imperialist wars or austerity packages, the far right can more effectively claim an antiestablishment profile, a ‘neo-socialist’ or ‘neither left nor right’ identity; and the radical social milieu often becomes alienated. Political compromise becomes an important concept and the lines separating it from co-optation, de-mobilisation and self-negation are thin. When radicals cease to be radical they face setbacks. And much of the aftertaste leads to divisions and sectarianism. This is in any case not an easy or temporary pathology to get rid of, given a broad, complex and rich ideological heritage. Moreover, to speak of socialism to promise a utopia and explicitly invoke transformative potential is perhaps the discursive tactic most in need of ontology. Without a solid, scientific, collective and rigorous background of policy elaboration and theoretical discussion, a discourse which brings teleology in from the cold without making the case for socialism’s plausibility is exposed to all the common accusations dealt with here.

Any form of contradiction, disjuncture or incongruence within the radical left will eventually be discursively articulated into an offensive against it. This attack can either concern its false promises, oversimplifying pledges and thus demagogic style, or more generally its veritable continuity with other political forces, which engage in ‘politics as usual’.

4. Conclusion

Reclaiming radicalism can be fuelled when collective efforts by popular and workers’ movements, politicians and intellectuals are made to alter the existing dialectic between discourse and action. For this act of resistance to be fruitful, collective agency and a certain degree of unity, a *famille spirituelle*, are necessary. Consistency is also important, but both of these potentialities are influenced and often obstructed by historical time and national specificities, as well as the contingencies of elections and parliamentary structures. Distorting signifiers of left radicalism have come into widespread circulation because of pre-existing structural factors. Yet agency can either be present, or not. Reclaiming radicalism is a complex and difficult task to achieve, especially in the age of fake news and given that the radical left political space as a whole is fragmented. Yet doing so is visibly pertinent in the battle of ideas and interest if radicals want to compete and struggle on their own terms and not those of others.

Finally, inasmuch as the left needs to plan specific strategies to deal with systemic labelling and the discursive distortion of its identity, there is also a grave need to decipher strategic success and failure in doing so thus far. Further study in this direction will be most effective if it is both conceptual and empirical: that is, simultaneously identifying how discourse can be legitimised or delegitimised by action, and how this effect has operated in particular historical eras and instances.

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#### The NEG need not rejoin untopical AFFs:

#### The ‘United States federal government’ is the three branches.

U.S. Legal 16, Organization Offering Legal Assistance and Attorney Access, “United States Federal Government Law and Legal Definition”, 2016, https://definitions.uslegal.com/u/united-states-federal-government/

The United States Federal Government is established by the US Constitution. The Federal Government shares sovereignty over the United Sates with the individual governments of the States of US. The Federal government has three branches: i) the legislature, which is the US Congress, ii) Executive, comprised of the President and Vice president of the US and iii) Judiciary. The US Constitution prescribes a system of separation of powers and ‘checks and balances’ for the smooth functioning of all the three branches of the Federal Government. The US Constitution limits the powers of the Federal Government to the powers assigned to it; all powers not expressly assigned to the Federal Government are reserved to the States or to the people.

#### ‘Should’ requires mandating action.

David H. Sawyer 17, Judge on the Michigan Court of Appeals, J.D. from Valparaiso School of Law, “Spartan Specialties, Ltd. v. Senior Servs.”, Court of Appeals of Michigan, 2017 Mich. App. LEXIS 1178, 7/20/2017, Lexis

The specifications in the drawings for the mini-piles stated that the capacity for the mini-piles was "to be" 6,000 or 8,000 pounds and that the length of the mini-piles was "to be" adequate to get into undisturbed soil to a depth adequate for obtaining the required capacity. The specifications in the project manual stated that the mini-piles "should" have a capacity of 4 tons and 3 tons, that the mini-piles "should" be driven to minimum depth of 25 feet, and that a grout bulb "should" be formed at the base of a mini-pile. Kenneth Winters, an expert in structural engineering, and Richard Anderson, an expert in geotechnical engineering, agreed with Steve Maranowski, plaintiff's president, that the specifications in the project manual, because those specifications used the word "should," were permissive and suggestions of what plaintiff could do to achieve the required capacity. However, the trial court, when it instructed the jury on how to interpret the contract, instructed the jury that it was to interpret the words of the contract by giving them their ordinary and common meaning. An ordinary and common meaning of the word "should" is that it denotes a mandatory obligation. [\*9] See People v Fosnaugh, 248 Mich App 444, 455; 639 NW2d 587 (2001) (stating that "the word 'should' can, in certain contexts, connote an obligatory effect"); Merriam-Webster's College Dictionary (11th ed) (defining "should," in pertinent part, as "used in auxiliary function to express obligation, propriety, or expediency"). Accordingly, viewing the evidence in a light most favorable to defendant, reasonable jurors could have honestly reached different conclusions on whether the specifications in the project manual were mandatory and, because Maranowski admitted that plaintiff did not use grout bulbs and did not drive all the mini-piles at least 25 feet into the ground, whether plaintiff breached the contract. Morinelli, 242 Mich App at 260-261.

#### ‘Collective Bargaining Rights’ is the legal right between unions and employers.

NLRB ND – National Labor Relations Board, “Collective Bargaining Rights,” accessed 7/19/25, https://www.nlrb.gov/about-nlrb/rights-we-protect/the-law/employees/collective-bargaining-rights

Collective bargaining rights

The National Labor Relations Act gives you the right to bargain collectively with your employer through a representative that you and your coworkers choose. What does that mean?

Your union and employer must bargain in good faith about wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment until they agree on a labor contract or reach a stand-off or “impasse.” If negotiations reach an impasse, an employer can impose terms and conditions so long as it offered them to the union before impasse was reached. Once a contract is in place, neither party may deviate from its terms without the other party’s consent, absent extraordinary circumstances. If a contract expires before the next contract is in place, almost all the terms of the expired contract continue while the parties bargain (the exceptions being union security, management rights, no-strike/no-lockout, and arbitration provisions).

#### ‘Workers’ means more than one.

Wiktionary ND, “Workers,” https://simple.wiktionary.org/wiki/workers

The plural form of worker; more than one (kind of) worker.

The workers worked overnight to finish the house

#### Prefer it:

#### 1. FAIRNESS. They unbalance the equity of preparation, shattering predictable limits. Debate is a game that is meaningless without substantive constraints.

#### 2. CLASH. A clear, well-defined resolution is critical to allow the NEG to refute the AFF in an in-depth fashion. That produces argument refinement, where we learn to improve our arguments based on our opponents’. That’s key towards fostering reflexivity and avoiding dogmatism.

### Case---1NC

#### 1. Telling the truth is not enough---resistance without alternative gets co-opted and collapses into the academy.

Gëzim Visoka 19, Lecturer in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Institute for International Conflict Resolution and Reconstruction at Dublin City University, “Critique and Alternativity in International Relations,” International Studies Review, vol. 21, no. 4, 12/01/2019, pp. 678–704

Critique-without-Alternative

The first mode of critique in peace and conflict studies is critique-without-alternative. This approach has its origins in the early efforts within critical peace approaches to reveal the weaknesses of liberal peacebuilding and its rarely provided alternative solutions, which are often counterfactual to the solutions of mainstream peacebuilding theories and praxis. Critique-without-alternative has concentrated largely on “revealing the implicit political underpinnings of international peacebuilding, and [demonstrating] their flaws,” such as power imbalance, ideological inconsistency, and flawed sources of legitimacy (Tadjbakhsh 2011, 6; see also Paffenholz 2015). For the critique-without-alternative camp, critique is an endpoint, which often creates the impression that critiquing is done for the sake of critiquing. Their quest is to highlight the impossible and incomplete, and they in fact aspire to problem-shifting, thereby avoiding the need to propose alternatives. By not offering an alternative, they aim to see the current system fall under its own contractions. They do this by deconstructing the ethics and politics of political interventions, seeking more to find faults than solutions (Jackson 2015, 26). In other words, critique-without-alternative seeks to unmask power relations and dynamics of dominance and to create space for a politics of resistance. It is a type of critique that seeks “to politicize practices that have been profoundly depoliticized” (Walker 2002, 258). This approach draws its epistemological inspiration less from empirical observation than from political and philosophical theories. Scholars pursuing critique-without-alternative have been drawn away from generating practical and alternative solutions, fearing that they might be co-opted by state-led policy agendas (see Heathershaw 2008, 616–18). They have been strongly influenced by the work of other critical scholars and their normative alternatives on human security, humanitarian intervention, and responsibility to protect have been utilized by policy makers, not for advancing emancipatory interests but for disguising international interventions (see Browning and McDonald 2011, 244). Kurki (2013, 243) has argued that a “danger resides in . . . policy-driven engagement: the danger of feeding into the legitimacy of a specific policy area, simply through critique.”

