# 1NC---Kentucky RR---Round 6

## 1NC

### OFF

#### Topicality should rejoin the AFF. The aff isn’t topical:

#### ‘Resolved’ entails legal action.

Words and Phrases 64. Permanent Edition.

Definition of the word “resolve,” given by Webster is “to express an opinion or determination by resolution or vote; as ‘it was resolved by the legislature;” It is of similar force to the word “enact,” which is defined by Bouvier as meaning “to establish by law”.

#### ‘United States federal government’ requires the three branches.

OECD 87. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Council [*The Control and Management of Government Expenditure*, p. 179

1. Political and organisational structure of government

of The United States America is a federal republic consisting of 50 states. States have their own constitutions and within each State there are at least two additional levels of government, generally designated as counties and cities, towns or villages. The relationships between different levels of government are complex and varied (see Section B for more information). The Federal Government is composed of three branches: the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch. Budgetary decisionmaking is shared primarily by the legislative and executive branches. The general structure of these two branches relative to budget formulation and execution is as follows.

#### ‘Should’ requires mandatory action.

Court of Appeals of Arizona, Division 1, Department D. 02. IN RE: the Marriage of Vanessa A. McNUTT, Petitioner-Appellee, v. Shane M. McNUTT, Respondent-Appellant. No. 1 CA-CV 01-0255. Decided: June 27, 2002 https://caselaw.findlaw.com/az-court-of-appeals/1315322.html

¶ 26 The word “should” is most commonly used to express obligation or duty.   See The American Heritage Dictionary 1670 (3d ed.1992).   We conclude that, based on the intent of the Guidelines and the interest of parents in the allocation of the federal tax exemption, the word “should” as used in § 25 of the Guidelines is mandatory rather than discretionary.   See Lincoln v. Lincoln, 155 Ariz. 272, 276, 746 P.2d 13, 17 (App.1987) (holding that the trial court abused its discretion by refusing to allocate the dependency exemption).   Thus, the trial court abused its discretion by failing to allocate the federal tax exemption, and we direct the trial court to allocate the exemption on remand.

#### ‘Substantially’ entails a legal obligation.

Justia 19. Dictionary. “Substantial.” https://dictionary.justia.com/substantial#:~:text=Definitions%20of%20%22substantial%22,a%20legal%20issue%20or%20decision

Definitions of "substantial"

Refers to the essence or core of a matter in legal situations

Not false or imaginary, but based on valid and tangible facts or evidence in a legal context

Having a relevant impact or bearing on a legal issue or decision

#### ‘Strengthening’ must increase regulatory effectiveness.

Cambridge 24. Cambridge Dictionary; 2024; “strengthen,” https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/strengthen

strengthen | BUSINESS ENGLISH

strengthen

verb

[ T ]

to make something more effective or powerful:

A discussion paper aiming to strengthen the EU's competition regime has been circulated amongst commissioners.

Research and development expenses amounted to €76m in the first six months, reflecting the company's desire to further strengthen its technological leadership.

Recent efforts have been made to strengthen the role of outside directors.

strengthen your position/performance/control Mobile operators need to strengthen their control over revenue and profit.

strengthen laws/regulations/mechanisms The Oil Conservation Division is in the process of trying to strengthen regulations over oil waste pits.

#### In the context of ‘bargaining rights’, that entails legal enforcement.

US **Code 20**. Cornell Law School is a renounced Ivy-League institution. “collective bargaining.” Legal Information Institute. 2024. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/collective\_bargaining.

Collective bargaining is the negotiation process between an employer and a union comprised of workers to create an agreement that will govern the terms and conditions of the workers' employment.

The result of collective bargaining procedures is a collective agreement. Collective bargaining is governed by federal and state statutory laws, administrative agency regulations, and judicial decisions.

The main body of law governing collective bargaining is the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). It is also referred to as the Wagner Act, and explicitly grants employees the right to collectively bargain and join trade unions. The NLRA was originally enacted by Congress in 1935 under its power to regulate interstate commerce under the Commerce Clause in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution. It applies to most private non-agricultural employees and employers engaged in some aspect of interstate commerce. Decisions and regulations of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which was established by the NLRA, greatly supplement and define the provisions of the act.

The NLRA establishes procedures for the selection of a labor organization to represent a unit of employees in collective bargaining. The act prohibits employers from interfering with this selection. The NLRA requires the employer to bargain with the appointed representative of its employees. It does not require either side to agree to a proposal or make concessions but does establish procedural guidelines on good faith bargaining. Proposals which would violate the NLRA or other laws may not be subject to collective bargaining. The NLRA also establishes regulations on what tactics (e.g. strikes, lock-outs, picketing) each side may employ to further their bargaining objectives.

State laws further regulate collective bargaining and make collective agreements enforceable under state law. They may also provide guidelines for those employers and employees not covered by the NLRA, such as agricultural laborers.

#### “Worker” requires an employment relationship.

US District Court 07. United States District Court, W.D. Washington, at Tacoma. Cook v. Ocean Gold Seafoods, Inc., No. C06-5562FDB, 2007 WL 4190410, at \*1 (W.D. Wash. Nov. 21, 2007), rev'd and remanded, 334 F. App'x 812 (9th Cir. 2009). WestLaw

The IIA defines “employer” and “worker” and includes standards for determining whether independent contractors should be treated as “employers” or “workers.” RCW 51.08.070 and RCW 51.08.180. A “worker” is defined as follows in pertinent part at 51.08.180:

1. “Worker” means every person in this state who is engaged in the employment of an employer under this title, whether by way of manual labor or otherwise in the course of his or her employment; also every person in this state who is engaged in the employment of or who is working under an independent contract, the essence of which is his or her personal labor for an employer under this title, whether by way of manual labor or otherwise,....

#### 1. Clash: a predictable topic motivates in depth negation and argument refinement. Their interp explodes limits, allows affirmative conditionality, and makes debate a one-sided monologue which turns the case and creates false positives---presumption.

#### 2. Fairness: the NEG should win on average 50% of the time. Expecting fair evaluation in a competitive activity proves their arguments are shaped by a drive to win, and fairness as an axiom possesses intrinsic moral value. Voting neg countervails the insurmountable AFF advantage generated under their vision of debate regardless of the value of the 1AC itself.

### OFF

#### Criticism.

#### Their theory of ongoing self-negation is depoliticizing and makes dismantling capital impossible.

Adolph Reed & Kenneth Warren 26. Professor Emeritus in the Department of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Politics at Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts. Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of English at the University of Chicago. “BLACK STUDIES, CULTURAL POLITICS, AND THE EVASION OF INEQUALITY: The Farce this Time.” DOI: 10.4324/9781003569947.

As that literature demonstrates, the trajectory of black political history has been driven by pragmatic dynamics, co-evolving within matrices of institutions and interests shaped by, and partly shaping, a system of asymmetrical power. That trajectory, albeit constrained or path-dependent, has been and is open-ended within broad parameters; it has not unfolded toward some teleological end. That is, there has been no overarching, transhistorical “black liberation struggle” or “black freedom movement” in effect decreeing or guiding strategic priorities, political directions, issue-selection, or patterns of alliance. Such notions, to the extent that they imply the existence of something like a Racial Oversoul that guides a collective yearning, are literally and quintessentially racist, in the sense that racism is at bottom the belief that “races” are natural populations. The premise that “race” confers distinct sensibilities and aspirations—in the lexicon of Victorian race theory, “racial group ideals”—on such populations only compounds that problem.

Notions like “liberation” and “freedom,” moreover, have no specific content, and assertion that they constitute the telos of black political activity amounts to a demand that we abstract away from historical specificity to affirm an ostensibly deeper truth, which, to make bad matters worse, may as well have come out of a fortune cookie. They are platitudes; anyone and everyone can represent, and understand, their political agendas as consistent with pursuit of those banal ideals. Interpretations based on such platitudes elevate purported continuity over change and assert unitary objectives over time and circumstances, diminishing the significance of concrete distinctions. Because they divest black Americans’ politics of its historicity, they obscure the differences between past and present, and therefore cannot help us make sense of how we got from there to here, from then to now. For that reason, they cannot helpfully inform our understanding of contemporary politics and are worse than useless analytically. The teleological perspective, for instance, produces such fatuities as claims that individuals and tendencies whose programs were sharply antagonistic in their own historical moments—e.g., Booker T. Washington, Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr.—were all nevertheless pursuing the same goal. Rather than examining or explaining distinctions and change, the substantive intent of this approach is more to deny they exist or explain them away.

The black liberation struggle/freedom movement framework originated in a naïve interpretive whiggishness, as a rhetorically more assertive revision of the approach that grounded the academic study of black political thought at its beginnings in the postwar decades. The field took shape in the heyday of consensualism in the study of American political thought and in a context in which dominant race relations discourse posited black Americans as a singular entity. Unsurprisingly, early accounts of black political history commonly proceeded from orienting conceptual categories such as the Negro’s struggle for freedom or equality, which assumed that the object of study was, consistent with the race relations framework, the efforts of putatively representative black “leaders” to define and advance agendas for the race.149 In that perspective, “blacks and whites—or ‘black America’ and ‘white America’—are basic, indivisible units of political interest.”150 And, as Michael Rudolph West points out, black people disappear as citizens. He notes that under the race relations rubric

interests and aspirations of politicians and ministers, workers and businessmen, parents and teachers would no longer be expressed by way of the normal, if messy, institutional channels through which Americans settled their conflicts and competition. Instead they would be mediated through the good offices of “Negro leaders.”151

That is a perspective on black politics that excludes the possibility of politics among black people.

The revisionist construct—liberation struggle and freedom movement are interchangeable—marked a shift in nomenclature and affect that did not alter the interpretive premises that underlay the race relations approach, in particular the notion of the black “community” as a singular political subject. The black liberation struggle/freedom movement framework gained traction in the insurgent mood associated with the Black Power movement and the radical political tendencies it spawned, which also were invested in racial teleology and in theorizing black Americans as a singular political entity. Pro forma rehearsal of the notion that black politics and thought have been impelled by a definitive racial telos was validated as a commonsense trope, a shibboleth, from the 1970s forward in black studies, which, as an academic field, is itself institutionally and intellectually biased toward racial exceptionalism.152

The complex political dynamics that have ensued from the 1965 Voting Rights Act should have exposed the inadequacy of both teleological accounts of black political history and the presumption of a unitary black political aspiration or metaaspiration. Instead, ideological mystification has triumphed over actual experience in both academic and popular discussion of black politics. Trends in black studies elaborated a domain of ersatz politics that enabled turning away from complexities of contemporary life that do not fit easily with the field’s race-reductionist orientation. As African American studies became institutionalized in elite universities during the 1970s and 1980s, the field became a site for contestation over the extent to which familiar political or, in Kenneth Warren’s characterization, “community service” legitimations should continue to ground claims for institutional recognition.153

By the end of the 1980s a turn to a discourse of cultural studies inflected with postmodernist theoretical sensibility promised to harmonize intellectual and political concerns and solidify academic standing.154 This turn appealed in part because its grounding in high theory betokened academic legitimacy. It also came with the aura of an intellectual avant-garde that comported well with the field’s history of extramural legitimations and its association with populist stances within the academy. Of greater political significance, though, was that cultural studies discourse at the same time encouraged promiscuous expansion of the universe of the political, to the extent of defining even scholarly practice in itself as a political intervention.

Insofar as it is rooted in cultural production rather than the realm of public, institutional action, this idea of politics, Warren points out, “tends to get reduced to a matter of meaningful aesthetic expression and the correct exegesis of that expression rather than concerted action directed toward definable goals.” Thus, for example, Peniel Joseph’s history of Black Power leaps from discussion of the Black Panther Party in the early 1970s to a characterization of hip-hop cultural expression as bearer of Black Power’s true legacy—as though the emergence and consolidation of a new, institutionally grounded black political class based on elected officials and functionaries were somehow beside the point in considering Black Power’s practical impact.155 And because it assigns definitive political agency to suppressed populations held to express themselves through indirect, ostensibly apolitical and ultimately Aesopian means, this politics conveniently requires the mediation of expert interpreters to render its “hidden transcripts” publicly recognizable as political expression.156

#### Capitalism causes extinction through climate change, endless militarism, and pandemics.

Dr. Charles Derber & Suren Moodliar 23. Ph.D. in Sociology; Professor of Sociology. Activist & Founder, Encuentro5; Editor, Socialism and Democracy. “The Extinction Triangle: Capitalism, Environmental Destruction, and Militarism.” Dying for Capitalism: How Big Money Fuels Extinction and What We Can Do About It, Chapter 1.

The idea of a global extinction triangle linking capitalism, environmental destruction (including climate change, pandemics, and biodiversity collapse), and militarism (especially nuclear war) will be viewed in many nations, and especially the United States, as itself madness. It is so taboo that most analysts of climate crisis, pandemics such as COVID-19, and nuclear war – and indeed much of the climate and peace movements – avoid the subject of the capitalist system and the need for systemic transformation like the plague.