Many aspects of critique-without-alternative are exemplified in the influential work of Chandler (2006, 2010, 2013, 2017), who is known for systematically criticizing other critical peace theories while avoiding engaging with the question of alternativity. From the outset, Chandler (2017, 209, 9) defined peacebuilding “as an evolving set of problem-solving prescriptions,” which has resulted in blurring “the boundaries between peace and war and between sovereignty and intervention.” Chandler’s critique leans more toward deconstructive methods, which highlights the weaknesses of mainstream thinking, but intentionally avoids providing any alternative solution apart from implicitly favoring human agency and the political autonomy of the state as a form of political community. The closest Chandler (2013, 32) gets to articulating an alternative is to spell out ambiguously his favor for [[TABLE OMITTED]] material and social conditions behind both interventions and resistance to external peacebuilding efforts, which at some point takes on the connotation of “post-liberal governance.” Chandler (2010, 16) criticizes the critical scholars who provide alternatives for being uncritical about their “critique of liberalism in post-conflict societies” and for creating a consensus framing the problem of state-building and peacebuilding intervention as a “problem of the relationship between the liberal West and the non-liberal Other.” For him, the postliberal governance framework does not operate based on the principles of human rights, political legitimacy, and the social contract but instead it seeks, as he asserts, “to secure stability through balancing internal and external interests and concerns as matters of technical and administrative competences in the formulations of good governance” (Chandler 2010, 15). From this position, generating alternatives when international interventions fail is an attempt to make the responsibility for unwanted consequences disappear.

Following the same logic of critique, Chandler (2013, 9) has recently moved on to debates on resilience, where he has argued that, in the context of international state building, resilience has emerged as an “apologia for the limits of international interventions” and as an attempt to evade responsibility for the outcomes of state-building interventions. He has found that, as a result of this shift, local capacities, vulnerabilities, and agencies have been the target of intervention and research: consequently, the field of intervention involves societal reengineering rather than regime change (Chandler 2013, 211). Moreover, Chandler (2013, 24–25, 32) has argued that the return to nonlinearity, together with the local and intersubjective understandings of practices, moves away from structuring economic and social relations, such as “market inequality” and “asymmetries of intervention.” He adds that “the non-linear discourses of local ‘hidden’ agency neither create the basis of any genuine understanding of the limits to liberal peace nor provide any emancipatory alternative” (Chandler 2013, 31). In addition, critiquewithout-alternative takes issue with the recent critical turn in peacebuilding studies, which seeks to achieve emancipation by using Western agencies, structures, and institutions as epistemological bases for studying conflict-affected societies (see Sabaratnam 2013). They claim that current emancipatory possibilities within peace and conflict studies assign the responsibility for materializing their security alternatives to dominant powers, which render change impotent (see Hynek and Chandler 2013, 50). Here, proponents of critique-without-alternative fear that emancipating individuals as subjects of security plays into the hands of ruling forces. The closest Chandler and other proponents of critique-without-alternative get to alternativity is highlighting—through negational dialectics—the absence of something, without elaborating its key features or indicating how such a possibility could be translated into practice (see also Hameiri 2010). Because critique-without-alternative avoids offering practical alternatives, it has turned debates on peacebuilding from a praxis to a discourse, which facilitates conceptual interrogation and problematization free from the messy nuances and incommensurability of practices and empirical facts (see Heathershaw 2008, 602). Yet in Chandler’s (2006, 2010, 2017) work, there are trace arguments in favor of a strong, autonomous state free from external intervention, which, surprisingly, are not problematized by other noncomplicit critical scholars.

Another example of critique-without-alternative is the recent work by Catherine Goetze (2017), which offers an interpretative critique of peacebuilding by deconstructing actors, relations, and processes of peacebuilding using Bourdieu’s concepts of field and habitus. Goetze (2017, 1) has argued that peacebuilding “exists because it has become for a sufficiently large number of people and institutions with sufficiently important authority an unquestioned way of political action in the world and, on a more individual level, a way of making a living.” Goetze’s (2017, 4) study intentionally avoided offering alternatives that considered questions relating to the efficiency and success of peacebuilding as problem solving alternatives which fail to “investigate the economic, social, and political conditions that make the unequal relationships between internationals and locals possible, relationships that sustain themselves over time.” This claim is similar to Chandler’s method of critique—indicating what is wrong with the existing system, and vaguely articulating power relations and socioeconomic conditions of inequality as the structural causes of failure, without exploring how to change or overcome such structural blockages. A typical feature of critique-without-alternative is epistemological escapism, which is also present in Goetze’s work: he admits that “this book is not about a better peace we could build, it does not conclude on any policy recommendations,” leaving it implicit for attentive readers to “draw out practical lessons from my analysis, in particular in the ways peacebuilding work is organizationally structured” (Goetze 2017, 14).

Finally, the work of Mark Duffield (2001, 2007) on the security-development nexus represents a borderline example of critique-without-alternative: it offers a valuable critique of the merging of development and security, highlights the contradictions and fallacies of liberal peace and the entire humanitarian and development assistance industry, and points out the complicit role of Western states in reproducing insecurity and maintaining underdevelopment in conflict- and disaster-affected societies. Duffield, however—like other proponents of critique-without-alternative—missed the opportunity to capitalize on his critical observations and promote emancipatory alternatives in greater detail. Although Duffield’s (2001) work on global governance and the new wars tracked down different political alternatives arising as a response to the networked character of liberal peace and the aid industry, he fell short of elaborating sufficiently on emancipatory alternatives for an inclusive global order embedded in cosmopolitan politics. Later on, Duffield (2007) made a compelling critique of development aid and its role in entrenching insecurities and creating uninsured subjects in turbulent societies but again fell short of teasing out further alternatives for building a solidarist global order that delivers aid to impoverished societies without expecting security, material gains, and political favors in return.

Across the board, critique-without-alternative has deemed alternativity a form of intervention that plays into the hands of the existing global, regional, and local power holders. The major concern of critique-without-alternative is that if these power holders describe or prescribe what emancipatory peace might look like or how it might come about in reality, it could succumb to the instrumentalist logic of mainstream, interventionist epistemic and policy forces. This notwithstanding, it still does not resolve the primary question: how does critique for the sake of critique bring about social change? Critique-without-alternative has become a mode of delivering critique that is detached from social reality and imprisoned by the ontological recirculation of metatheoretical narratives (Duvall and Varadarajan 2003). The works of critical scholars that avoid alternativity are grounded to a considerable extent on imaginary and theoretical premises in which normative emancipatory empiricism does not feature greatly. Cynthia Weber (2017, 54) rightly argues that critical scholars in IR who tend to endorse antinormative knowledge risk making critique a dogmatic form of knowledge with moral certainty and a singular understanding of history, ideology, and political community. For Levine (2012), epistemic reification is one of the main fallacies of critical knowledge in IR.

The quest for never-ending critique and antisolutionism evident among those subscribing to critique-without-alternative is gradually pushing critical peacebuilding debates toward metatheoretical and postempirical discussions. Ian Angus (2000, 258) has argued that discourse theories have lost touch with reality, as they regard discourses and language as disembodied representations of reality rather than a means for “understanding them as figuration of praxis.” In the context of peace and conflict studies, David Lewis (2017, 3) found that “the explicit or implicit reliance of many critics of liberal peace on a Foucauldian framework of discourse and knowledge is undermining the capacity to conceptualize and engage with the challenges of peace and conflict in a rapidly changing international order.” While it might be understandable why critique-without-alternative avoids offering practical solutions, its proponents miss the opportunity to perhaps capitalize on what Ulrich Beck (2015) referred to as emancipatory catastrophism, which holds that risks, disasters, and failures have hidden performative and emancipatory side effects that may produce positive common goods. Critique-without-alternative could benefit from this logic of inquiry without compromising its criticality. Yet it remains unfinished until it offers an emancipatory alternative—at either the conceptual, normative, or practical levels of inquiry. In essence, what this mode of criticality lacks is expanding the critique of power, security, and governmentality to also include non-Western societies that are affected by illiberal and authoritarian regimes, where the Eurocentric critical lens used to criticize liberal interventionism might no longer be relevant (see Lewis 2017).