To take just climate, the notion that the capitalist system drives climate change is highlighted by only a few leading analysts, mainly on the Left. One is Naomi Klein, who argues that extinction arises from “the collision between capitalism and the planet” and that:

We have not done the things that are necessary to lower emissions because those things fundamentally conflict with deregulated capitalism, the reigning ideology for the entire period we have been struggling to find a way out of this crisis. We are stuck because the actions that would give us the best chance of averting catastrophe – and would benefit the vast majority – are extremely threatening to an elite minority that has a stranglehold over our economy, our political process, and most of our major media outlets.2

Klein acknowledges that “autocratic industrial socialism” can also cause climate change, but argues that the ruling capitalist model is the major risk and we need to pursue a democratic “eco-socialism” to save the planet.

Joining Klein in the laser-like but lonely focus on the capitalist DNA driving extinction is the journalist, George Monbiot. He writes that:

Ecologically, economically and politically, capitalism is failing as catastrophically as communism failed. Like state communism, it is beset by unacknowledged but fatal contradictions. It is inherently corrupt and corrupting. But its mesmerising power, and the vast infrastructure of thought that seeks to justify it, makes any challenge to the model almost impossible to contemplate. Even to acknowledge the emergencies it causes, let alone to act on them, feels like electoral suicide. As the famous saying goes: “It is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism.” Our urgent task is to turn this the other way round.3

Monbiot is not joking when he says our most important task is to “turn this the other way round.” While this sounds daunting, imagining systemic change in the global capitalist economy has become essential to human survival. In a period when there is a new awakening about “systemic racism,” we need now to expand our consciousness about our economy, recognizing that we are now living in a new stage of “extinction capitalism.” Only systemic change in our political economy can save us.

Klein is Canadian and Monbiot is British. These are both societies where it has long been possible to offer critiques of capitalism without sounding like a crackpot. Both Britain and Canada have labor or socialist parties, and mainstreamed the idea that large parts of the society should be separated from profitmaking and organized for the provision of public goods. These societies are less complicit than the United States in climate and military policies fueling extinction.

In the United States, mainstream socialist political parties do not exist, and “big government” and universal welfare programs are seen as enemies of liberty, with the exception of an enormous military. Klein and Monbiot have an audience in the United States, but their views that to survive means moving beyond capitalism and especially neoliberalism capitalism runs into huge hurdles, especially in American political discourse, even among liberals. However, we shall see that it is not an impossible dream, and that even a President as moderate as Joe Biden, pushed by people of color, young people, and social movements, has begun to break with neoliberalism and shift toward a public goods economy that could help save the planet.

Crossing the Threshold: Humanity Confronts Its Final Stage

Beginning in the mid-1940s, when the United States attacked Japan with nuclear weapons, we saw the emergence of the first period in human history – now known as the Anthropocene – in which capitalism began to threaten both nuclear and climate extinction. As Noam Chomsky writes: Review of the record reveals clearly that escape from catastrophe for seventy years has been a near miracle and such miracles cannot be trusted to perpetuate.

On that grim day in August 1945, humanity entered into a new era, the nuclear age. It’s one that’s unlikely to last long, either we will bring it to an end or it’s likely to bring us to an end. It was evident at once that any hope of containing the demon would require international corporation ….

It was not understood at the time but a second and no less critical new era was beginning at the same time. A new geological epoch, by now, called the Anthropocene–an epoch defined by extreme human impact on the environment.

The Anthropocene and the nuclear age coincide, a dual threat to the perpetuation of organized human life. Both threats are severe and imminent. It’s widely recognized that we have entered the period of the sixth mass extinction.4

Extinction denialism has limited public awareness of the new stage that arose in the late 1940s but is rooted in the foundations of our economic system. Indeed, capitalism, even as it historically helped build new economic growth and innovation and pulled millions out of poverty, has always created war and environmental destruction. Its historical progress fueled “development” that catapulted the European and American world toward prosperity and material well-being for two centuries. But that huge leap forward also froze into society an unsustainable quest for unfettered growth threatening military and environmental catastrophe and externalized multiple costs onto the peoples of the Global South. The history of capitalist successes disguised latent crises now surfacing in the extinction stage. The historical benefits of capitalism have not disappeared, but their relative value has declined compared to the costs and risks – ultimately of extinction.

The Triangle of Extinction: Mad Money

To save humanity and all life on the planet, we need to understand the new extinction stage as rooted in a causal triangle of three intertwined threats. The only way that humanity will survive is if the world – including all states, peoples, and social movements – come together to dismantle the triangle and create a new circle of sustainable life systems.

Capitalism drives the triangle of extinction. Its very nature, as a system, foments militarism and drives environmental destruction. In Chapter 2, we argue that capitalism’s constant need to expand both its resource base and its markets fosters a militarism to pry open markets and “protect” investments. Territorial expansion across national borders has a corollary in the capitalist dynamic to test and break ecological thresholds, producing the third corner of the triangle, environmental destruction.

However, these two corners – militarism and environmental destruction also feed back into, affect, and reinforce the logic of capitalism. Both create the disasters that leave communities and states turning to capitalists for solutions. The soil fertility depletion, for example, that capitalist agriculture produces, leaves us all more dependent on the petrochemical and agro-industrial corporations selling fertilizers and pesticides. Similarly, capitalism’s inherent instability, particularly in the American case, produces a “military Keynesianism,” using state spending to increase production and profits of military companies. This, in turn, compromises democracy, giving weapons contractors privileged access to the state, rendering the latter dependent on the “market” fortunes of these corporations (Figure 1.1).

As we contemplate this triangle, we must recognize that its dynamics play out in social and historical structures that are profoundly intersectional, ones characterized at the global, regional, and national levels by evolving hierarchies including those of race, gender, class, and states. A more complete picture of the triangle therefore looks like this (Figure 1.2).

This second diagram spells out the variety of forms of environmental destruction and militarism that create existential and extinction threats, whether they be, in Bostrom’s terms, forms of bang, crunch, shriek, or whimper risks. In both pictures, we are adhering to the idea that existential threats – and extinction itself – should not be defined exclusively as total annihilation.

The second picture shows that there are several major existential risks; among the risks in the environmental destruction corner are three well-known ones, climate change, pandemics, and biodiversity loss. But these interact with the others listed, as well as with the many other risks that are less well known. Similarly, militarism produces nuclear, biological/chemical, and cyberwar risks. All of these six varieties of existential risk are extremely important, and all are “systemic” in that they are partly caused and fueled by the United States and global capitalist system. All deserve urgent study leading to emergency transformative change because each of them could create devastating mass death from which humanity might not be able to recover. In addition to these six existential risks, the clusters around each corner of the second diagram also name other risks that may escalate into either existential risks or radically re- duce the quality of life and pose civilizational risks.

In this book, mainly to keep the book shorter, we do not analyze biodiversity collapse, cyber war, or biological war, focusing instead on nuclear war, climate change, and pandemics. If we were to write a second volume, we would analyze with the same sense of urgency the other three incredibly dangerous threats; they are growing and increasingly intertwined with the threats we focus on here.

The arrows in the diagrams reflect causation. Capitalism itself creates a threat of extinction, independent of environmental death and war. But it also causes and fuels the environmental threats of climate change, pandemics, and loss of biodiversity, which multiply the extinction threat. And capitalism, especially the militarized hegemonic form modeled by US neoliberal capitalism, causes war, which further multiplies the extinction threat embedded in the possibility of nuclear war. Climate change, pandemics, and extreme war could arise from other systems than capitalism, but capitalism is a leading cause and accelerator of all these threats, which in turn intensify the extinction dangers of each other. Climate change is a major driver of war and war has become a leading cause of climate change. Scholarship on climate change and broader environmental matters typically recognize several major tipping points and environmental thresholds beyond which abrupt and catastrophic outcomes are to be expected. While we do explore these in depth, we consider these important aspects of the three corners of the triangle of extinction.5

#### The alternative is affirmative instrumentality.

Caroline Levine 23. David and Kathleen Ryan Professor of Humanities, Cornell University. “Toward an Affirmative Instrumentality.” *The Activist Humanist: Form and Method in the Climate Crisis*, Chapter 1.

In this context, a resolute anti-instrumentality actually turns our attention away from the basic conditions that sustain collective life, such as water, food, and shelter. So: what is the alternative? What I propose is an affirmative instrumentality for the aesthetic humanities. I turn here to Potawatomi philosopher Kyle Powys Whyte’s concept of “collective continuance,” a framework for justice that does not dispense with use. Whyte defines collective continuance as “a society’s overall adaptive capacity to maintain its members’ cultural integrity, health, economic vitality, and political order into the future and avoid having its members experience preventable harms.”48 The continuity of food systems is one of Whyte’s examples. Different societies will have different ways of finding, harvesting, and distributing food, but all will treat food in part as useful — necessary to the task of keeping bodies alive over time. Food systems will always be subject to external forces and sudden shocks, such as storms and floods. For this reason, some adaptation and some flexibility will always be necessary. Collectives will also have to plan for the future, not to overharvest a food supply, for example, or to store water for a dry spell. For Whyte, this means moving away from an opposition between conservation and innovation, and between traditional and modern societies, and toward the requirement to plan and build conditions for intergenerational flourishing in the face of inevitable change. A society is just if it prevents foreseeable harms to future generations.

<<TEXT CONDENSED NONE OMITTED>>

This definition allows Whyte to specify the injustices of settler colonialism. Colonizing forces destroy “the capacities that the societies that were already there — Indigenous societies — rely on for the sake of exercising their own collective self-determination over their cultures, economies, health, and political order.” For example, when European settlers built railroads or cleared land for timber and farms, they advanced their own interests while demolishing the conditions for the planting, hunting, and fishing practices developed by Indigenous communities to support collective health, strength, and political independence over the long term.49 One especially violent settler strategy has involved forcibly moving Indigenous groups off traditional homelands where specific foods thrive and then dispensing and withholding food rations as a means of political control.50 California settlers pushed Karuk people away from the river, a long-standing food source, and then criminalized practices that had sustained harvests over generations, including controlled forest burns. Around the world, working systems of collective continuance are violently disrupted by “dams, intensive agriculture, urban development, pollution from industry and other land-use practices, including recreational activities.” The California Department of Fish and Game has in fact repeatedly favored fishing as a leisure activity over Karuk salmon harvesting.51 I rely on Whyte’s definition of “collective continuance” throughout this book. I find it especially powerful because it points to a kind of means-ends thinking that does not immediately fall back into the trap of instrumental rationality. Collective continuance is a just end that is also an ongoing means. That is, collective continuance is the establishment of political, cultural, environmental, and economic conditions that allow collective life-worlds to flourish over time: it is a set of enabling conditions — an infrastructure. To reject all ends as constraining and oppressive is to miss the ways that some fundamental material conditions — clean water, fertile soil, breathable air — are the preconditions for all other activity. Or to put this another way: collective continuance is a capacitating end, a crucial means of affording a range of other ends.52 Another term for collective continuance might be “sustainability.” This term has long drawn fire from humanists and activists.53 As often embraced by businesses as by environmental activists, sustainability implies the continuation of life as we know it, which for many in business and politics includes expectations of ongoing economic growth, competition, and accumulation. If we work to sustain current systems — like global markets and extractive industries — we become complicit with the most rapacious forces on earth.54 Yet in fact, these dominant systems are dramatically unsustainable: the pace of extraction and emission is making the planet uninhabitable for humans and vast numbers of other species. What I want to suggest here is that sustainability is in fact a kind of neutral term: it refers to the capacity to keep any state of affairs going over time. In this sense, sustainability can refer to just or unjust conditions. What climate change has made suddenly clear is that sustaining must be a goal on the left as well as the right. We are now faced with a struggle to keep collective life going at all. Collective continuance describes a genuine sustainability — the vast and urgent project of sustaining collective life over generations. Amartya Sen’s influential “capabilities approach” allows us to see why understanding ends as means is crucial to the work of global justice. Sen turns away from both abstract rights and the distribution of specific resources because these do not recognize or foster cultural heterogeneity: it does little good to have the right to a job if one cannot leave one’s home, and it is not enabling to be offered food that it violates one’s religion to eat. Justice lies in people’s capacity to shape their lives according to a wide range of values. Most unjust are those constraints on specific groups that prevent them from pursuing the full array of possibilities that are available to others. It is unjust to force women to become dependent on male breadwinners for survival, for example, or to allow movement through the streets to remain unsafe for transgender people. For Sen, the ends must remain various: it is not for one group to decide and enforce a particular set of values for others. Although Sen’s model is deliberately pluralist, there is one set of conditions that he singles out as more fundamental than others. He assumes a broad global consensus around “basic capabilities”: everyone needs minimal standards of health, food, shelter, and education as a precondition for achieving other ends.55 These basic capabilities are what draw my attention in this book. They are not particularly complex or interesting to most philosophers, but climate change is threatening all of them right now, including air to breathe and water to drink. As homelands are made unlivable by droughts and floods, as arable land and safe shelter become scarce, and as violent conflicts over resources favor the armed, the powerful, and the rich, vast numbers of people will be forced to sacrifice other cherished ends — such as keeping families together or pursuing an education — for the sake of sheer survival. Whole populations will have to give up their homes in search of food and water. In Sen’s terms, any acceptance of the onrushing consequences of global warming is therefore intolerably unjust. And so, I want to make the affirmative case here for capabilities, that is, a set of ends that are also a means: just and sustainable conditions that are themselves a means to allow a rich variety of lives to continue into the future.56

<<PARAGRAPH BREAKS CONTINUE>>

This definition of justice allows us to draw a precise distinction between right and left politics. The right often justifies some amount of starvation and homelessness as a necessary spur to economic productivity and argues that this is ultimately good for everyone,57 while the entire span of the left, from progressives to radicals, argues that it is unjust to deny the most basic necessities of survival to anyone. In other words, the most important difference between left and right in our time lies not in our relationship to norms and constraints but in the ways we understand enabling conditions — the infrastructures of collective life.

Despite many and very substantive arguments among us, then, the whole span of the left could begin from a shared basic version of justice that is both an end and a means: the urgent work of guaranteeing basic capabilities for all. There is a universalism here, yes, but it is specifically a universalism of enabling conditions.58 This is neither a top-down imposition of particular values nor an invitation to neglect racial and cultural difference. As Enzo Rossi and Olúfemi O. Táíwò argue, the temptation to privilege race at the expense of class or class at the expense of race misses the reason why it is crucial to address the two together, which is that anti-Blackness unjustly distributes the most basic capabilities that should be available to everyone — like adequate nutrition and health care — according to race. They make the case for “embedding antiracist policy within a universalist materialist politics.”59

With collective continuance as our horizon, we do not have to choose between race and class. Nor do we have to choose between brutal exploitation and principled withdrawal, or between acquiescence to the status quo and change so radical that it is literally unimaginable. We can start doing the hard work of figuring out how to build durable material infrastructures for multiple life-worlds to flourish over time. It is true that we will need to break with dominant systems in order to get to new political and economic conditions, but it is my argument here that we should treat such ruptures not as goals in themselves but as waystations on the route to another, more just, set of ends. The struggle to build better conditions will be much harder and messier — much more imperfect and laborious — than resistance and negation, but to borrow Winnicottian terms, it will be a “good-enough” general guide for the political action that is urgent to undertake now, before so many of the globally devastating runaway effects of climate change have become irreversible.

Practical Action

Turning to the project of guaranteeing basic capabilities carries with it a new relation to political action. Instead of gesturing to unrepresentable futures, I ask: what materials, what agency, what strategies can build conditions for collective continuance here and now?

“Pragmatism” has often been a term of opprobrium in the aesthetic humanities, charged with confining us ever further within the brutal systems of the present. José Esteban Muñoz argues against “gay pragmatism” because it reentrenches the “corrupt and bankrupt social order,” and Karen Pinkus warns environmentalists against the “tyranny of the practical.”60 Anything short of pulling this whole rotten society up by the roots is the same as quietism and complacency, wishy-washy liberalism, or worse, sinister neoliberalism. Radical thinkers call for “burning it all down,”61 drawing on a long history of revolutionary thought that has opposed piecemeal reforms in favor of the shattering work of revolution.62 At least as far back as Marx and Engels in 1850, leftists have worried that social welfare programs like health care and social security provide just enough in the way of comfort and security to prevent workers from rising up as an angry mass but without changing fundamental economic structures.63 Accelerationists go so far as to argue that we should hasten the worsening of conditions because desperation is the necessary precondition for revolutionary change.64 The more moderate — and more pervasive — version of this logic, which we can see in such different thinkers as Jack Halberstam and Giorgio Agamben, is that we should not work for small changes or half measures because these will prolong our acceptance of a fundamentally violent and exploitative system.

But what if this refusal of pragmatic action is wrong? What if institutional changes, techno-fixes, and legislative reforms do not necessarily get in the way of large-scale structural change and can in fact serve radical ends? A different tradition of revolutionary thinkers has understood organizing for achievable ends as important, even necessary, steps in a larger revolutionary struggle. For Rosa Luxemburg, famously, the opposition between revolution and reform was a false dilemma: “The struggle for reforms is its means; the social revolution, its aim.” Women’s suffrage was for Luxemburg a crucial example.65 Raymond Williams, too, understood reformist tactics as more effective at mobilizing working-class people than the demand for an immediate smashing of capitalism.66 In our own time, Chantal Mouffe advocates a “radical reformism” as a crucial tool for building a powerful populism of the left.67 Against passionate arguments from fellow radicals, Angela Davis has defended the legal reforms of civil rights and the election of Barack Obama as important pieces of the Black radical struggle, not obstacles to it.68 Similarly, Sherry Wolf, a socialist organizer for LGBTQ rights, has argued for the importance of gay marriage not as a concession to an assimilationist pressure but as part of a larger fight for civil rights for all.69 And here, perhaps surprisingly, is Slavoj Žižek:

In the developed Western societies, calls for a radical revolution have no mobilising power. Only a modest “wrong” choice can create the subjective conditions for an actual communist perspective: whether it fails or succeeds, it sets in motion a series of further demands (“in order to really have universal healthcare, we also need . . .”) which will lead to the right choice. There is no shortcut here, the need for a radical universal chance has to emerge by way of mediation with particular demands. To begin straightaway with the right choice is therefore even worse than making a wrong choice, as it amounts to saying “I am right and the misery of the world which got it wrong just confirms how right I am.”70

The insistence on revolution in wealthy countries actually turns into the opposite — a kind of perfectionism that gets stuck because it does not have sufficient mobilizing power. In this scenario, revolution itself gets in the way of revolution.

Despite many important differences, these thinkers agree that large numbers of people are most inclined to mobilize around immediate causes of suffering and concrete demands. And because revolutions take shape through the collective energy and organization of big groups, practical struggles to transform existing conditions and institutions, such as the fight for labor protections, voting rights, and same-sex marriage, are necessary to the building of the revolutionary left. Or to put this another way: it is a mistake not to recognize the revolutionary potential in any campaign that draws and mobilizes large numbers for expanding or transforming existing institutions, even if these ends are not thoroughgoing transformations of current conditions in their own right, like marriage equality or national health care.

The crucial question here is a strategic one — how social, economic, political, and cultural transformation actually comes about. In place of the fantasy of a spontaneous revolution where, as Bruce Robbins puts it, “Everything Is Suddenly and Utterly Changed,”71 I turn to the revolutionary tradition that invites us all to struggle with imperfect and near-term political ends, to focus on mobilizing, organizing, and planning, and to engage in the unromantic, demanding work of social transformation through all existing channels for political struggle, including elections, battles for legal rights, and institutions like the university and the state. Practical politics is also crucial to building skills, organizations, and collective power on the left, all preconditions for radical structural change.

### OFF

#### Federal Workers CP.

#### The United States federal government should substantially strengthen collective bargaining rights for civilian federal employees.

#### That’s key to restore protections for civil servants, capping extinction.

Loren DeJonge Shulman 22. Lecturer of international affairs at George Washington University, M.P.P. from the University of Minnesota, "Schedule F: An Unwelcome Resurgence." Lawfare. 8/12/2022. lawfaremedia.org/article/schedule-f-unwelcome-resurgence

Best-Case Scenario: Weakening the Civil Service Risk Management Role

Over 2 million career civil servants working across dozens of large and small agencies are hired under the competitive service process. More than 70 percent work in national security-oriented agencies, such as the Defense Department, the State Department, the Treasury Department, and the Energy Department. Many more work in technical, administrative, policy, and legal roles. They do work that often results in news that makes headlines—negotiating sanctions policies, advising on the legality of drone strikes overseas, maintaining relationships with allies and partners, preparing procedures and resources for future pandemic response—and a great deal more behind the scenes that may end up on a cabinet secretary’s or president’s desk for consideration.

Author Michael Lewis describes civil servants’ responsibilities in the “The Fifth Risk,” calling the U.S government the manager of “the biggest portfolio of [catastrophic] risks ever managed by a single institution in the history of the world.” Some are obvious—the threat of nuclear attacks, for example—but most are glacial and opaque, demanding a portfolio of reliable and steady risk managers who can prioritize the nation’s security without fearing for their job security.

Thousands of such “risk managers” who work in policy-adjacent roles would be implicated by a Schedule F policy that removes the civil service protections set out for them in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. Civil servants today are protected against possible political retaliation, coercion, or removal by presidents and political appointees. They must be hired on the basis of relative ability, knowledge, and skills, using fair evaluation metrics. And they are protected against reprisal for whistleblowing.

These rules are frequently shorthanded derisively in (false) assumptions that civil servants cannot be fired. To the contrary, there are set guidelines for when federal employees can be lawfully terminated and disciplined based on performance or misconduct. The antiquated federal hiring process faces similar—albeit fairer—criticism, but its slowness is intended to screen for those who have “a high standard of integrity and trust to promote the interests of the public” and for good reason. Overall, these critiques misunderstand that the competitive hiring process and subsequent protections are what make it possible for civil servants to perform exceptionally, particularly in high pressure, complex policy areas where the government is managing extreme risk on behalf of the country, such as national security.

By protecting them from political reprisal, these rules give civil servants in policy roles the foundation to offer advice that may be tough for presidents to hear, to execute policies with high stakes, to report illegal activity and misconduct as a part of their duties, and to trust that they and their peers owe their first fealty to protecting and defending the Constitution. They do all of this with the confidence that their integrity will be rewarded and protected.

At best, shifting policy-aligned roles to Schedule F roles would have a chilling effect on such policy experts whom we rely on for their unique expertise, candor, and integrity, potentially making them more cautious about the advice they give, the portfolios they support, the risks they take in defending the Constitution, and their willingness to call out malfeasance or bad news.

Worst-Case Scenario: Harming National Security

At its worst, Schedule F will make it possible for presidents to remove thousands of experts who make U.S. global leadership possible. By shifting protected civil servants to at-will employees, Schedule F makes it possible to fire them without the due process currently owed to civil servants. In other words, civil servants could be fired for any reason at all—for giving unwelcome advice, for prior jobs, for being the subject of unsubstantiated accusations of any type, for perceptions of partisan affiliation, or simply for being in a role the president wishes to open up for a loyalist.

Some Schedule F advocates make clear that large-scale removals are under consideration and that removal, not oversight, is their ultimate goal for Schedule F. “Fire everyone you’re allowed to fire,” one commented, according to the Axios reporting. “And [then] fire a few people you’re not supposed to, so that they have to sue you and you send the message.”

Because the policy would also allow replacement of current civil servants without a competitive process, replacements for nonpartisan civil servants could be made without regard to qualification and suitability, or based on partisan affiliation, creating a new kind of political appointee.

The potential loss of talent could be wide and extremely damaging. Axios also reported that, according to sources close to Trump, the former president intends to “go after” the national security establishment as a matter of “top priority,” including those in the intelligence community and State Department. Policy roles that could be reclassified as Schedule F could cut across many high-import areas: Russian defense strategy, Iranian nuclear programs, or Chinese regional security capabilities, among hundreds of other categories. The harm to national security of removing and replacing civil servants—whose work, as we have established, requires expertise, relationships, and clear understanding of risk—with individuals with no required qualification except loyalty to a single individual is self-evident.

But, should a future president pursue this action, beyond missing an endless list of risk portfolio managers, the United States will miss something more fundamental to its success and security: its reliability. American alliances are valuable because of the steady undercurrent of the nation’s civil servants who maintain networks, expertise, and consistency regardless of who inhabits the Oval Office. Despite its turmoil, the American political system is a strong model and international interlocutor because its civil servants serve expertly and well across presidential administrations of any political affiliation. Schedule F, by stifling or removing long-serving civil servants, would make the United States a weaker, less reliable, and less trusted partner.

Why Shouldn’t the President Get a Say?

A president’s desire to shape a policy team, and to be sure it is filled with strong performers who are closely aligned with their views, is understandable. After all, presidents are elected to implement their chosen policy agenda, and having a team around them who can work in support is critical. But presidents already can wield enormous influence over both their closest policy advisers and the most far-flung agency overseers: through the 4,000 political appointees who are named, or removed, at the pleasure of the president. The Schedule F proposal would be an enormous and unnecessary expansion of this already poorly utilized system.

Most administrations never come close to seeing all those politically appointed policy roles filled despite the tremendous access and leverage such appointments bring them. And some presidential teams still struggle to make best use of political appointee and career civil servant partnerships. Rather than adding more chaos and instability with a Schedule F policy, administrations could be maximizing the opportunity that comes with leveraging their career and political leaders together. As noted in a recent Partnership for Public Service and Boston Consulting Group report:

Career executives bring program and policy expertise from their long familiarity with their agencies which can help them manage programs better and work more effectively with external stakeholders and inside actors. Politically appointed leaders can bring energy, risk-taking and responsiveness into an agency’s decision-making process which can improve performance. When leaders are matched with missions, agendas and teams that align with their distinct approaches and perspectives, they can find success in creating a government that is more efficient, innovative and responsive to the needs of the public.