By constantly deconstructing liberal peace discourses and practices, critique-without-alternative has unintentionally contributed to the constitution of liberal peace as a unitary discursive framework, making it consistent in its inconsistency, timeless in its temporality, solid in its fluidity, and liberal in its illiberalism. Cynthia Weber’s (2017, 54) most recent critique of critical IR fits well in the fallacy of critique-without-alternative: “even though they know themselves to be working against all manner of disciplinary formations of knowledge, power, and practice, Critical IR scholars often stabilize these disciplinary formations through their opposition to them.” Moreover, recent attempts to displace peacebuilding and state-building discussions to broader philosophical debates has opened up the possibility for the critique of peacebuilding to lose any practical relevance. Consequently, scholars subscribing to the critique-without-alternative approach have stopped engaging with problem-solving, realist, and liberalist perspectives. As critical approaches now battle each other, the question is no longer how they can challenge dominant epistemological orthodoxies but how to rescue them before they lose practical relevance.

#### 2. Nor is inclusion---characterizing the aff as a voice for ‘nobodies against the state’ liberates them from political responsibility without materially improving the lives of those excluded.

Dorothy Figueria 8, Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia, Ph.D. in Comparative Studies in Literature from the University of Chicago, “Postcolonial Criticism and Identitarian Politics,” in *Otherwise Occupied: Pedagogies of Alterity and the Brahminization of Theory*, pp. 31-48, State University of New York Press, 2008, ProQuest, DG

Following Lyotard, only the local narratives can have validity. The task then becomes for the critic to uncover in the “native” narrative what has been lost in the voicelessness of the colonial subject. The theorists, “assorted Australian, Indian and Canadian ventriloquists,” must then speak for “speechless subalterns” (San Juan 1998:30). Their need to mediate stems from the notion, common to most poststructural theory, that some heritage of systems limits the reader. Our present condition, although seemingly benign, imposes an existential limit, and theory alone can liberate us from systemic constraints (Fluck 1996:216). In this respect, postcolonial criticism once again reveals its indebtedness to Foucault in its lavish declarations of resistance. Missing in all these discussions of power and theory as a political act is any inquiry into how the text’s appearance as a network of hegemonic or subversive gestures suits the state of literary theoretical professionalization or how this cooptation reflects the critics’ class interests as bourgeois intellectuals ensconced in metropolitan institutions. Theory thus allows individuals cut off from any effective social action and buoyed by their security as academic professionals to coopt the voices of and claim solidarity with the disenfranchised. The theorist’s alienation from real powerlessness (as in the case of the academic Marxist’s guilt vis-à-vis the worker) is then replaced by a posture of powerlessness vis-à-vis representation. The critic must self-fashion him- or herself through imaginary marginalization resulting in the wide-ranging identification of a privileged class of academics with the marginalized Other. I have termed this process a “brahminization of theory” and will examine it more closely in the next chapter. The historically oppressed become the new role models for the critic. In this way, theory and professionalism interact and justify each other (Fluck 1990:18). Postcolonial criticism may well aspire to decenter Enlightenment discourse and repudiate Eurocentric models. The sad truth of the matter is, however, that this process of “expressive individualism” (Fluck 1996:227) only seems to liberate the critic.

#### 3. Ballots are bad.

Michael Karlberg 3, Assistant Professor of Communications at Western Washington, PEACE & CHANGE, v28, n3, July, p. 339-41

Granted, social activists do "win" occasional “battles” in these adversarial arenas, but the root causes of their concerns largely remain unaddressed and the larger "wars" arguably are not going well. Consider the case of environmental activism. Countless environmental protests, lobbies, and lawsuits mounted in recent generations throughout the Western world. Many small victories have been won. Yet environmental degradation continues to accelerate at a rate that far outpaces the highly circumscribed advances made in these limited battles the most committed environmentalists acknowledge things are not going well. In addition, adversarial strategies of social change embody assumptions that have internal consequences for social movements, such as internal factionalization. For instance, virtually all of the social projects of the "left” throughout the 20th century have suffered from recurrent internal factionalization. The opening decades of the century were marked by political infighting among vanguard communist revolutionaries. The middle decades of the century were marked by theoretical disputes among leftist intellectuals. The century's closing decades have been marked by the fracturing of the a new left\*\* under the centrifugal pressures of identity politics. Underlying this pattern of infighting and factionalization is the tendency to interpret differences—of class, race, gender, perspective, or strategy—as sources of antagonism and conflict. In this regard, the political "left" and "right" both define themselves in terms at a common adversary—the "other"—defined by political differences. Not surprisingly, advocates of both the left and right frequently invoke the need for internal unity in order to prevail over their adversaries on the other side of the alleged political spectrum. However, because the terms left and right axe both artificial and reified categories that do not reflect the complexity of actual social relations, values, or beliefs, there is no way to achieve lasting unity within either camp because there are no actual boundaries between them. In reality, social relations, values, and beliefs are infinitely complex and variable. Yet once an adversarial posture is adopted by assuming that differences are sources at conflict, initial distinctions between the left and the right inevitably are followed by subsequent distinctions within the left and the right. Once this centrifugal process is set in motion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to restrain. For all of these reasons, adversarial strategies have reached a point of diminishing returns even if such strategies were necessary and viable in the past when human populations were less socially and ecologically interdependent those conditions no longer exist. Our reproductive and technological success as a species has led to conditions of unprecedented interdependence, and no group on the planet is isolated any longer. Under these new conditions, new strategies not only are possible but are essential. Humanity has become a single interdependent social body. In order to meet the complex social and environmental challenges now facng us, we must learn to coordinate our collective actions. Yet a body cannot coordinate its actions as long as its "left" and is "right," or its "north" and its "south," or its "east" and its "west" are locked in adversarial relationships.

#### 4. Racial capitalism is ahistorical and has zero explanatory power.

Cedric Johnson 25. Professor of Black studies and political science from the University of Illinois-Chicago, Ph.D. in government and politics from the University of Maryland-College Park. "The Wrong Durée: The Politics of Cedric J. Robinson’s Racial Capitalism." Nonsite. 1/29/2025. nonsite.org/the-wrong-duree-the-politics-of-cedric-j-robinsons-racial-capitalism

Robinson provides a sweeping account of world history, which winds its way from the earliest encounters between Mediterranean and Nile Valley civilizations through the Islamic presence and influence in Spain and the emergence of the Genoese bourgeoisie to the modern European conquest and colonization of African nations. That account, however, too often treats anti-black racism as the motive force of history rather than the consequence of centuries-old processes and in a manner that neglects historical contingency and the presence of other discrete interests that cannot be attributed to racist thinking. This historically-versed ahistoricism is a core problem of *Black Marxism*, and yet it may well be the sweetener that has drawn so many to embrace the language of racial capitalism in recent years, even if they are not faithful students of Robinson’s particular interpretation of history.

As Joseph Ramsey writes, Robinson’s account of racial capitalism “ultimately tends to understand capitalism as an expression of a transhistorical European racialism, putting forth a monolithic view of ‘Western civilization’ itself as, from the beginning, essentially and uniquely racist and inclined to violent domination.”46 The core problem with Robinson’s account, Ramsey concludes, “is not that racism is emphasized, but that it is ontologized.”47 Indeed, in Robinson’s work, racialism and race stand in for discrete political motivations and real interests in motion, and historical contingency seems to disappear altogether from his account. His narration of the making of the West obscures so much of that history’s complexity. Racialist metanarrative does not convey the manifold and conflicting motivations of sovereigns, influential individuals, wealthy families, joint stock companies, and the bourgeoisie as a class for itself, and their relative successes and failures in advancing their respective interests. And while racial ideology would eventually serve as a justification for empire building, so many other factors were more decisive in determining the strategies, prerogatives, and decisions of the capitalist classes of Portugal, Spain, England, France, the United States, and other imperial powers: economic cycles of boom and bust; speculation and the power of financiers; the perennial triumph and ruin of individual firms; the formation of opportunistic alliances, feuds, mergers, and hostile takeovers—not to mention the constant weight of the coercive laws of competition; the sectoral and cultural changes provoked by technological development; and the unforeseen impacts of depression, war, labor shortages, plagues, famines, and natural and industrial catastrophes on individual and social fortunes.