The civil service system is not perfect. The pay system has its origins in World War II. The hiring process, though well-intended, is glacial. The permeability of the system in an era that requires close understanding and collaboration across sectors is limited. But the fundamentals are powerful, and they serve as a critical ingredient to the success of the United States’ global leadership and the sustainability of its democracy.

The U.S. government is able to take on high-risk, high-cost ventures—nuclear security, pandemic response, environmental clean-up, food safety, and more—because civil servants are hired based on qualifications, not party affiliation; give advice based on data and integrity, not fear of reprisal; and owe allegiance to the Constitution, not the president. It needs to stay that way.

#### Non-topical affs shouldn’t be able to permute topical counterplans. It enables aff condo and precludes engagement by allowing the aff to permute out of an impact turn to the 1AC’s modality of structure.

### OFF

#### Antitrust DA.

#### The United States federal government should repeal the statutory basis for collective bargaining rights and classify collective bargaining as anticompetitive conduct under federal antitrust law.

#### Collective bargaining rights sustain monopoly power in violation of antitrust law.

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We’re hearing a lot in recent discussions of Wisconsin’s government workers’ unions about how newly elected Governor Scott Walker plans to limit or end the unions’ collective bargaining rights. Here is a discussion by an opponent of Walker’s move that, as far as I can tell, gets the facts right. Except for one thing. It’s not about rights. It’s about power.

Almost everyone on both sides of the debate uses the term “collective bargaining rights” to mean the right of a union to bargain with an employer who must, by law, bargain in good faith. It also includes the right of a union to negotiate even for employees who don’t want to be members of the union and don’t want to pay dues to the union. So “collective bargaining rights” really mean the power to force others–to pay the dues and/or to join the union and/or to give up their power to negotiate with an employer. So the alleged right is really the “right” to monopolize the supply of labor to an employer. That’s a phony right, not a real right. It’s really a power.

Interestingly, even many economists who defend union monopoly power, recognize that it is monopoly power. Harvard economists and union defenders Richard Freeman and James Medoff, for instance, wrote, “Most, if not all, unions have monopoly power, which they can use to raise wages above competitive levels.”

Economist Morgan Reynolds, who wrote the article on labor unions for the Concise Encyclopedia writes:

Many unions have won higher wages and better working conditions for their members. In doing so, however, they have reduced the number of jobs available in unionized companies. That second effect occurs because of the basic law of demand: if unions successfully raise the price of labor, employers will purchase less of it. Thus, unions are a major anticompetitive force in labor markets. Their gains come at the expense of consumers, nonunion workers, the jobless, taxpayers, and owners of corporations.

#### Absent antitrust, Big Tech cements global digital authoritarianism.

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The cult of the tech visionary

Beyond corporate legal structures, today’s titans of industry are backed by a niche techbro following, wielding power through a mix of economic, technological, and communicative influence. They control the core infrastructure and streams of global information, communication, and personal data, and shape the trajectory of technological innovation. Through corporate mission and vision statements, as well as strategic narratives, these broligarchs have mastered the art of online communication and personal branding, positioning themselves as visionaries shaping humanity’s future.

Fueled by “moonshot” ambitions, hallmarks of Silicon Valley culture, they make sweeping decisions with little oversight, often treating their companies like personal experiments. As unelected or undemocratically elected figures, they see themselves as the ones who can make the difficult calls and change the world according to their own vision. Like digital influencers, they amass followers who seek to emulate their lifestyles, ideologies, and business philosophies. Despite vast criticism, their cultural, political, and technological reach is undeniably global.

Historical precedents for such influence exist, but not on this scale. Today’s tech elite govern through algorithms and platforms used daily by billions. Much like authoritarian rulers, they dictate the terms of participation in digital life, establish policies, and shape the public discourse, all without democratic accountability.

Companies like Meta may even liken themselves to governments. Zuckerberg once claimed Meta is “more like a government than a traditional company.” Given their reach, he isn’t entirely wrong. The problem, however, is that frequently these tech tycoons place personal ambitions above the public good, producing immediate, far-reaching consequences worldwide.

Certainly, not all platforms are the same, but many share similar patterns of centralized, founder-driven power, often guided by the philosophy of “move fast and break things.” Yet, broligarchs don’t act alone; they are backed by a powerful ecosystem of investors, financiers, and political actors that enable and expand their control.

Wealth is power – but not forever

It’s too early to predict the fate of today’s tech giants. But if history can inform the future, power is never permanent. Colonial enterprises eventually collapsed, and empires fell. The early American industrial giants were broken up or restructured. In some cases, descendants rejected the legacies of the companies they inherited.

As the digital world remains a broligarch’s playground, the demand for transparency and democratic regulation is more urgent than ever. Reducing concentrated power requires a strategic and coordinated approach that includes antitrust and competition laws, reforms in corporate governance, transparency and accountability mechanisms, data privacy laws, international cooperation, and investment in local innovation capable of offering alternatives.

Although it is easy to fall into despair, believing that the power held by these individuals is absolute, unquestionable, and unaccountable, even in the short history of modern tech companies, their behavior has shifted in response to public pressure and changing circumstances. Resistance matters. Users, advertisers, employees, internal teams, the press, civil society, regulators, and governments all play a critical role in holding these figures—and the systems behind them— accountable.

#### Absent regulation, Big Tech causes extinction.

Edward Ongweso Jr. 23. Senior researcher at Security in Context, B.A. in politics, philosophy, and economics from Hampshire College. "AI Doesn't Pose an Existential Risk-but Silicon Valley Does." 6/7/2023. thenation.com/article/economy/artificial-intelligence-silicon-valley/#:~:text=It's%20Silicon%20Valley%20and%20its,for%20the%20public%20to%20object

No, the real threat is the industry that controls our technology ecosystem and lobbies for insulation from states and markets that might rein it in. I want to talk about three factors that make Silicon Valley, not one of its many developments, a “societal-scale risk.”

First, the industry represents the culmination of various lines of thought that are deeply hostile to democracy. Silicon Valley owes its existence to state intervention and subsidy, at different times working to capture various institutions or wither their ability to interfere with private control of computation. Firms like Facebook, for example, have argued that they are not only too large or complex to break up but that their size must actually be protected and integrated into a geopolitical rivalry with China.

Second, that hostility to democracy, more than a singular product like AI, is amplified by profit-seeking behavior that constructs increasingly larger threats to humanity. It’s Silicon Valley and its emulators worldwide, not AI, that create and finance harmful technologies aimed at surveilling, controlling, exploiting, and killing human beings with little to no room for the public to object. The search for profits and excessive returns, with state subsidy and intervention clearing the way of competition, has and will create a litany of immoral business models and empower brutal regimes alongside “existential” threats. At home, this may look like the surveillance firm and government contractor Palantir creating a deportation machine that terrorizes migrants. Abroad, this may look like the Israeli apartheid state exporting spyware and weapons it has tested on Palestinians.

Third, this combination of a deeply antidemocratic ethos and a desire to seek profits while externalizing costs can’t simply be regulated out of Silicon Valley. These are fundamental attributes of the industry that trace back to the beginning of computation. These origins in optimizing plantations and crushing worker uprisings prefigure the obsession with surveillance and social control that shape what we are told technological innovations are for.

Taken altogether, why should we worry about some far-flung threat of a superintelligent AI when its creators—an insular network of libertarians building digital plantations, surveillance platforms, and killing machines—exist here and now? Their Smaugian hoards, their fundamentalist beliefs about markets and states and democracy, and their track record should be impossible to ignore.

Despite the constant crowing about how integral technology is to our society, you and I play virtually no role in deciding what gets built, who builds it, how it gets financed, or why it should be built. The small role the public plays largely boils down to ratification through channels that are built to accommodate larger vessels—states, markets, trade blocs, corporations, capital, political party institutions, robust lobbying networks complete with friends and insiders, and more. Powerful participants formulate policy in private and say “do so” to a public that’s actively excluded.

<Condensed>

Contempt for democracy is nothing new, of course. In America, it’s a vaunted pastime that stretches back to the start of our grand experiment. In debates at the Constitutional Convention, James Madison was unambiguous that their government’s goal was “to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority.” The Senate, he argued, would be instrumental to this purpose because that purpose would ensure the creation of “a system which we wish to last for ages.” Still, Madison argued, there was a key tension everyone was overlooking: An increase of population will of necessity increase the proportion of those who will labour under all the hardships of life, & secretly sigh for a more equal distribution of its blessings. These may in time outnumber those who are placed above the feelings of indigence. According to the equal laws of suffrage, the power will slide into the hands of the former. No agrarian attempts have yet been made in this Country, but symtoms [sic], of a leveling spirit, as we have understood, have sufficiently appeared in a certain quarters to give notice of the future danger. Peter Thiel—the billionaire cofounder of surveillance firm Palantir, head of the VC firm Founders Firm, and former board member of Facebook—has lamented similar outcomes. In a 2009 essay for Cato Unbound, Thiel admitted, “I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible.” While the wake of the 2008 financial crisis affirmed to him and his fellow libertarians that “the broader education of the body politic has become a fool’s errand,” Thiel believed the problem went back further: “The roaring 1920s were the last decade where one could be genuinely optimistic about politics but since then we’ve seen a troubling development: Since 1920, the vast increase in welfare beneficiaries and the extension of the franchise to women—two constituencies that are notoriously tough for libertarians—have rendered the notion of ‘capitalist democracy’ into an oxymoron.” Thiel later clarified that he did not believe that disenfranchising women, or any other group, was desirable. He was simply saying suffrage posed a danger to other rights. There’s a clear thread here: Democracy is a virtue to pay lip service to, but there are other more important priorities that, if left on their own, the public will bungle. Such as politics. In the 20th century, American liberals who were concerned about the public’s ability to interfere in political affairs took up the thorny question of how elites should ensure control of America’s unruly democracy. Edward Bernays—Sigmud Freud’s nephew and the “father of spin”—argued in his 1928 book Propaganda that “conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element of democratic society.” Why? Because “intelligent minorities” in our society need to “make use of propaganda continuously and systematically.” At around the same time, Walter Lippmann, a prominent and influential journalist whose major works maintained that reality was becoming too complex for the masses to understand, argues that an inability to distinguish reality from opinion necessitated “the manufacture of consent” to ensure that democracy functioned as desired. A “specialized class” of individuals with the foresight and position to realize those interests would manage those unable to. Among this specialized class, you’d have “public men,” who could ensure “the formation of a sound public opinion.” Lippman wanted to keep the public far from the formation, deliberation, and execution of affairs concerning them. “Public opinion is not a rational force,” Lippman wrote. “It does not reason, investigate, invent, persuade, bargain or settle.” The indolent public’s purpose is to ratify things already deliberated on. The democratic question isn’t something only liberals have been wrestling with, however. In his recent book Crack Up Capitalism, economic historian Quinn Slobodian documents the intellectual history and consequences of the capitalist right’s attempt to liberate capitalism from democracy. Largely drawn from the superrich, these libertarian utopians are searching for the ideal container for capitalism, for zones of exception where holes can be punched into nation-states to undermine the capacity for democracy to interfere with markets. “Champions of the zone suggest that free-market utopia might be reached through acts of secession and fragmentation, carving out liberated territory within and beyond nations, with both disciplining and demonstration effects,” Slobodian writes in the opening pages of his book. The text is littered with examples that span the globe. The book’s case studies pour over the obsession with city-state dictatorships like Dubai, Singapore, and Hong Kong. In one chapter, libertarians spend the 1980s trying to save Ciskei, a South African Bantustan, by forming a commission to explore how best to become “African Hong Kong.” The goal was not to eradicate apartheid but engineering a scenario “inviting in foreign capital while encouraging voluntary segregation from below instead of mandatory segregation from above.” Heading the commission was Leon Louw, a libertarian Afrikaner who founded the Free Market Foundation and styled himself as an abolitionist who could liberate the market from the apartheid democracy. Foreign capital came, not just for the state subsidies but also because of Ciseki’s eagerness to use force on the population. Workers were regularly detained and tortured; the police killed protesters; activists were assassinated; but investors’ needs were satisfied. There are other examples closer to Silicon Valley: Saudi Arabia’s delusional NEOM, former Andreessen Horowitz (a16z) partner Balaji Srinivasan’s grand strategy to put nation-states on the cloud, and Thiel’s dream for similar vision for an escape beyond politics—a retreat into colonizing outer space, cyberspace, and the oceans. There was also the half-baked plan pitched by Stanford economics professor Paul Romer to craft what reactionary blogger Curtis Yarvin called a “colonialism for the 21st century” and apply it to Honduras. A plan, Slobodian points out, that had commentators drooling over its vision and ambition and slick, forward-looking momentum. Peter Thiel ended that 2009 essay with a sweet note saying that “all of us must wish Patri Friedman the very best in his extraordinary experiment.” That experiment was to carve out Romer’s enclave in Honduras with the help of people in Thiel’s orbit, backed by investors from the Future Cities Development group (which Friedman cofounded), and bring the “Silicon Valley spirit of innovation to Honduras.” Other investors came; memorandums and agreements with the government were signed; ideologues spoke about the potential of this experiment to revolutionize sovereignty and governance. Many of these people were also attracted to a project called Prospera, which was built on an island off the coast of Honduras. Prospera was not only built and funded by networks involved in Romer’s adventure but also managed to extract a territorial concession from Honduras and lobby for a law that allowed corporations to set up zones in the country. “While earlier settlers once sought wealth in gold, crops, or railroads, the treasure of zones like Prospera in the twenty-first century was their status as a jurisdiction—their potential as a new place to pick and choose among regulations and licensing requirements,” Slobodian explained. Crucially, the anarcho-capitalists who inspired and helped make this project sought to make a colony where the social contract was “a literal contract” shaped by whatever regulations investors were interested in adhering to or skirting. That sort of perforation was helped along by the fact that Honduras was, like Ciseki, liberal with its use of force. The Honduran government had already spent decades detaining, torturing, and murdering protesters and activists. For libertarians and their utopias, this willingness to use violence against a population that might protest is important, but it is not sufficient for their control. Ciskei collapsed, and Prospera may soon follow. Last year, the Honduran government rejected the law and constitutional amendment enabling Zones for Employment and Economic Development, the corporate enclaves that libertarians have been so excited about. Proponents of the liberal variant of antidemocratic thought are also concerned with ensuring that the public and the instruments responsive to it—like the state—don’t get in the way of their own self interest. As I wrote in my previous article, post-WWII planners and their Silicon Valley tech heirs insist that we can solve various crises (i.e., ecological catastrophe or permanent surveillance systems) only by handing over control to them—the very saboteurs responsible for these crises. Among tech elites, sometimes the general principle that specialized classes alone have the education, position, and inherent ability to act calmly and rationally based on the facts is said loudly. In mid-May, former Google chief executive Eric Schmidt told NBC’s Meet the Press that Big Tech and Big Tech alone should regulate artificial intelligence. “When this technology becomes more broadly available, which it will, and very quickly, the problem will get worse. I would much rather have the current companies define reasonable boundaries,” Schmidt said in the interview. “There’s no way a non-industry person can understand what’s possible. It’s just too new, too hard; there’s not the expertise. There’s no one in the government that can get it right. The industry can broadly get it right.” Schmidt has spent years ringing the alarm bell about artificial intelligence, arguing that it will be a key geopolitical fault line and that we risk ceding it to China. In an essay for Le Monde, tech critic Evgeny Morozov dives a bit deeper into Schmidt and connects him to Gilman Louie—a key figure in the coming US-China cold war (Cold War 2.0) who worked with the Air Force, ran the CIA’s venture capital fund, worked with Schmidt at the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence, and now runs the Schmidt-backed America’s Frontier Fund. “Ironically, Gilman Louie, the man who leveraged Cold War 1.0 to hype up Tetris, is now leveraging Cold War 2.0 to hype up AI. Or perhaps vice versa,” Morozov writes. “In today’s Washington, these two operations have become almost indistinguishable, and the only certainty is that all that hype will be monetised.”

<Integrity returns>

Scaremongering about AI is a tactic to sell more AI. But it’s also part of a larger campaign that poses an actual threat to all of us. A deeply entrenched contempt for democracy, a desire to use the state as a vessel for reshaping society into something more amenable to unregulated development and profit-seeking, and a long-standing obsession with surveillance and social control will deliver eye-watering returns for a few. It will also leave us with a world dominated by innovative extraction, violent borders, robust and dynamic repression, and streamlined violence. Don’t fall for the trick: Silicon Valley, not AI, is the existential risk to humanity.

### Case

#### 1. Presumption.

#### a) The aff can be practiced and advocted for outside of the debate, reducing the importance of this individual ballot.

#### b) Debate’s adversarial and competitive nature means that teams are incentivized to learn how to beat the aff, not meaningfully engage with it.

#### c) Pure affirmation of actualizing space is a symbolic gesture that papers over material commitments to solve antiblack violence.

Ryan Carroll 24. PhD. Student in English and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina. “The Future Isn’t Now: Impossible Action in Political Scholarship.” Spring 2024. https://csalateral.org/section/aporias/the-future-isnt-now-impossible-action-political-scholarship-carroll. Found by Krissy; Cut by Youngster; Read by Song.

In a dark world, it’s exhilarating to dream of possibility. A certain vein of literary and cultural critique is founded on this principle, proposing that there is something politically productive in imagining otherwise. Such scholarship, which stretches across a variety of different methodological positions, is readily recognized by its gestural rhetoric—its stakes are to inaugurate new paradigms, shed light on potential ways of being, envision other worlds. In one way, this ethos makes sense: radical politics should point the way to something better than death and destruction. But it seems that the thrill of possibility-creation has produced a new aporia for critique. The affect that undergirds possibility politics—the ecstasy of imagining otherwise—runs the risk of obscuring the obstacles between critique and action and thereby making critique more indulgent than generative, more projective than powerful, more self-soothing than edifying.

The politics of possibility descends from a critical-theoretical turn toward speculative thinking in the past two decades. José Esteban Muñoz’s Cruising Utopia (2009), a seminal text in queer studies, is perhaps the most salient example of such thought: Muñoz posits on the first page that queerness is emblematic of “an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world.”1 For him, queerness is a “warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality” and studying queer aesthetics unveils “blueprints and schemata of a forward-dawning futurity” for human sociality.2 But Cruising Utopia is not alone in its speculative disposition. A similar maneuver appears, albeit with different disciplinary coordinates, in Saidiya Hartman’s “Venus in Two Acts,” which positions Hartman’s method of critical fabulation as a means for “exploiting the capacities of the subjunctive (a grammatical mood that expresses doubts, wishes, and possibilities)” to tell provisional histories of transatlantic slavery.3 Though slavery’s archive is inevitably fragmented, possibility lingers in the act of critical intervention: aporia births vitality, if only temporarily. Hartman’s later Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments (2019) offers a less qualified version of this historical-poetical method: excavating “the nothing special and the extraordinary brutality” of fin-de-siècle Black life, she says, produces a “chorus” which “propels transformation . . . is an incubator of possibility, an assembly sustaining dreams of otherwise.”4 While Hartman does not avow precisely the same utopianist commitment as Muñoz, possibility is still a galvanic force of her work; critique’s work seems to be its possibility-making.

Nor are appeals to possibility confined to what we loosely (and/or arbitrarily) call critique. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s “Paranoid Reading, Reparative Reading,” for instance, posits the titular reparative method not as an aesthetic practice for the well-lettered but as a way to “assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have the resources to offer an inchoate self.”5 What we “learn” from such objects, she argues, is the “many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture.”6 Tucked into Sedgwick’s language is an appeal to criticism’s possibility-making faculty: her reparative politics is about discerning what makes it possible for an individual or collective to survive in a hostile world. Even Rita Felski’s The Limits of Critique, the most stridently anti-critique entry in literary studies’ so-called Method Wars, nestles an appeal to possibility within its political pragmatism. Though Felski dismisses critique’s supposed utopianism, she asserts that her aim is to find a method, and thus a politics, open to “the differences, variations, contradictions, and possibilities in social conditions as we find them.”7 The problem, for Felski, is about how literary methodology conditions our ability to judge which resources for possible worlds are contained in which political environments—not so different from Muñoz or Hartman, in an odd sense.

I make this critical tour to highlight that possibility politics is not a narrow strain of thought. On the contrary, as Caroline Levine argues, critical attention to potentiality stretches across theoretical schools and methodologies (Levine herself cites Derek Attridge, Jonathan Kramnick, and Roderick Ferguson as noteworthy examples,8 though we might also think of Ernst Bloch,9 Theodor Adorno,10 Herbert Marcuse,11 or, for that matter, the lengthy Hegelian philosophical tradition from which they emerged—all of which is incredibly productive to consider but which there isn’t space here to discuss).12 This sort of scholarship asserts that cultural materials, whether in themselves or upon being activated by scholarly engagement, contain some way of coordinating possibilities and envisioning new worlds. By extension, critical theory’s competency is to make these possibilities explicit. In the ecosystem of revolutionary vocations, the scholar is imagined as a medley of prophet and strategist, herald of the possible and presager of action.

But the critique that’s followed Sedgwick, Hartman, and Muñoz, I think, has become yoked to an affect that risks entrapment in the promise of possibility. Although it’s easy to indulge in rapturous accounts of scholarship’s worldmaking power, it’s also easy to forget that there’s no necessary connection between a hopeful affect and an ability to enact possibilities. As Patricia Stuelke has remarked, “To imagine that things are broken and can be fixed with the best of intentions, with a labor of love, with a new way of reading . . . is a category error that neither the planet nor any of its inhabitants can afford.”13 Although we can revel in imagining the construction of a better world, there’s no guarantee our blueprints reach the builder—and, even worse, the binge of hope can lead back into despair.

To be clear, I am not taking issue with the speculative scholars I’ve considered so far—their work is illuminating, and in fact, it’s precisely my belief that we haven’t read them well enough. Instead, our readings have led to a kind of ersatz utopianism that can occlude the real demands of activist commitment. Although a variety of material factors stand in the way of scholar-activism, from institutional complicity to prohibitive constraints on time,14 the affect of possibility scholarship risks painting over these difficulties. The stakes are high: if we do not recognize the feelings that structure our scholarly political commitments, scholarly activism will be nothing more than a language game.

It begins when I (you, we) inhabit the world. The world feels terrible. For reasons related to content oversaturation, to my own uncertainty in what I do, to my own struggle to commit to doing the work of making the world better, and to the multiple cultural phenomena grouped under the rubric of “crisis,” things feel bad.

Then, I open a book. A special book. I read a pithy, punchy, compelling voice: English departments and/or the humanities and/or higher education and/or liberal democracy and/or global ecology is/are in a state of crisis, the kind of crisis that seems as crushing to read about as it is to experience (a vulgar abstraction, but a common one for many in the academy). Then, somewhere in the book, perhaps in its introduction or methodological outline, maybe in the theoretical intervention or maybe in the rhetorical flourish that hints at its final chapter, there’s something else. Literary studies itself, I learn, represents hope. I realize, carried along by the beaming light of incandescent language, that reading can sculpt the flames of possibility. Suddenly, it seems thrillingly simple to touch another world. I learn that I can build with literature, that the past contains tools to reconstruct the future, that I belong to a class of heroes prophesying visions to construct a new world. I just need do what I’m already good at doing: write about books.

I tell my colleagues about the text, mention it in conference panels, drop references in essays, content myself with knowing that I am on the frontlines of something new. Possibilities seize me: perhaps I will use Wilkie Collins’ The Woman in White (1860) for mutual aid communications or Virginia Woolf’s Between the Acts (1941) to organize a community collective or Morowa Yejidé’s Creatures of Passage (2021) for creating collective historical records.

But I don’t.

I might fire off an email or donate money to a bail fund or germinate an idea for a discussion group, but eventually, the ecstasy fades into the murmur of everyday life. I return to research and teaching, and the grand possibilities I excavated from my literature of choice fade away. I tell myself it’s okay (the real work I do is the care work of teaching, anyway). I open my phone. I’m slapped in the face with content overload, crisis porn. Things feel bad. It begins again.

In part, this is a story about one person (me) with their own foibles (mine). Simultaneously, however, this is also not about just one person. This is about the kinds of feelings that thread across our intellectual engagement, the affects that shape how we read and speak and think about acting. My intent here is not to engage in what David Kurnick has thoughtfully called a “moralized characterology,” a rhetorical maneuver implying that the crisis in the humanities has something to do with particular kinds of psyches.15 To be clear: whether or not the humanities wither under institutional austerity will have little to do with the affect of our possibility politics. Yet though our psyches won’t determine critique’s institutional fate, whether and how we’re able to put our gestures into action has entirely to do with our affective disposition, with our ability to convert everyday feelings into political commitments.

And so this is not just a story about me. I suspect that you, too, have read a work that’s made you hope, that’s given you the thrill of possibility, and that has dropped you back into hopelessness. I suspect that you’ve read a paper or heard a conference presentation that contends with unspeakable violence—white supremacy, homophobia, imperialism—and, blithely invoking possibility scholarship (often that of Muñoz or Hartman), paves over the difference between gesture and action.