Robinson’s prose is, at times, seductive and insightful as he recounts the processes of European expansion, but it is primarily idealistic. Rather than concrete historical interests, he emphasizes the power of ideas in various ways, the distinctive cultural character of African versus European peoples, and the hypocrisy of American colonial elites as much as the material force of history. His prose is written largely in passive voice and too often employs personification, treating institutions as historical actors rather than consistently specifying the embodied human subjects in history themselves. Although he references the American bourgeoisie in the passage quoted above, there are other places where “the accommodation of Western historical consciousness to racial ideologies created …,” “popular thought affected …,” and “This intellectual grounding came to absorb ….” among similar phrasings (BM, 76, emphasis added). And like so many contemporary academics and activists, his narration assumes “white,” “black,” “Western,” or “African” are more than contextual descriptors. Instead, the guiding premise seems to be that corporeal identity, the experience of social exclusion, and even consumer choices all tell us something significant and readily knowable about the values, perspectives, and interests of real people. These literary choices disappear any sense of discrete historical interests and constituted power in Robinson’s account of Western civilization from antiquity to the modern capitalist world.

It is true that some Greeks and Romans remarked on the distinct appearances of Africans they encountered. As Robinson notes, when Herodotus encountered the Colchians, he said, “they are black skinned and have woolly hair” (BM, 83). Such descriptions of physical characteristics are not racism, however, and this is where the construct of racialism, which is never defined by Robinson, makes mischief of history. As Frank Snowden documents in his pioneering work on the African presence in Ancient Europe, Africans were not generally viewed by Greeks or Romans as innately inferior as a group because their social relation to those civilizations was not slave-based.48 Instead, Greeks and Romans were more likely to encounter Africans in the roles of merchants, statesmen, or soldiers. Moreover, like Africans themselves, Greeks and Romans would have appreciated the significance of a range of other social, class, religious, ethnic, and national distinctions more so than phenotype.

Robinson’s account gives the impression that modern racism appeared much earlier and that it was a motive force for conquest when it was not. The following passage is exemplary: “In England, at first gripped by a combative and often hysterical Christianity—complements of the crusades, the ‘reconquests,’ and the rise of Italian capitalism—medieval English devouts recorded dreams in which the devil appeared as ‘a blacke moore,’ ‘an Ethiope,’” writes Robinson. “This was part of the grammar of the church, the almost singular repository of knowledge in Europe.” “Centuries later,” Robinson continues, “the Satanic gave way to the representation of Africans as a different sort of beast: dumb, animal labor, the benighted recipient of the benefits of slavery. Thus the ‘Negro’ was conceived” (BM, 3–4). What is missing from this provisional account of racism’s emergence is any sense of historically grounded meaning and relative amplitude. So, while we can find seeds of racist ideas in medieval Europe, seeds are not fully formed trees, no more in the study of ideology than in botany.

Robinson’s narrative might have us believe that racism and profit-making were twinned motives of equal significance from Cristóbal Colón’s 1492 arrival in the Americas through the first importation of African slaves at the Jamestown settlement in 1619. “The trade in African slaves,” he writes, “coming as it did as an extension of capitalism and racial arrogance, supplied both a powerful motive and a readily received object” (BM, 100). Such conclusions are errant for a few reasons. Race was not the driving force of capitalism’s emergence or the expansion of the trans-Atlantic slave trade but rather the material interests of competing merchants, royals, and joint-stock companies. The enrichment of national coffers and personal fortunes drove and gave urgency to the expeditions, settlements, trade agreements, and imperial wars that ensued. On this subject of the development of race as popular ideology, the work of historian Barbara J. Fields is far more clarifying than Robinson’s. “The rise of slavery itself on the North American mainland was not in essence a racial phenomenon,” Fields writes, “nor was it the inevitable outcome of racial prejudice.”49 Contrary to Robinson’s account, race as we know it would take some time to make its way onto the historical stage and even longer to become a widely understood and legitimate justification for the regimes of chattel bond labor that were central to the establishment and commercial success of the New World colonies. It is easy to become lost in Robinson’s account of pre-modern racial ideas precisely because it is selective and idealistic and one that does not discern between pre-enlightenment forms of prejudice and social conflict and the relative material force of religious doctrines, racist taxonomy, the profit motive, and corporate interests in the historical development of specific slaveholding republics in the Americas.

Robinson’s account of racialism conflates various medieval forms of discrimination, hierarchy, and affinity for modern racism. Racism is a type of prejudice, but not all forms of prejudice are racism. While there were all manner of tribal, ethnic, religious, and sectional prejudices in pre-capitalist Europe, these were not racism. Those forms of difference were not grand metaphysical narratives but were intimately connected to social relations and affinities that existed in concrete time and space, which distinguishes them from the universal racial taxonomy first articulated by Carolus Linnaeus, as well as Johann Blumenbach, Thomas Jefferson, and others who would assign human worth and capacity based on race.50 These figures were not particularly concerned with the situated experiences of particular clans, religious sects, kingdoms, and civilizations and their particular languages, customs, rites, technology, and history; on the contrary, they favored massive generalizations predicated on phenotype and continental divides. Racial taxonomy evolved as imperial shorthand, an ideological mapping that became as central to navigating the emerging commercial world as the stars, shifting winds, and tides.

Even if we concede that there are modes of thinking that prefigure or anticipate modern racism, we should not mistake their appearance for power. Travelogues, biographies, and reports during the periods of exploration and colonization reveal great ambivalence, hypocrisy, honesty, ignorance, humanity, and surprise in the first encounters, treaties, quotidian interactions, collaborations, and betrayals that defined the processes of European incursion, conquest, and imposition of forced labor regimes throughout the Atlantic world.51 “No trader who had to confront and learn to placate the power of an African chief could in practice believe that Africans were docile, childlike, or primitive,” writes Fields. “The practical circumstances in which Europeans confronted Africans in Africa make nonsense of any attempt to encompass Europeans’ reactions to Africans within the literary stereotypes that scholars have traced through the ages as discrete racial attitudes.”52 And this is precisely the problem with the historical account that Robinson provides; social cleavages that predated the emergence of racist ideology are not only presumed to be cognates of race articulated during the age of bourgeois revolution, but these are also assumed to wield similar, even equal, power in widely dissimilar historical contexts.

#### 5. Ontology is false---it’s wrong to universalize the experience.

Susan Buck-Morss 13. Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the CUNY Graduate Center, NYC. 2013. “A Commonist Ethics, ” in The Idea of Communism, 2013, http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/