This mode of scholarship, I contend, risks producing the kind of the affect that Lauren Berlant terms cruel optimism: “When something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing.”16 For Berlant, this kind of relation is constituted by “attachments that organize the present,” rather than ones that responsibly relate to the future.17 The connection might seem odd, given that possibility politics professes to be about futurity—but despite its notional commitment to the future, the affect of possibility politics is inevitably bound up with how one feels now. Inevitably, any critical maneuver will draw from and produce specific affects in those who make and read them; in the case of possibility politics, it isn’t just about the future we imagine but our disposition to the present, the way that dreams of possible worlds can soothe the psychic pain of contemporary political violence. But—and this part is crucial—despite its power to energize the writer and reader, to soothe the psychic pain of living in an ailing world, scholarly possibilities have no necessary relation to future-oriented action. Gestures toward possibility do not, for instance, fix the fact that, as sociologist Francesca Cancian has highlighted, to be a professional academic and committed activist are each so demanding as to preclude one another.18

Now, we might tell ourselves, it’s hardly fair to think of theory in the same way we think about concrete action like community agriculture, wealth redistribution, or eviction disruption. Theory, we know so well and are so happy to explain, belongs in a dialectic with action; theory’s purpose is to offer provocations rather than engage in concrete solution-making, and it demands non-instrumentalized thinking to do so.19 But we shouldn’t forget that dialectic demands moving between theory and action, not simply flinging possibilities into a void and hoping something will happen. As Nicholas Whittaker has incisively argued of “undercommons” scholarship: “it might seem as though all the undercommons has to offer us are declarations: screeds and manifestos and reading groups and open-access journals. If David’s stone cannot fell Goliath, what good are his words?”20 Ultimately, if critique only produces hypothetical possibility and inebriated hope, then it isn’t praxis—it’s escapism.

#### 2. The 1AC’s conception of labor mystifies the extraction of labor that is inevitable AND magnified by a focus on the politics of the self.

Dr. Jennifer C. Nash 24, PhD, Jean Fox O'Barr Professor, Gender, Sexuality, & Feminist Studies, Duke University, "Black Feminist Self-Help: Or, Notes on the Genres of Contemporary Black Feminist Political Life," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society, Vol. 49, No. 3, pg. 559-561, Spring 2024, UCP. [italics in original]

If the self-help genre puts its reader to work, Black feminist self-help does as well, even as it hides that work, or recasts it as transformation, care, or simply politics. It insists that its reader can be different, that its reader *should* be different, and that the task of achieving this difference is not extractive neoliberal labor but instead Black feminist politics. In other words, the labor that it demands of its reader is never called “work” because Black feminist popular writing champions anti-work modes of living and resists capitalist ideas of productivity. And while there are no “catchy three-step plans”—to use the phrase Cooper mobilizes to describe and disavow self-help (2018, 1)—in the archive I examine here, there are guides and exercises in self-transformation that emphasize that Black feminism is a mode of living, that Black feminist political life is constituted by a commitment to living differently and by a self that has a new—or renewed—orientation to life itself. In other words, what I want to think about here is how political life has become narrowly construed to be constituted by the work of self-transformation. My contention, of course, is not that self-transformation is apolitical; instead, my interest is in thinking about the constriction of the space of the political by the Black feminist self-help genre.

And, of course, self-help sells. The books that I study here are immensely popular: all four have appeared on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and they are collectively part of a post-2020 racial “reckoning,” a literary moment marked by an intense interest in race generally, in Black writers more specifically, and in Black women writers particularly.2As one bookstore owner noted when describing the proliferation of post-2020 books on race and racism: “It’s a tsunami” (Kwame Spearman, quoted in Harris 2021a). Black feminist writers have become the quintessential crossover acts, showing that Black feminist theoretical concepts like intersectionality can not only be “translated” to a popular audience but are articulated, transformed, and developed in a broad public sphere. And this means that Black women writers enjoy a new visibility, even as the visibility they have been afforded is tremendously limited. This is also a moment marked by a relatively recent celebrity culture of academia—particularly Blackademia—largely made possible by Twitter, where platforms are garnered by exchanging ideas pithily, acquiring followers, and making concepts accessible and rapidly “travelable.” It is increasingly hard to discern the distinctions among scholar, activist, and social media influencer, and it is abundantly clear that Twitter and Instagram are sites of Black feminist teaching as significant as the university classroom and the local independent bookstore.3 Thus, the books that I write about here exceed the text. Unlike hooks’s *All about Love*, which was published in a pre–social media moment, these books are supported by rich social media archives where authors speak with and back to readers and connect the work on the page to larger, still-unfolding cultural conversations about the intersections of race and gender.4

In this article I make two arguments about the contemporary Black feminist self-help genre. First, these books present a simple promise: you can feel better, and the work of feeling better is politically radical. To invest time, energy, and labor into feeling better, these books tell us, is transgressive precisely because we inhabit a moment marked by the relentless violence of capitalism, anti-Blackness, and misogyny, and by the intersecting catastrophes of pandemic-time, ecological disaster, and the collapse of democratic institutions. Second, this promise is articulated in a way that has become deeply seductive: through the voice of Black women. I have argued elsewhere—both in my own work and in collaborations with Samantha Pinto—that Black women have become key symbols of moral certitude for feminist theory, practice, and politics (Nash and Pinto 2021). The texts that I study here permit their readers to signify their allegiance to the mantras of the moment—including *cite Black women*, *believe Black women*, and *let Black women lead*—by allowing Black women writers to steer readers toward feeling differently. These texts mobilize Black women’s imagined truth-telling capacity—what Cooper calls “homegirl interventions” (2018, 5)—to teach their readers not just to feel *differently* but to feel *better*. Thus, these popular texts are part of a long and troubling tradition of Black women positioned as our collective affective teachers whose bodies are called upon—and now offer themselves up—to instruct us on how to feel better and how to feel correctly. This practice of Black women presenting their bodies as pedagogical spaces unfolds even as many of these authors name refusal—particularly of the extraction of Black women’s labor—as a hallmark of Black feminist practice. Hersey, for example, reminds her Twitter followers “Black women are not the free help desk” (2022a). But these very same texts offer themselves as help desks to their readers. Careers are launched, profits are garnered, and bestsellers are made precisely because Black women writers—under the mantle of Black feminism—present their bodies, experiences, and wisdom to instruct readers on the possibilities and politics of self-improvement.

This article also aims to probe the particular and particularly narrow conception of the political that undergirds this genre. If all feminist work might be understood as a form of self-help, as championing “the personal is political” and suggesting that political transformation begins with the self, Black feminist self-help insists that political transformation is constituted by self-improvement, that self-work is synonymous with political work, that feeling better is political and politically radical.5 The idea of the radical promise of self-improvement permeates this archive, from the transformative promise of self-love in Taylor’s *The Body Is Not an Apology* to the resistant potential of simply lying down in Hersey’s *Rest Is Resistance*. But what happens when our conception of political work begins and ends with the self? Or when the idea of the self becomes so capacious that it becomes the singular object around which the political—and the possibility of political transformation—is organized? How, if at all, might Black feminist self-help advance a capacious conception of the political that insists that self-work is not the totality of political labor?

#### 3. Structures thrive on the individual feeling of reclaimed agency, which trades-off with and precludes mapping the fissures within capitalism and opportunities for revolution.

Ingolfur Bluhdorn 07. PhD, Reader in Politics/Political Sociology, University of Bath May 2007. “Self-description, Self-deception, Simulation: A Systems-theoretical Perspective on Contemporary Discourses of Radical Change,” Social Movement Studies, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1–20, May 2007, google scholar.

Yet the established patterns of self-construction, which thus have to be defended and further developed at any price, have fundamental problems attached to them: ﬁrstly, the attempt to constitute, on the basis of product choices and acts of consumption, a Self and identity that are distinct from and autonomous vis-a`-vis the market is a contradiction in terms. Secondly, late-modern society’s established patterns of consumption are known to be socially exclusive and environmentally destructive. Despite all hopes for ecological modernization and revolutionary improvements in resource efﬁciency (e.g. Weizsa¨cker et al., 1998; Hawkenet al., 1999; Lomborg, 2001), physical environmental limits imply that the lifestyles and established patterns of consumption cherished by advanced modern societies cannot even be extended to all residents of the richest countries, let alone to the populations of the developing world. For the sake of the (re)construction of an ever elusive Self, in their struggle against self-referentiality and in pursuit of the regeneration of difference, late-modern societies are thus locked into the imperative of maintaining and further developing the principle of exclusion (Blu¨hdorn, 2002, 2003). At any price they have to, and indeed do, defend a lifestyle that requires **ever increasing social inequality, environmental degradation, predatory resource wars, and the tight policing of potential internal and external enemies**.14 For this effort, military and surveillance technology provide ever more sophisticated and efﬁcient means. Nevertheless, the principle of exclusion is ultimately still unsustainable, not only because of spiralling ‘security’ expenses but also because it directly contradicts the modernist notion of the free and autonomous individual that late-modern society desperately aims to sustain. For this reason, late-modern society is confronted with the task of having to sustain both the late-modern principle of exclusion as well as its opposite, i.e. the modernist principle of inclusion. Very importantly, the conﬂict between the principles of exclusion and inclusion is not simply one between different individuals, political actors or sections of society. Instead, it is a politically irresolvable conﬂict that resides right within the late-modern individual, the late-modern economy and late-modern politics. And if, as Touraine notes, late-modern society no longer believes in nor even desires political transcendence, the particular challenge is that the two principles can also no longer be attributed to different dimensions of time, i.e. the former to the present, and the latter to some future society. Instead, late-modern society needs to represent and reproduce itself and its opposite at the same time. If considered within this framework of this analysis, the function of Luhmann’s system of protest communication, or in the terms of this article, the signiﬁcance of late-modern societies’ discourses of radical change becomes immediately evident. At a stage when the possibility and desirability of transcending the principle of exclusion has been pulled into radical doubt but when, at the same time, the principle of inclusion is vitally important, these discourses simulate the validity of the latter as a social ideal. In other words, latemodern society reconciles the tension between the cherished but exclusive status quo – for which there is no alternative – and the non-existent inclusive alternative – on whose existence it depends – **by means of simulation**. The analysis of Luhmann’s work has demonstrated how the societal self-descriptions produced by the system of protest communication, or late-modern society’s discourses of radical change, fulﬁl this function exactly. They are an indispensable function system not so much because they help to resolve late-modern society’s problems of mal-coordination, but because by performing the possibility of the alternative they help to cope with the fundamental problem of self-referentiality. In this sense, late-modern society’s discourses of sustainability, democratic renewal, social inclusion or global justice, to name but a few, suggest that advanced modern society is working towards an environmentally and socially inclusive alternative – genuinely modern – society, but they do not deny the fact that the big utopia and project of late-modern society is the reproduction and further enhancement of the status quo, i.e. the sustainability of the principle of exclusion. Protest movements as networks of physical actors and actions complement the purely communicative discourses of radical change in that they bring their narrative and societal selfdescription to life. Whilst the declarations of institutionalized mainstream politics cannot escape the generalized suspicion that they are purely rhetorical, social movements provide an arena for the physical expression and experience of the authenticity and reality of the alternative, or at least of the reality of its possibility and the authenticity of the commitment to its realization. For late-modern individuals who seek to find their elusive identity in ever new acts of consumption, protest movements offer an opportunity to experience themselves as autonomous, as subjects, as actors, as distinct from and opposed to the all-embracing market. Social movements and the more or less institutionalized discourses of radical change thus transmute from germ cells of the alternative society into reserves of alterity, or theme-parks for simulated alterity (Blu¨hdorn, 2005a). This interpretation reflects Luhmann’s suggestion that contemporary discourses of radical change are not so much about the actual implementation of radical social change as about the ‘symbolism of the alternative’. And it nowappears that the societal self-descriptions they generate fulfil a vital function not in so far as they increase the reflexivity of late-modern society but in so far as they are arenas for the experience of simulated subjectivity, duality and modernity. They provide an opportunity to reconcile the cherished but exclusive status quo with the equally cherished but unsustainable belief in the inclusive alternative. Protest movements and discourses of radical change are the implantation of the alternative into the system itself, or the simulated reproduction of alterity fromthe system’s own resources. As the real alternatives to the system are utterly unattractive, disappearing fast, and indeed resisted and annihilated at any price, this internal simulation of alterity is becoming late-modern society’s only remaining way of coping with the threat of self-referentiality.

#### 4. Specifically, their debt-based method accomplishes nothing

Conor Heaney 17. Lecturer in Liberal Arts & Politics, King’s College London. “Stupidity and Study in the Contemporary University,” La Deleuziana, No. 5, 2017.

With these notions briefly defined, Harney and Moten’s notion of study will be much clearer. For study occurs in a state of permanent debt, through the mutual elaboration of debt, in the undercommons. Harney and Moten’s concept of study pertains to those practices of thought which are not subsumed within logics of individualisation and competition – study is not “knowledge production” in the sense promoted by the contemporary university – and takes place where the undercommons «meet to elaborate their debt without credit» (2013: 68). Study, as such, occurs outside of regimes of credit, in which debt is always calculable and payable (that is, within calculative regimes of stupidity); it is also an amateur practice, unprofessional. In or though study, the undercommons do not acquire credit, graduate, articulate interests, nor do they construct policies (indeed, professionalisation and policy are attempts to capture the capacity to study that the undercommons have). So what do they do, those «committed to black study in the university’s undercommon rooms?» (2013: 67).