The First Point: Politics is not an ontology. The claim that the political is always ontological needs to be challenged.[1](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:1) It is not merely that the negative the case — that the political is never ontological[2](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:2) (as Badiou points out, a simple negation leaves everything in place[3](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:3)). Instead, what is called for is a reversal of the negation: The ontological is never political. It follows that the move from la politique (everyday politics) to le politique (the very meaning of the political) is a one-way street. With all due respect to Marcel Gauchet, Chantal Mouffe, Giorgio Agamben, and a whole slew of others, the attempt to discover within empirical political life (la politique) the ontological essence of the political (le politique) leads theory into a dead end from which there is no return to actual, political practice. There is nothing gained by this move from the feminine to the masculine form. The post-metaphysical project of discovering ontological truth within lived existence fails politically. It fails in the socially disengaged Husserlian-Heidegerian mode of bracketing the existenziell to discover the essential nature of what “the political” is. And it fails in the socially critical, post-Foucauldian mode of historicized ontology, disclosing the multiple ways of political being-in-the-world within particular, cultural and temporal configurations. This is not news. From the mid-1930s on, it was Adorno’s obsessive concern, in the context of the rise of fascism, to demonstrate the failure of the ontological attempt to ground a philosophy of Being by starting from the given world, or, in Heideggerian language, to move from the ontic, that is, being [seiend] in the sense of that which is empirically given, to the ontological, that which is essentially true of existence (Dasein as the “a priori structure” of “existentially”[4](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:4)). Adorno argued that any ontology derived (or reduced5) from the ontic, turns the philosophical project into one big tautology.[6](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:6) He has a point, and the political implications are serious. Ontology identifies. Identity was anathema to Adorno, and nowhere more so than in its political implications, the identity between ruler and ruled that fascism affirmed. Indeed, even parliamentary rule can be seen to presuppose a striving for identity, whereby consensus becomes an end in itself, regardless of the truth content of that consensus.[7](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:7) It is not that Heidegger’s philosophy (or any existential ontology) is in-itself fascist (that would be an ontological claim). Rather, by resolving the question of Being before subsequent political analyses, the latter have no philosophical traction. They are subsumed under the ontological a prioris that themselves must remain indifferent to their content.[8](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:8) Existential ontology is mistaken in assuming that, once “the character of being” (Heidegger) is conceptually grasped, it will return us to the material, empirical world and allow us to gather its diversities and multiplicities under philosophy’s own pre-understandings in ways adequate to the exigencies of collective action, the demands of actual political life. In fact, the ontological is never political. A commonist (or communist) ontology is a contradiction in terms. But, you may ask, did not Marx himself outline in his early writings a full ontology based on the classical, Aristotelian claim that man is by nature a social animal? Are not the 1844 manuscripts an elaboration of that claim, mediated by a historically specific critique, hence an extended, socialontology of man’s alienation from nature (including his own) and from his fellow man? Yes, but in actual, political life, this ontological “man” does not exist. Instead, we existing creatures are men and women, black and brown, capitalists and workers, gay and straight, and the meaning of these categories of being is in no way stable. Moreover, these differences matter less that whether we are unemployed, have prison records, or are in danger of being exported. And no matter what we are in these ontic ways, our beings do not fit neatly into our politics as conservatives, anarchists, evangelicals, Teaparty-supporters, Zionists, Islamists, and (a few) Communists. We are social animals, yes, but we are also anti-social, and 0 are thoroughly mediated by society’s contingent forms. Yes, the early Marx developed a philosophical ontology. Nothing follows from this politically. Philosopher-king-styled party leaders are not thereby legitimated, and the whole thorny issue of false consciousness (empirical vs. imputed/ascribed [zugerechnectes] consciousness) cannot force a political resolution. At the same time, philosophical thought has every right – and obligation — to intervene actively into political life. Here is Marx on the subject of intellectual practice, including philosophizing: But again when I am active scientifically, etc, — when I am engaged in activity which I can seldom perform in direct community with others –- then I am social, because I am active as a man [human being[9](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:9)]. Not only is the material of my activity given to me as a social product (as is even the language in which the thinker is active): my own existence is social activity, and therefore that which I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness ofmyself as a social being. [10](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:10) Again, no matter how deeply one thinks one’s way into this ontological generalization, no specific political orientation follows as a consequence. It describes the intellectual work of Heidegger and Schmitt every bit as much as it does that of Marx or of us ourselves.

#### 6. Mutual aid fails AND magnifies violence.

Hummel ’20 (Thomas, activist and a member of Marx 21, 6/29/20, “Mutual Aid Networks: Toward a Constructive Critique,” <https://marx21us.org/2020/06/29/mutual-aid-networks-toward-a-constructive-critique/>)

Many of the best activists are currently involved in mutual aid work. The extent to which I understand the importance of these organizations is illustrated by my involvement with the one in my neighborhood where I’ve helped with grocery runs for undocumented immigrants and donated some of my stimulus money to keep the organization going. The organization in my neighborhood has raised over $30,000 and has delivered food and essential aid to an impressive number of our neighbors.

While these efforts are incredibly important, we cannot forget that they should be unnecessary. Capitalism and the state that supports it are responsible for a situation in which millions are suffering from privation. In this crisis, the state has been primarily concerned with the maintenance and health of capitalism and has provided only scraps to the vast majority, even as it spends generously to rescue the wealthy. Mutual aid groups have formed to fill this void left by the state’s total disregard for the survival of the most vulnerable.

But since these projects often depend upon us sharing our meager resources, they can be very difficult to maintain. The group in my neighborhood, for example, despite its impressive fundraising, is having difficulty continuing its efforts as new donations dry up. If the left were organized and strong, instead of having to scramble to provide these resources for ourselves, we would be able to apply material pressure and demand them from the state and the wealthy elite that the state protects.

Origins of mutual aid

Looking at the origins of mutual aid philosophy is illuminating. Mutual aid derives from the political philosophy of Anarchism. The term “mutual aid” comes from the anarchist Peter Kropotkin’s 1902 book of the same name, which sought to explore how cooperation, what Kropotkin called “mutual aid,” was “a factor in evolution.”

The issue at hand bears some similarity to a debate going back to the mid-19th century between Marx and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Proudhon was a utopian socialist and the father of modern anarchism. Proudhon believed that a new, post-capitalist society could be created alongside capitalism and slowly grow to the point where it became dominant. This process, he believed, could happen in a decentralized way. Marx, by contrast, judged that the capitalist state would never allow this to happen, and would attempt to destroy and undermine these forms of collective care. He argued that the state must be challenged with a fighting organization of the working class. This organized resistance can put pressure on the state and the wealthy, forcing them to provide resources that ordinary people need. But, for Marx, a better society could only come when our forms of organization were strong enough to directly confront the state and replace it with something better.

What’s at stake today is something similar. While acts of solidarity and mutual aid organizations are extremely important, there are limits to what they can achieve inside capitalist society. Organized solidarity entails not just sharing our limited resources between ourselves, but fighting to take them from the rich, whether directly, or indirectly through political demands on the capitalist state. In order for this to be a political movement, and not just a form of charity, organized acts of solidarity and demands on the state need to be made in ways that build class consciousness and organization.

Many socialists have taken on the language and strategy of mutual aid wholesale. In doing so they have unconsciously adopted an anarchist theory of social change and the state. The anarchist theory argues that placing demands on the state only recognizes its authority, strengthens it, and weakens the workers’ movement. Revolutionary socialists, by contrast, share the anarchist opposition to the capitalist state, but think the anarchist approach of ignoring or attempting to circumvent the state is wrong. We believe that the organized working class must engage with and make demands upon the state, while avoiding the social democratic trap of working exclusively through the state, and relying on its reforms. Workers can only achieve a better society by building it for ourselves, brick-by-brick, from the bottom up.

For instance, revolutionary socialists, anarchists, and social democrats can work together with tenants in supporting realistic rent strikes during this time of mass unemployment, and mutual defense against evictions—sometimes cited as a form of mutual aid. But it is also a political act to extend these pressures to demands on the state for a blanket end to evictions, and for rent and mortgage cancellation or moratoriums.

Mutual aid and class struggle at work

“Occupy Sandy” provides a revealing illustration of the merits and limitations of mutual aid work. During the hurricane, a number of New York activists previously involved with “Occupy Wall Street” organized themselves into “Occupy Sandy” around a politics of “mutual aid, not charity.” The group was involved in a lot of important work and provided crucial help to people who were impacted by the storm. However, the political distinction between mutual aid and charity was not always clear to those giving or receiving aid. And despite all its impressive efforts, getting the electricity back on and the subways running ultimately depended upon the state. When the crisis ended, the group left no form of organization behind.

The scale of the crisis today is orders of magnitude larger than it was during the hurricane in 2012, and a much larger portion of the working class has been impacted. The government is currently spending trillions of dollars to prop up banks and corporations. Working people, who create all the wealth in society, need to be getting a share of that. We need to develop strategies that not only spread our limited resources around, but reappropriate what the wealthy have taken from us.

Labor unions, where working people are organized and have leverage against the bosses and corporations, are crucial in the battle for wealth redistribution. An illustrative example comes from the experience of workers in the airline industry. The recent bailout provided the industry with $75 billion. When workers learned this was happening, they organized to ensure that this money would go to help workers and their families get through the crisis. The Flight Attendants Association, led by Sara Nelson, was able to force the airlines into setting aside $29 billion for their workers. This will help pay salaries through the end of September. In a commendable display of solidarity, the union fought for a portion of this aid to go to airport workers as well. The airline workers displayed a willingness to use their power to secure what they needed from their employers. More union actions like this—especially if they were to include greater direct involvement from rank-and-file airline workers—could not only win important material gains, but would also strengthen working class self-organization for future battles against the state and corporations.

Combative social movements will get us the goods

In order to be effective, resistance cannot be the province of a revolutionary minority alone. Since capitalism is creative to the same degree that it is destructive, it tends to breed resistance among people of all walks of life — revolutionary and non-revolutionary alike. It is the role of revolutionaries not to take over these movements, but to intervene and fight alongside those affected in order to win them over to revolutionary politics. Mutual aid networks can be a starting point for people who are radicalizing, but they are most effective when connected to wider movements for change, not seen as an end unto themselves.