They study without an end, plan without a pause, rebel without a policy, conserve without a patrimony. They study in the university and the university forces them under, relegates them to the state of those without interests, without credit, without debt that bears interest, that earns credits. They never graduate. They just ain’t ready. They’re building something down there. Mutual debt, debt unpayable, debt unbounded, debt unconsolidated, debt to each other in study group, to others in a nurse’s room, to others in a barber shop, to others in a squat, a dump, a woods, a bed, an embrace. (2013: 67-68)

What informal space is not a site of study? A site of planning? Study surrounds us. Despite regimes of credit, despite policies to capture the undercommons into accreditation and professionalism, which is to say despite the professionals’ attempt to locate and make policy to address the undercommons. Policy as instruction from above; policy as correction (curriculum as policy; curriculum as professionalisation (Hall and Smyth 2016; Heleta 2016)). Planning, launched from anywhere («any kitchen, any back porch, any basement, any hall, any park bench, improvised party» (2013: 74)), is a continuous experiment with the informal, it is «the ceaseless experiment with the futurial presence of the forms of life that make such activities possible» (2013: 75). Study as futurial and experimental being-with-others. As such, the university is, no doubt, a place of study, but study is by no means of the university; indeed, try as it might (through governance, through policy, through curriculum), the university cannot fully exclude study (2013: 113). Will study be possible in the university-to-come, under the governance of our contemporary systemic stupidity?

In study - where debt is permanent, inexpiable, and always being elaborated – one can lose track. This, in fact, is necessary for study’s open-endedness. When we enter study, we forget our debts, and «begin to see that the whole point is to lose track of them and just build them in a way that allows for everyone to feel that she or he can contribute or not contribute to being in a space» (2013: 109). An ongoing experiment with the informal, “with and for” each other in their projects of study. No longer simply “in but not of” the university, but also “within and for” the undercommons of the university. Not that this movement is without its difficulties:

When you move further out into an autonomous setting, where you get some free space and free time a little more easily, then, what you have to attend to is the shift, for me, between the within and against – which when you’re deep in the institution you spend a lot of time on it – and the with and for. And that changes a lot of shit. All those things are always in play. When I say “with and for,” I mean studying with people rather than teaching them, and when I say “for,” I mean studying with people in service of a project, which in this case I think we could just say is more study. (2013: 147-148, my emphases)

How to be “with and for” is thereby itself a project of study. The undercommons are still working out what it means to be with and what it means to be for. It is through this point that we can describe why Harney and Moten will often use the term prophetic organisation when discussing the activities of the undercommons. That the undercommons participates in prophecy is another aspect of their lack of professionalism and naïvety. Their planning is of a prophetic type; of, as I have already noted, an experimental and futurial type. Administration, policy, and governance has no time for planning, for prophecy, for futural projection; it foresees risks, governs, and controls, such is its stupidity. It demands knowable objects: the state, economy, civil society, populations, border flows and security risks. Such are the proper objects of academic research, governance, and integration into the flows of stupidity. In study, there are no objects to be known, but rather experiments to conduct. Or, to put this slightly differently, the “object” of study is refigured as «future project» (2013: 27); study involves an investment or commitment to the future. This is not at all to say that there undercommons have no objects of study, that they do not focus on this or that problem, project, or experiment. In study, the undercommons organise around problems, around projects of study. However, through this (prophetic) process, they do not articulate a position, enunciate interests, or clamour for representation. They just keep on studying, planning, project-ing, creating, problematising. Too open, too playful (2013: 131), the undercommons are always exceeding any declaration of interest or representation, always slipping away from correctional institutions (the university, the prison):

Politics proposes to make us better, but we were good already in the mutual debt that can never be made good. We owe it to each other to falsify the institution, to make politics incorrect « ... » We owe each other the indeterminate. We owe each other everything « ... » We are the general antagonism to politics looming outside every attempt to politicise, every imposition of self-governance, every sovereign decision and its degraded miniature, every emergent state and home sweet home. We are disruption and consent to disruption. We preserve upheaval. Sent to fulfill by abolishing, to renew by unsettling « ... » we got politics surrounded. We cannot represent ourselves. We can’t be represented. (2013: 20)

#### 5. Utopian thinking is a vital political project. Rejecting it reinscribes oppression.

Polina Whitehouse 25. Doctoral student in political theory at Oxford. "The Left Needs Utopian Thinking." Jacobin. 9-17-2025. https://jacobin.com/2025/09/utopia-socialism-marxism-feminism-owen

What Use Is Utopia?

If we acknowledge that Marx and Engels were unfair to the Owenites in particular and to utopians in general, we still face the question of what, if anything, utopian thinking can offer us today.

First, as Mark Fisher pointed out, succumbing to a sense of doom reinforces the status quo. A detailed vision of a bright future can have denaturalizing, uplifting, and mobilizing effects, helping to shake the sense that things can only be as they are (or worse) and to motivate people to collective action. Second, the Right is already doing a good job of painting pictures of alternatives; the Left needs to compete.

A third answer is that we need utopias for feminism. Some even claim that feminism itself is necessarily utopian. In her 1982 article on feminist utopian fiction, Anne Mellor, for instance, called feminist theory “inherently utopian” because “equality between the sexes” had “never existed in the historical past.” If the goal of feminism has not been achieved even according to this fairly narrow 1980s definition, then commitments to emancipation from oppression on the basis of sexuality, gender nonconformity, and transness must render feminism necessarily all the more utopian today.

This is simultaneously a right and a wrong way to look at the question. It is certainly true that the proper aims of feminism have nowhere been realized — not in the Owenite communes that professed equality but still tended to assign the cleaning, cooking, and childcare to women, and not in the ancient matriarchies whose myths 1970s radical feminists sought to write into history. Unquestionably feminism needs utopia because it needs to look to the future for answers.

But this is true not merely in a definitional sense, whereby all that is feminist is already utopian. Instead feminism needs utopia not as a vague orientation toward the future but as a reflective method: to formulate properly feminist aims, we cannot look only to the past or to contradictions in the present — we have to work out what future society we want, and what would make it plausible and desirable.

The commitment shared by Marxists and Owenites to connecting feminist questions with broad social transformation is key. Any good socialist feminist knows that true feminism is incompatible with capitalism. One reason is that women’s liberation involves socializing reproductive labor in ways that can’t be done under capitalism (or at least not in a way where the cure wouldn’t be worse than the disease).

Comparing utopian thought to a one-dimensional Marxist understanding of revolution helps clarify its distinctive usefulness. We have no good reason to think that the transformation of one element of society — through seizure of the means of production by the proletariat, for instance — will inevitably, and without the need for advance design, lead to the desirable transformation of all the other elements.

Utopian thinking can help us imagine a social world to aim for by considering which desirable elements might reinforce one another, which institutions are preconditions for the existence or stability of others, and how we can make coercion obsolete to the fullest extent possible. It is especially valuable, then, to envision in detail an ideal society, from its economic, political, and reproductive institutions to the texture of the psychological experiences and personal relationships it fosters.

The ambivalence about marriage among Owenite women and their female audiences that Taylor identifies may seem like a point against utopia, since rigid blueprints foreclose such contestation. But there is a different and better way to understand the constructive aspect of utopia. Utopianism as a mode of political thought allows radical political theorists and movements to consider and contest what set of institutions and practices they would like to build in place of those to be abolished, and to consider each of these in the context of a social whole.

For example, while abandoning marriage in the nineteenth century might have hurt women by reducing men’s material responsibility for children, a world without the marriage contract would nevertheless be a better one, opening up possibilities not only for women but also for queer people. A precondition for this better world is the socialization of childcare and the abolition of private property, which Owen and many of his followers also advocated, since those changes would obviate the need for assigning financial responsibility to fathers.

Still, isn’t Marx right that a goal that seems radical today might be reactionary in a few years or decades? And how do we know whose utopia to pursue? In a recent paper, the political theorist Titus Stahl follows Leopold in rejecting the foundational objections to utopian design. But Stahl subscribes to a weaker caveat: since the very concepts we use to understand the world and formulate our aims have been formed within the unjust social structures we inhabit, we can’t use them to come up with the ideal society right now.

However, utopian visions needn’t emerge fully formed from one person’s mind. As the Owenite movement shows, even with a leader who tries to entrench his own designs, the utopian vision at the movement’s core can nevertheless explode into variety and disagreement without becoming any less utopian. Collective revision of utopian goals through democratic contestation can square the circle.

Stahl argues that utopia should not be a static end point but a target for us to continually debate and reconceive as experiments yield results and circumstances change. He also contends that we can evaluate utopian proposals based on the success with which they would resolve the problems plaguing existing society. To invent and assess utopian visions in this way requires no impossible leap away from our historical standpoint. Of course, practice is the ultimate test, but we can use theory to make predictions and choose among utopian goals based on those predictions.

Brighter Futures

Taylor’s book offers a somewhat melancholy coda to illustrate the lost radical potential of Owenite feminism. She draws a comparison with Chartism, a contemporary movement that sought to address the concerns of working people through the expansion of parliamentary representation. Among Chartists, the view that women’s proper place was in the home was common, and calls for women’s suffrage remained marginal. The mass base of Chartism dissipated in the 1850s, not long after the decline of Owenism.

British labor organizing during the rest of the nineteenth century took a male-dominated form, with its conservative approach to the “woman question” sometimes rising to the level of committed anti-feminism. As Taylor writes:

The Owenite call for a multi-faceted offensive against all forms of social hierarchy, including sexual hierarchy, disappeared — to be replaced with a dogmatic insistence on the primacy of class-based issues, a demand for sexual unity in the face of a common class enemy, and a vague promise of improved status for women “after the revolution.”

Meanwhile, a reformist outlook gained ground on the terrain of women’s organizing after the fall of Chartism and Owenism weakened the connection between socialist transformation and women’s rights and as more middle-class women concerned about respectability joined the movement. In the 1850s and ’60s, nascent and growing feminist groups took up John Stuart Mills’s call to remove obstacles to women’s entry into free competition on the same playing field with men. This was in contrast with the Owenite aim of abolishing social systems that were oriented toward such competition.

Political options reminiscent of these disappointing alternatives are alive and well today. The danger persists of marginalizing forms of oppression by identifying one fundamental cause of all social ills, whose overcoming will inevitably fix the rest, and modest claims for feminist improvements that are detached from a broader project of social transformation abound. Utopian thinking, on the other hand, can help us reinvigorate the connection between feminism and anti-capitalism.

The Right has caught on. Today’s conservatives do not merely resist change. Project 2025, for instance, is in many ways a textbook example of utopian thought, with an ethical vision that grounds its specific policy proposals and touches on every aspect of society, from family to trade, from gender to taxes. This imagined world is one they want to produce, not preserve, even if it’s wrapped up in traditionalist ideology.

The Left needs its own counterproposals: rich accounts of a transformed society that both help us decide what steps we should take now and keep us motivated for the long haul. I’m not suggesting all leftists should unite around one utopia but rather that debate and experimentation around ambitious aims for social transformation is an urgent political project rather than a matter of merely academic concern. Pace Marx and Engels, utopia’s radical potential has not yet been exhausted.

#### 6. Their political focus on the self through catharsis and survival within debate fails to challenge existing power relations created by colonization

Pheng Cheah 11. Professor of Rhetoric at Berkley “Crisis of Money,” in Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih (Eds.) Creolization of Theory, p. 84-93

At the same time, however, Fanon's insistence on the dignity of sheer life as the necessary outcome of his analysis of colonial trauma leaves the governing motif of the classical concept of trauma intact. For whether it is a matter of mere corporeal survival or being able to lead an emotionally healthy, bearable, and less unhappy life, what is always at stake is the security of the living self**,** the organism's ability to protect itself from physical or psychical distress that comes from the outside.10 The ultimate aim of Fanon's explication is to remove the various external impositions that have led to the evisceration of black consciousness: the collective unconscious, the racialepidermal schema, the various processes of unconscious socialization of the black person as an individual, but most important, the social, political, and economic conditions of European colonialism. Black Skin, White Masks is intended to be a mirror that enables the black person to recognize himself as a universal human being so that he can be returned to the path of a normal or undistorted dialectical relation to the world.11 The important point here is that this involves the constitution of a strong consciousness that can master and bind the physical and psychical excitations impacting on it. Fanon's project is essentially one of helping the subject regain its self-mastery, power, or sovereignty so that it can return to an autonomous, normal path of development, one free of any heteronomy or subordination to an other. The fundamental principle or value governing Fanon's project thus remains that of security: the reconsolidation and strengthening of an interior so that it can withstand or regulate any breaching from the outside, so that it can stem any excessive exposure to alterity. (Colonial) political domination or subjugation is traumatic because it causes the erosion and loss of the colonized subject's psychical self-mastery. Conversely, political and economic sovereignty or self-determination is the necessary condition for black consciousness to regain its self-mastery and health.