We need to build social movements that strive not only to redistribute the few resources available to us, but which also work to reappropriate from the rich the wealth they have taken from us. These movements can translate material pressure into material resources for the majority. They can secure concessions such as medicare-for-all and the inclusion of the undocumented in government aid programs. Bernie Sanders had proposed $2,000 per month for everyone for the duration of the crisis. This is a proposal that combative mass social movements could have the power to actually secure.

Organization, defined as mass involvement, solidarity, and unity-in-action toward a common goal, is the only tool that can give us enough power to take on capital and the state. Without it, we risk just papering over the cracks in capitalism. Only with this tool can we move toward a society based not upon mindless profit for a few, but upon meeting the needs of all. This will allow us to eliminate the conditions that make mutual aid groups necessary, and construct a society based upon solidarity.

#### 7. The prefix ‘afro’ is antithetical and parasitic to the history of Africa and grounded scholarship, coopts their project, and causes erasure

Phetogo Tshepo Mahasha 13, is a filmmaker and Philosophy student from South Africa., “Art Criticism: is the prefix ‘Afro-’ (as in “Afro-futurism”) arresting our imagination and manifesto salesmanship?” This Is Africa, 7-24-2013, <https://thisisafrica.me/african-identities/art-criticism-prefix-afro-afro-futurism-arresting-imagination-manifesto-salesmanship/>

The prefix ‘Afro-’

A prefix modifies a word/statement. The prefix ‘Afro-’ as used in art criticism modifies existing manifestos. In my opinion, it does not promote the generation of wholly new ideas and manifestos, but only the modification of the creativity of others. The prefix ‘afro-’ has acquired a parasitic character, leeching off manifestos: Afro-Surrealism, Afro-Punk, Afro-Futurism and Afro-etc. I think it has the capacity to arrest African imagination, so that the African imagination only follows other manifestos, only to attach itself to them and never coming up with an original of its own. I wouldn’t have a problem with it because creativity is about modifying elements that are already there to create something new, but given what’s out there at this point I have an objection. Just a quick internet search reveals that the movie The Matrix is listed as Afro-futurism on some websites. It can go to the point where Afro-futurism can only be about a person of colour in a future space, when in fact for a project like ‘The Matrix’, the faces and races are interchangeable, it would still be what it is without black people in it.

I read an Afro-Surrealist manifesto written by D. Scot Miller and it had me asking a few questions. In this manifesto, Miller outlines what isn’t Afro-Surrealism. He writes, “Afro-Surrealism is not surrealism.”

“…Leopold Senghor, poet, first president of Senegal, and African Surrealist, made this distinction: ‘European Surrealism is empirical. African Surrealism is mystical and metaphorical.’”

And then he says of Afro-Surrealism, “[it] presupposes that beyond this visible world, there is an invisible world striving to manifest, and it is our job to uncover it.”

And he goes on to say, “Afro-Surrealists restore the cult of the past. We revisit old ways with new eyes. We appropriate 19th century slavery symbols, like Kara Walker, and 18th century colonial ones, like Yinka Shonibare. We re-introduce ‘madness’ as visitations from the gods, and acknowledge the possibility of magic. We take up the obsessions of the ancients and kindle the dis-ease, clearing the murk of the collective unconsciousness as it manifests in these dreams called culture.”

Miller claims that Afro-Surrealism is NOT Surrealism. And then he goes on to define something that’s different from ‘Surrealism’ and calls it ‘Afro-Surreal’. My question when I read Miller’s Manifesto was why call it Afro-Surrealism if it is not Surrealism? Why prefix the word Surrealism with ‘Afro-’? Most importantly, since it is so different from surrealism, why not call it something entirely new?

Miller considers The Neptunes early music Afro-futurist. Would that same music if it was produced by a person of a different race still be considered Afro-futurist? What made it fundamentally Afro-futurist except for race?

African Renaissance

Ever since the independence of the first African state there has been talk of an African Renaissance, a rebirth of Africa.

This is to be realized by taking what was before colonisation and put it in its proper place. African Renaissance can be divided into three processes: excavations, integrating the material into the present and projecting the material into the future.

The African renaissance to me is naturally linked with the development of African Philosophy that carries on today. African Philosophy has at its base the idea of the “Struggle for reason”. To quote Mogobe B. Ramose:

“One of the bases of colonization was that the belief ‘man is a rational animal’ was not spoken of the African, the Amerindian, and the Australasian … Little did Aristotle realize that his definition of ‘man’ laid down the foundation for the struggle for reason—not only between men and women but also between the colonialists and the Africans, the Amerindians, and the Australasian’s.”

“The struggle for reason—who is and who is not a rational animal—is the foundation of racism.”

These African Renaissance excavations are about restoring whatever cultural artefacts/Philosophy/idea, basically they’re an attempt to restore the humanity of Africans in the light of this ‘struggle for reason’, post-colonization; this is the environment, and artists will most certainly interact with it: Picking up bits and fashioning them, if they choose to do so.

It’s about freeing the African from this struggle for reason by collecting and restoring artefacts/philosophies, and projecting these into the future so that this base will always be available to future generations, presumably a generation of free Africans, free to create whatever they please, free from the “struggle for reason”. It is within either of these contexts of ultimate freedom and/or of the offsetting of “the struggle for reason” that I see cultural production taking place and being evaluated.

Legitimate Art Criticism is concerned with: The Artist (who they are), the work, and the Artist’s environment.

Given what the environment was and is, it raises questions when an artist like for example – Simphiwe Dana can be mentioned in a critic’s article, which in its attempts at giving her work context, doesn’t mention The African Renaissance, but in fact shifts the cultural context to Sun-Ra’s Afro-Futurism, seeing Dana as its “offspring”.

Manifesto salesmanship

When I first heard of Spoek Mathambo he called his music “Township Techno”. True, it may not be a step too far from prefixing it ‘Afro-Something’, but it was still an honest attempt to contextualize his music within the township continuum, with South African music as its lineage. Hearing the genre name itself ‘Township Techno’ gives a pretty good idea what is happening, though it doesn’t go as far as I hope it should, which is just naming it something different like, ‘HighLife’ music (music originating in Ghana) or Kwaito.

Spoek Mathambo is an even more interesting artist in terms of Art Criticism because he illustrates the strength of ‘Manifesto salesmen.’

To give a clear idea of what I mean by Manifesto salesmanship there is an interesting review of the case of Frida Kahlo and Surrealism. Andre Breton went around selling the Surrealism Manifesto to artists who produced the work without any prior knowledge of his manifesto.

In the LA Reviews of Books, a review of the exhibition “In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States” ends with: “And so, in the end it turns out Breton was justified in his fears. People will call almost anything surrealism”. Eli Diner writes:

“Take the case of Kahlo. She met Breton on his 1938 trip to Mexico. Fascinated by her work, he wrote an essay to accompany her show that year at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York and included some of her paintings in an exhibition the following year in Paris. In 1940, she exhibited work in the International Surrealist Exhibition in Mexico City. She experimented a little with automatic writing and painting and participated in a few exquisite corpses, but Kahlo, for her part, rejected the label and disavowed any interest in surrealism, insisting that she did not “paint dreams.” In a letter to a friend in 1952, she summed up her feelings on the subject: “I detest surrealism. To me it seems to be a decadent manifestation of bourgeois art.” Kahlo’s naive style, disturbing imagery, phantasmagoric ruptures and canvases crowded with “non-western” logics of the folkloric, the archaic and the natural, suggest that her many affinities with surrealism remain just that, incidental. For Breton this was precisely the point. Kahlo offered a kind of natural confirmation of the surrealist sensibility. He wrote of his “surprise and joy” upon discovering her work, which had “blossomed forth […] into pure surreality, despite the fact that it had been conceived without any prior knowledge whatsoever of the ideas motivating the activities of my friends and myself.” Activities, it should be added, that principally included the very procedure Breton performed in identifying Kahlo. As much as the art and literature — or, for that matter, the games, the manifestos, and the so-called “researches”— surrealism consisted of the hunt for iterations of the surreal. From distant corners of the globe, in primitive art and tribal cultures; among the hysterics in the Salpêtrière Hospital; in objects acquired at Paris flea markets; among the work of a few contemporaries deemed kindred spirits or the poetry of a 14-year-old girl seen to have arrived at a pure automatism; and through literary and artistic forebears reshuffled in an ever-changing account of their own lineage, the surrealists gleefully coopted whatever might fit into their vast catalogue of surreality.”

Which brings me to a TED Talk by the Kenyan filmmaker Wanuri Kahiu titled ‘Afro-futurism in popular culture’ (July 2012). Kahiu makes it very clear that the Talk is a manifesto sales pitch, comparable to Andre Breton’s sales pitch, in that she disregards the incidental ‘similarity’ of the work produced around Africa and Afro-futurism, and she disregards the African context in which the work is produced around Africa, and she wants to force the ‘Afro-futurism’ context which has it’s own history on the African works. In the talk, Kahiu gives a brief history of Afro-futurism, and then to underlie the sales pitch, “…but that was very specifically about African-Americans, but I wanted to find a place for Afro-futurism in Africa.” Then she proceeds to offset the cultural context of ancient African myths, legends and visuals with Afro-futurism.

With all due respect, I find this sort of ‘Bretonian’ manifesto salesmanship a bit damaging. It distorts the diachronic (historical narrative) analysis of the work by not seeing it as a mere concurrent and incidental relationship. I humbly doubt, and I may be wrong, that Spoek Mathambo or Wanuri Kahiu knew what Afro-futurism was when they began. I humbly assume that it was sold to them, as it was sold to me. I may be wrong in this assumption, in effect to point at a sense of inevitability.

As it was for me, it’s one of those cases where you do something and present it to others, and others tell you what you are doing from their own context, like – “hey, you are doing Afro-futurism”, and if you are black and live in Africa it really strikes me as inevitable that you will produce such work in the renaissance context; but that’s not sufficient ground for the Renaissance’s continuum to be distorted.

In Art, there is tension, collaboration and assimilation in the interactions between people of African Descent worldwide. These can be systematically listed and tracked, so that the Art production is correctly interpreted and contextualized. This tension and assimilation must be taken into account; lineage of things must be taken into consideration.

In my opinion, Afro-futurism and other Afro-manifestos cannot entirely and securely stand separately from the African Renaissance because in some aesthetic terms they depend on the cultural excavations of the Renaissance.

Conclusion

True, culture may build on work of other cultures of other cultures of other cultures…

As I have explored my views, I concluded:

a) The use of the prefix ‘afro-’ needs to be minimized for the sake of freeing African imagination. Since I can’t foresee and cover the entire use of the prefix, I am referring to the points that I’ve covered in this essay in relation to art-criticism.  I see it as a necessity for the sake of encouraging imagination to grow, and not be restricted to – or attached to – other pre-existing manifestos and make it harder for ourselves to come up with something unique. Minimizing the ‘afro’ prefix would promote fresh thinking. Afro-manifestos have a “leeching” tinge to them. They are forms of reacting to things instead of all out attempt at ‘originality’ – Black people reacting to other manifestos: Punk (Afro-Punk), Surrealism (Afro-Surrealism) etc.  I haven’t even taken into account that Afro-futurism may be a misnomer, when looked at with the “Futurism” manifesto.

#### 8. Mythologizing the underground railroad is bad.

Cherif Ba ’24, M.A in English at CCNY, “America America’s Enabler: How Colson Whitehead’ s Enabler: How Colson Whitehead’s The Under s The Underground Railroad Contributes to Racial Inertia”, 2024, <https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc_etds_theses/1222>. DA: 9/22/25, DMurph

In reality, The Underground Railroad was a decentralized network of safehouses which abolitionists offered as refuge for ~~slaves~~ (enslaved person) making their way north. It requires no mythologization. The abolitionists were engaged in an active form of rebellion against the state. Whitehead’s omission works to sanitize this fact. His imagined ~~slaves~~ (enslaved persons) did not successfully escape solely based on unbelievable bravery, perseverance, and with the aid of those willing to undermine the state, but with the aid of a magical, steampunk-like contraption. The people involved in this movement were real and deserve to be recognized for their efforts rather than relegated to the realm of science fiction.

#### 9. Ceding labor results in right-wing populist takeover of institutions, which turns case and legitimatizes neoliberalism.

Ruth Dukes 23, Professor of Labour Law and Deputy Director of Research in the School of Law, University of Glasgow, Scotland; Wolfgang Streeck is Emeritus Director of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, Germany, “Labour law after neoliberalism?” Journal of Law and Society, 2023, pp. 1-20, https://doi.org/10.1111/jols.12423

1 INTRODUCTION

Everything that has a beginning also has an end. In the field of labour law and work relations, as elsewhere, the first signs have appeared that the dominance of neoliberal thought and practice in policy- and lawmaking may be waning. In countries including the United Kingdom (UK), the emergence of a new kind of right-wing populist approach to labour law reform is indicated, one that is quite different to the neoliberal approach or approaches of the past four decades. Rightwing populist leaders loudly declare their support for workers’ rights and interests and, in some cases, even follow up on the rhetoric with worker-friendly innovations in labour law and social welfare.1 Emphasizing conflicts of interest between immigrants and nationals, they promise to curb immigration as a fast-track route to improving the working and living conditions of working people.2 In line with wider efforts to centralize power and stifle opposition, they take steps to further disarm already weakened trade unions, removing the last vestiges of their economic and political power. In countries with a corporatist tradition, such as Germany, meanwhile, right-wing populism has so far failed to take hold. There, neoliberal reform, to the extent that it happened, had to be imposed on – if not negotiated with – more or less resilient intermediary institutions that survived exposure to global competition by facilitating coalition building between capital and labour. For now, at least, these institutions stand in the way of a right-wing populist response to the crisis of the neoliberal revival of capitalism. Here, too, however, the principle applies that nothing lasts forever, even if change proceeds more slowly, less visibly, or in a different direction.

Right-wing populism may be conceived, we suggest, as involving the return of the strong state as a visible agent of industrial governance, following its neoliberal withdrawal into the role of a technocratic guarantor of an allegedly non-political free play of market forces. Under neoliberalism, the invisible hand of the state liberated the visible hand of capital and the global firm so that they could perform their miracles on behalf of the common good. Under right-wing populism, the hand of the state reappears to force the market to work in favour of the nation’s loyal citizens to the exclusion of other, less deserving groups.

Proceeding from this perspective, our investigation of contemporary labour law begins with a brief, and necessarily somewhat schematic, look backwards: first, to the pre- and post-war decades and, second, to the ostensible depoliticization of the law under neoliberalism.3 We then consider the possible emergence of a distinctly right-wing populist approach to labour law and work relations, drawing on empirical examples including the UK under Boris Johnson, the United States (US) under Donald Trump, and Poland under Jaroslaw Kaczyński . To shed further light on the specifics of Anglo-American and post-communist right-wing populism, we draw comparisons with the German experience after neocorporatism. In the final part of the article, we take a normative turn and consider what steps ought to be taken by a government intent on addressing class inequalities and restoring the kind of rights that post-war democracies once conferred on workers understood to be industrial citizens. Overcoming the destructive impact of neoliberalism and its latter-day offspring, right-wing populism, will demand, we argue, an extraordinary effort at political mobilization and institution building. In addition to great legal acumen by legislators, courts, and legal scholars, it will require a broad social countermovement against a new level and new forms of commodification of labour inherited from the latest, neoliberal wave of capitalist development.

It may be useful, given the extensive and rather divergent literature on the meaning of rightwing populism,4 to first clarify the sense in which we use the term. Unlike its predecessor neoliberalism, right-wing populism – as we understand it – is not an ideational system or ideology. Rather, it lacks intellectual ambition and is essentially a pragmatic, improvised response to the discontents of neoliberal capitalism caused by the exposure of national societies and politics to the unlimited global markets of the New World Order of the 1990s. In the face of various countermovements against the competitive restructuring of economy and society under international market pressures, right-wing populism seeks a more active role for the nation-state as a way of rendering neoliberal capitalism acceptable. It is in this sense a statist, or etatistic, mode of government that, unlike neoliberalism, does not deny or obscure the controlling role of the state in political economy. What it shares with neoliberalism is its denial of the need for and indeed the legitimacy of intermediary institutions, especially in the regulation of class relations: trade unions and collective bargaining. In this respect, it is fully in line, too, with the eighteenth-century tradition of classical liberalism, which informed the American and French Revolutions: a deep suspicion of intermediary powers disrupting the direct relationship between the state and the individual citizen, and of collective organizations below the state dividing its citizens into classes or ‘factions’.5 In order to make capitalism both safe and governable, right-wing populism instead offers a strong state as a patron protector for the nation as a whole – for all citizens alike, irrespective of class. Like inter-war fascism, which tolerated intermediary institutions only insofar as they had been transformed (‘gleichgeschaltet’, as the Nazis put it) into extended arms of the state, right-wing populism invokes national unity to obscure or neutralize capitalist class divisions. Very likely, it requires a supersized leader with demagogic talent; a figure with whom the nation can be identified, capable of producing powerful rhetoric and credible, if empty, promises.