#### It cements the crisis of capitalism. Self-mastery secures individuals rather than disrupts structures.

Pheng Cheah 11. Professor of Rhetoric at Berkley “Crisis of Money,” in Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih (Eds.) Creolization of Theory, p. 102-108

My point here is that the drive and imperative for speculative profit making not only animates foreign currency speculators and portfolio investors but operates in the very heart of industrializing Asian economies. It is the very spirit of financial globalization, which will always favor capital flows that can be withdrawn instantaneously, because patience is not a virtue of hyperprofitability. Once this imperative has set in, private-sector interests in developing countries will desire the rapid development of capital markets as the fast and easy track to making large sums of money. Even if the developmental state tries to stem rapid capital outflow now and then, the state will not and cannot stop outflow in the long run, not only because the state's strength is based on market-opening progress but also because in the official drive toward national economic productivity, it has inculcated the imperative for hyperprofitability in the people through various technologies of biopower. Training into consumerism through rising standards of living, and the proliferation of new needs and desires through the global culture industry and media advertising, are other means for the inculcation of this imperative. In the final analysis, the distinction between productive and nonproductive forms of capital dogmatically assumes the purity of the people and forecloses how the people were formed and constituted by technologies of biopower and cultural and ideological instruments to actively want these capital inflows. Simply denouncing the political and economic corruption of the indigenous elite as the internal neuralgic point that makes the nation vulnerable to speculative and nonproductive forms of foreign capital obscures the constitutive relation between state and people in these regions. For instance, why do most of these corrupt regimes remain in power even after the financial crash? Why does business largely continue as usual after the crisis has waned? As important as it is to attribute responsibility to external forces such as currency speculators and the IMP's and World Bank's neoliberal economic policies, finger-pointing and economic-nationalist sentiment can also hinder the more difficult task of coming to terms with how both statist and popular elements within the affected countries were also responsible for the conditions that generated the crisis. Strictly speaking, such an accounting of responsibility for the crisis wrought by financial globalization can no longer assume that it is a form of trauma. Despite surface similarities to colonial trauma such as the crisis's systemic or structural character and its origins in material political and economic conditions at the national and transnational level, the power and politics of global money cannot be understood in terms of the breaching of a protective barrier. In global financialization, money is not merely a force of destruction (Destructionkraft), as Marx claimed (Marx and Engels 1932/1970, 59; 94). It is also clearly productive in ways that go beyond Marx's understanding of production. There is no longer any barrier separating the inside from the outside because from the start, national economies are actively opened up by their states to the outside. Transnational capital flows fabricate the economic well-being of these collective subjects and their individual citizens from the start. It makes no sense to speak of trauma unless trauma is no longer pathological and the result of an external imposition but a normal state of existence, a power that is operative from the start, at the origin.

Within this framework, we need to distinguish between the different modalities of constitutive exposure and their levels of operation: first, at the macrologicallevel of global political economy, states undertake aggressive policy initiatives to open up their markets and attract foreign capital. As Saskia Sassen has argued, the state's active internalization of the legal, eco- nomic, and managerial rules, standards, and concepts required for crossborder business transactions and capital mobility within the framework of international finance and corporate services leads to its partial denationalization, since it is effectively welcoming its own disciplining by transnational legal and corporate regimes (Sassen 1998, 200 ). Second, at the level of the biopolitical production of the individual and the population, techniques of discipline and government craft the bodies of individuals as bodies capable of work and create their needs and interests as members of a population. Third, at the level of social reproduction, global mass-consumer culture also leads to the proliferation of sophisticated consumer needs and desires. These processes prepare the ground in which the desire for hyperprofit and the speculative drive can take root in individuals. They constitute the conditions of possibility of the political and economic self-determination and sovereignty of collective subjects and the self-mastery and security of individual subjects. At the same time, this condition of possibility of strength and power also implies a radical vulnerability.

The physiology of power of financial globalization differs from the colonial model of power presupposed by postcolonial cultural critique in at least two ways. First, it does not work through external imposition or impingement on a preexisting subject. Second, it does not operate in the first instance at a mental, psychical, or ideational level, even though it prepares the ground for processes of ideological subject formation to take root. Marxist categories of analysis such as alienation, ideology, and reification still have an explanatory value provided that we understand the reification of consciousness (Lukacs) as originary rather than something that befalls the subject under conditions of alienation, since the laboring subject of needs is itself a product -effect and not an original ground that subsequently becomes alienated. I would like to suggest that this physiology of power and its violent consequences should be understood not through the motif of trauma but in terms of what Jacques Derrida called in his final writings "auto-immunity." Autoimmunization is a perversion of the process of immunity. In immunization, a body protects itself by producing antibodies to combat foreign antigens. In autoimmunization, however, the organism protects "itself against its self-protection by destroying its own immune system" (Derrida 1998, 731127). Autoimmunization is therefore a form of suicide where the organism immunizes itself against its own immunity?0 The autoimmune or sui cidal character of hyperdevelopment through globalization lies in the fact that the constitution of the self's very selfhood requires the exposure of the self to the alterity and heteronomy of capital flows. In defending itself against this other, the self is doing nothing other than compromising its own selfhood, since its selfhood comes from the other. In Derrida's words, "The autoimmune consists not only in harming or ruining oneself, indeed in destroying one's own protections, and in doing so oneself, committing suicide or threatening to do so .... It consists not only in compromising oneself [s(mto-entamer] but in compromising the self, the autos-and thus ipseity. It consists not only in committing suicide but in compromising sui- or selfreferentiality, the self or sui- of suicide itself. Autoimmunity is more or less suicidal, but, more seriously still, it threatens always to rob suicide itself of its meaning and supposed integrity" (Derrida 2oosb, 45).

I have written at length elsewhere on the autoimmune character of postcolonial national culture (Bildung) as the opening up of the body to the supplementation of an image (Bild) (Cheah 2003). I conclude here with a brief outline of the autoimmune character of development through foreign capital and the cultivation of human capital. Financial flows are autoimmune processes. On the one hand, inflows of money strengthen the well-being of the national economy and are therefore a source of power and security that can be drawn on in self-defense against any external threats. On the other hand, however, since this integrates the nation into a circuit of capital market processes where other actors who have even more money can attack and weaken the nation through currency speculation, what is medicine is also poison. Hence this constitutive alterity needs to be divided into two so that the self can provisionally act in defense of itself, to protect itself against this other that is also in fact itself. Hence, in the Malaysian case, capital controls were established and justified through Prime Minister Mahathir's pious distinction between immoral forms of capital flows that lead to abnormal economic activity such as currency trading, short selling, and trading with borrowed shares and other forms of speculation, which are "unnecessary, unproductive and immoral" because they do not finance any real trade, and moral and productive forms of financial flows that contribute to the real economy. Bad flows of money are manipulative. They lead to "no tangible benefit for the world ... . No substantial jobs are created, not products or services enjoyed by average people . ... Their profits come from impoverish- ing others. Southeast Asians have become the targets because we have the money but not enough to defend ourselves." 2 ' Mahathir superimposes this moralistic distinction onto a Euro-American imperialist conspiracy against developing Asia: "But now we know better. We know that economies of developing countries can be suddenly manipulated and forced to bow to the great fund managers who decide who should prosper and who should not" (quoted in Gill1997, 124). But this obscures the point that any given state of global economic hegemony is sustained by the power of capital flows, and that all financial flows and profits, whether they come from production or speculation, involve exploitation.

But at the same time, and this is the real meaning of the crisis, there does not seem to be any way out of this circuit of exploitation. The long-term solution that is invariably suggested is sustainable development through the cultivation of human capital through state education policies. Here is the politically correct advice of the World Bank based on focus group results from Indonesia and the Philippines on schooling for the poor: Beyond the crisis, the education system will shape the region's future workforce and the competitiveness of its economies. Sustaining high quality and broad-based educational expansion is central to equipping workers with the skills for high productivity manufacturing and service industries and to train them over the course of a working life .... Institutional and policy reforms are required to foster the high quality schooling which includes the skills that will propel East Asian countries into the knowledge economy of the next century. (World Bank 1998b, 290) Here we hit against the autoimmune character of governmentality. Governmental technologies build human capital to strengthen the national economy. But in so doing, education's primary function is also reduced to the government of human resources in the interests of creating a more efficient and intelligent pool of commodified labor for the global economy. Yet, as the example of the East Asian model of development illustrates, this is the only way to ascend the hierarchy of the international division of labor. Unless we can somehow leap out of the networks and circuits of capitalist globalization, the inflow of foreign capital is something that no developing country in the postcolonial South cannot not want. Since we are all inextricably woven into and implicated within the web of the productive power and politics of money, postcolonial cultural critique should at least begin by questioning the continuing dominance of the colonial paradigm of power as an external imposition. This is not to say that this type of power no longer exists. It clearly does. But it is no longer the main modality and form of power in contemporary globalization. One fundamental task of postcolonial critique would be to interminably track the autoimmune processes of finance capital at every turn, looking at how and when the medicine can become poison in the interest of postponing or stalling these noxious effects and lengthening the respite of postcolonial nations outside the OECD so that, hopefully, they can become as powerful as possible within the rules of this new game of power. At the same time, the consequences and effects of any increase in power for a given postcolonial nation-state within the international division of labor also need to be interminably circumscribed, because the strengthening of a state necessarily leads to the further instrumentalization and exploitation of its own citizens, especially marginalized minorities, and other peoples.

#### Autoimmunity becomes the precondition for nuclear annihilation.

Amy Katherine Hickman 23. This thesis is presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Curtin University. Autoimmune Interventions: Between (Bio) deconstruction and (Bio) politics. Diss. Curtin University, 2023.

Just as being inherited carries the terror and violence of being eaten alive by the other, when we inherit, the other “violently elects us,” happens to or arrives upon us. Any inheriting, as we have seen, must be partial, incomplete, and unfaithful, and thus “one must filter, select, differentiate, restructure the questions”: reaffirming an inheritance, for Derrida, means to “transform it as radically as will be necessary” (Derrida 2006, 67); indeed, this is the most faithful inheritance possible. So while, on the one hand, there is indeed a lack of choice in the fact that “the being of what we are is first of all inheritance, whether we know it or like it or not” (Derrida 2006, 68), such an inheritance comes with the injunction to “relaunch it otherwise,” which is to say that the insistence on the affirmation of inheritance carries “no backward-looking fervor… no traditionalist flavor” (Derrida 2006, 67–68). The autoimmune structure of survival in and as the movement of inheritance, in making us vulnerable to the other, opens onto the future, the event, or anything to come.

At this point, we can turn back to Derrida’s claim in “Faith and Knowledge,”

that no community [is possible] that would not cultivate its own auto-immunity… and this in view of some sort of invisible and spectral survival. This self-contesting attestation keeps the auto-immune community alive, which is to say, open to something other and more than itself: the other, the future, death, freedom, the coming or the love of the other, the space and time of a spectralizing messianicity without messianism. (Derrida 2002a, 87)

From this perspective, and with the understanding that survival as living on is distinct from “life properly so-called,” we can come to make sense of the claim that community is kept alive by autoimmunity, in opening it to the other and indeed its own death. Indeed, we can 51 make the claim that “life properly so-called,” as Derrida writes, “begins with survival” (Derrida 2011, 131), in being structured in advance by the autoimmune movement of inheritance, which consists in being defenceless before the other. In pursuing the question of autoimmunity’s consequences for life, survival, as Kas Saghafi writes, “has become what happens when I am turned over to the other” (Saghafi 2015, 23). As Michael Naas argues, any consolation found in this survival must necessarily be tempered by the fact that

The survival or living on whose logic Derrida has developed is anything but a “personal” survival, for the trace I leave behind is precisely not “my own,” and the desperate attempt to multiply traces in order to leave more of myself behind does little more than distance me even more from “myself.” (Naas 2012, 272)

That is, the promise that autoimmunity keeps alive is not that of a self-identical and sovereign identity, and the survival that it enables is one without salvation or redemption. And, it would seem, there is little we can do about it. This chapter began with an elaboration of some of the more catastrophic consequences of autoimmunity in a political frame. But if, at this point, we seem to have come to an inevitable affirmation of autoimmunity’s promise, we also seem to have affirmed the logic that enables, among other things, the possibility of nuclear annihilation—and sacrificed our sovereignty along the way. In this light, perhaps it is no surprise that questions such as Nancy Fraser’s (1984, 127)—“Is it possible—even desirable—to articulate a deconstructive politics?”—seem further complicated, rather than resolved, by the explicitly political content of Derrida’s later works. Accordingly, the next chapter turns to the question of autoimmunity’s normative force.