As an ideal typical definition, the foregoing may not apply in every detail to every government or political party that is generally regarded as right-wing populist. Like post-war liberal democracy and, more recently, neoliberalism, populism takes different forms in different locations. Nor, given the gradual emergence of populism over time, is a stark dividing line to be found, necessarily, between governments that were squarely neoliberal and others that are decidedly populist.6 Elements of populism and authoritarianism can be identified in governments of the last decades of the twentieth century, just as older ways of thinking and doing things survive today.7 Indeed, given the persistence of some rationales and modes of action and decision making, what we might rather expect to see is a marked difference, shaped by the politics and economics of the recent and not-so-recent past, between the right-wing populisms of previously Soviet and Eastern European countries and those of Western states, including the US and the UK. If right-wing populism is rightly understood as a version of post-neoliberalism, we should not expect to find it in countries that were never fully neoliberal, such as Germany.

[TABLE OMITTED]

To be quite clear, then, our concern in this article lies with the politics of labour law and industrial relations at a time when the neoliberal political economy is suffering a crisis of legitimacy, as a result of broken promises of growth and prosperity for all. Rather than investigating holistic historical configurations of economy and society and their different manifestations in different countries, we focus more narrowly on the political management of work and industrial relations and the particular response to the crisis of neoliberal capital–labour relations that we call right-wing populist. In exploring this phenomenon, we do not claim to be dealing with a new social-political formation that is about to displace neoliberalism. Nor do we treat corporatism, neoliberalism, and right-wing populism as rigidly defined social orders that are the same everywhere and at all times, following one after the other in a predetermined historical trajectory. On the contrary, we conceive of all three as varying in time and space, with fluid borders where they may merge into or combine with one another. So that we may nonetheless investigate recent developments in policy and legislation in countries with governments that are widely recognized to be right-wing populist, we begin with ideal typical definitions of the three that emphasize broad differences with respect to their historical location, their mode of governance, and in particular the role of trade unions and collective bargaining and of state social policy, and the driving force in their evolution. These are roughly summarized in Table 1.

#### 10. Err NEG---any alternative OR claim to solve the AFF is contingent on the success of unions.

Begum Icelliler 25, PhD Candidate in Political Theory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, “The Necessity of Labor Unions for Curbing Domination,” Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy, July 2, 2025, DOI: 10.1080/13698230.2025.2520036

I argue that labor unions are not only good but necessary components of a republican model of non-domination. Neo-republicans usually sidestep unions in favor of state-level institutions. Radical republicans are more sympathetic to institutions that empower workers, but unions have often remained implicit in their accounts. I demonstrate the importance of labor unions for a republican polity at two levels. At the micro level, labor unions exhibit three functions that serve to create collective worker power. These functions are epistemic, deliberative, and pedagogical. Through the epistemic function, workers understand themselves as dominated agents, understand the nature of their domination, and believe that collective action can change their circumstances. With the deliberative function, they collectively establish – through discussion, debate, mutual influence and persuasion – political and strategic agendas for curbing domination. Through the pedagogical function, they become equipped with the skills, virtues, and knowledge to fight for their interests and push back against domination. At the macro level, labor unions leverage their distinctive institutional capacity, including resources, institutional knowledge, leadership, and decision-making rules to curb workplace and structural domination. In institutionalizing worker power, labor unions mitigate the constraints on collective action inherent in capitalism.

This paper makes several interventions. It contributes to normative republicanism by bridging the gap between republican diagnoses of domination and institutional prescriptions for non-domination. While radical republicans recognize the importance of class-specific institutions, they don’t provide a roadmap for getting to a more just state of affairs. The problem is that the structural diagnosis of domination stacks all the cards against workers. Radical republicans demonstrate just how systemic the barriers to non-domination are, but their prescriptions presume that those barriers have somehow been overcome. To bridge this gap, they need an account of how institutional labor power is created, and how workers’ organized power can push back against domination.

Beyond republican theory, I begin to take the first steps towards theorizing the role of labor unions for a democratic polity. There is an understanding in many corners of political theory that unions are good for a democratic and egalitarian society, but there has been no systematic theory of how unions serve these ends (Reiff, Citation2020; Umbers, Citation2023). The epistemic, deliberative, and pedagogical functions that I lay out provide an account of how unions uphold democratic accountability and political equality under the conditions of class society. The insights I develop in this paper – about the formation of collective power, the role of institutions in advancing freedom, and the trade-offs between strategic and democratic demands in organizing – have implications that extend beyond republicanism into democratic theory and egalitarianism. Furthermore, while using a republican framing allows me to tap into the conceptual vocabulary of power and domination, I intend the arguments presented in this paper to advance future research on labor unions with different theoretical orientations.

In positing labor unions as agents of change, I am sidestepping other worker organizations like worker cooperatives and workers’ parties. Bridging the gap between diagnosis and prescription requires theorizing at the level of political strategy, paying specific attention to the democratic possibilities available to political agents. If so, then worker cooperatives are not strong contenders. They constitute only a small part of capitalist economies; thus, their emancipatory potential is limited. Moreover, by design, worker cooperatives solve the problem of domination only in workplaces with cooperative structures. They lack ambitions towards organizing the working class as a whole, which limits the extent of the epistemic transformation they might achieve. The scope of their deliberation, too, stops at the management of the enterprise. While workers’ parties do have ambitions towards organizing the working class, they suffer from limited institutional capacity. In multi-party systems, they tend to make up a small percentage of the electorate, often failing to elect representatives. Unlike labor unions, they are also less capable of offering diagnoses and devising strategies tailored to the conditions of workers in particular workplaces and industries. Mainstream political parties hold more promise, as they have greater organizing capacity and political influence. But the extent to which mainstream political parties curb workers’ domination depends on the existence of an independently organized working class. Political parties respond to organized constituents, competing for their votes by proposing policies and legislation that align with those constituents’ demands (Freeman, Citation1985, Chapter 13). In the absence of organized labor, parties have much weaker incentives to uphold the rights and interests of workers (Rosenfeld, Citation2014, Chapter 7). Therefore, it is important to prioritize theorizing how labor unions, as opposed to these other organizations, curb workers’ domination.

#### 11. The AFF never gets off the ground without strong unions.

Begum Icelliler 25, PhD Candidate in Political Theory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, “The Necessity of Labor Unions for Curbing Domination,” Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy, July 2, 2025, DOI: 10.1080/13698230.2025.2520036

The institutional capacity, including rules, resources, and procedures that unions embody addresses a pressing concern expressed by Lillian Cicerchia, who has argued that capitalism puts constraints in the way of building solidarity amongst workers, constraints which inhibit collective action for fighting structural domination (Cicerchia, Citation2019). Workers must act collectively to fight structural domination, but the dynamics of competition and dependency that the labor market creates constrains their ability and willingness to self-organize. Stated in this way, the problem is one that faces all radical republican accounts that see structural transformation as necessary for realizing non-domination. I agree with Cicerchia’s diagnosis, but see a way out of the impasse that is endogenous to capitalism. Unions mitigate capitalism’s structural constraints by facilitating workers’ collective action. Thanks to unions, workers do not have to organize themselves spontaneously. Unions have the resources, institutional knowledge, and decision-making procedures that facilitate collective action. In their absence, organizing would be risky and inefficient. Inefficient because the cost of coordinating their collective action would fall entirely on workers themselves. Tasks such as selecting decision-making procedures and rules, delegating roles, and setting up communication channels are costly, especially in time. Unions absorb and diminish these costs by channeling their institutional capacity for organizing workers towards their desired ends. In their absence, collective organizing would also be riskier due to heightened fear of employer retaliation. Unions operate within a legal framework that, however imperfect, guarantees basic rights of association and speech, so much so that it treats the strike as a legitimate form of collective action despite its violation of basic rights of property and association (Gourevitch, Citation2018). While the legal framework is far from perfect, it still acts as a point of reference for workers to make claims. Take labor unions out of the picture, and collective action would take place on much more precarious grounds.