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#### The aff’s focus on reforming the energy sector ignores the way in which energy is embedded in social and historical context, which reinforces capitalist structures of domination.

Huber 13 Matt “What do we mean by “Energy Policy”? Life, Capitalism, and the Broader Field of Energy Politics” State of Nature May 4th 2013 <http://www.stateofnature.org/?p=7138> JW

In the 1970s we saw the rise of a peculiar concept: “energy policy.” Since that volatile decade it has become conventional wisdom that we need a new, transformative policy with regard to energy production and consumption. In the United States, for example, every President since Richard Nixon has promised a policy change toward “energy independence.” Depending on political affiliation, this energy transformation would be achieved by either investing in “alternative” energy or ramping up production of conventional fossil fuel – drill, baby, drill! – by removing ‘burdensome’ environmental regulation. More broadly, “energy” is thought of as a specific and contained “sector” of the economy – in the U.S., the domain of the Secretary of Energy; the concern of engineers and scientists with expertise in energy technology; the field of investment for countless ‘cleantech’ startup companies and, of course, the entrenched industries of fossil fuel based accumulation. Emerging out of this contained “energy sector” is a whole host of political forms of contestation. There are the wonkish, energy technocrats who want to harness the power of the profit motive to embed clean energy within a greener form of capitalism – Amory Lovins and friends being the most notable example. [1] There are the movements around environmental justice focused on the often devastating impact of the energy extraction and processing – from the Niger Delta to the Tar Sands to Mountain Top Coal Removal. [2] There is the burgeoning climate movement with its focus on the fossil fuel industry as “public enemy number one”. [3] In many ways, “energy” (and perhaps its conjoined issue of “climate”) has become just another topic in the world of “single issue” politics focused on a set of fixed and contained “causes” whether it be, immigration, abortion, prisons, or environment. The problem with this contained view of “energy policy”, “energy politics” and the “energy sector”, is it belies the way energy (not to mention any other single issue or cause) is embedded within capitalist society as a whole. Most profoundly, energy cannot really be contained in any “sector”, but is ubiquitous within everyday practices of social reproduction. In his attempt to diffuse the controversy over Marx’s “base-superstructure” metaphor, Freidrich Engels laid out the “mission” of historical materialism as such: “According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the last resort, the production and reproduction of immediate life.” [4] Engels’s description harkens back to the original formulations in The German Ideology which posited “the real-life process” and the social relations that make life possible as the foundation of a historical materialist analysis. [5] From this perspective, energy is not simply a “sector” or a “policy domain” but the material foundation of life itself (no matter what the historical circumstances). From the calories expending in gathering and hunting, to the sweat and toil of slave labor; from the coal, soot, and smoke of the coal-fired steam engine, to the decentralized geographies made possible through electricity and oil-based transport, every “mode of production” harnesses energy in particular ways. And, the historically specific modes of energy extraction and delivery often reproduce sociopolitical relations of power and domination. Indeed, the development of the coal fired steam engine was just as much an attempt to limit the working class power of manual laborers as it was about “efficiency”. [6] The expansion of oil-based suburbanization in the postwar United States laid the basis for the right wing’s mobilization of an often suburban form of neoliberal populism based on a an ideology of privatism opposed to government, taxes, and indeed, toward urban city life itself. [7] In history, political economy, and social theory, we are only starting to take seriously the role of energy in larger social and political shifts. [8] These insights force us to re-conceptualize what we mean by “energy policy.” In the rest of this essay, I will argue that the most profound era of energy policy change in the last century was not the 1970s – or not today as some might hope – but rather, an era where “energy” was not seen as a problematic field in need of intervention, but rather as the basis for a new era of modernity and the technical mastery of nature – the 1930s. Energy for Life In 1933, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt took office, he confronted two major forces – a dramatic collapse of capitalism (both in terms of conventional economic indicators and in terms of cultural legitimacy) and a mass revolt of workers and the unemployed over layoffs, wage-cuts, and exploding poverty throughout the country. In response, the New Deal was forged within a broader cultural politics of “life” in the historical materialist sense. In his 1932 campaign, Roosevelt claimed, “every man has a right to life; and this means that he has also a right to make a comfortable living.” [9] The politics of the 1930s saw the rise of a new concept: “The American way of life.” Although the phrase was used before, the phrase “the American way” was more common. As figure 1 indicates the specific phrase “American way of life” spiked in the 1930s and into the postwar era – only to fall in usage with the breakdown of the postwar “class accord” between capital and labor in the 1970s. Figure 1 – “The American Way of Life” Frequency of phrase by percentage of ‘mentions’ in the scanned Google book catalog. The American Way of Life Source: Google’s Ngram viewer FDR couched his many economic reforms precisely in the terms of creating the conditions for a specifically “American way of life.” Precisely because employers, banks, and other private capital would not do it on their own, the state laid the material conditions for a “standard of living” based on single-family home ownership, automobility, and, most importantly, working class power embedded in unions. There was the Wagner Act which institutionalized the legal right of unions to organize and collectively bargain with their employers. Impossible if left to the paternalism of capital, this ensured wage increases with productivity gains. Workers could now afford new standards of consumption. There were the Federal Housing Administration and the Home Owners Loan Corporation which made low and fixed interest 30-year mortgages a possibility for mainly white male blue collar workers and their families (and eventually returning veterans from WWII). On their own, private banks were previously only willing to lend 50% of the value of a home for as little as 5-year mortgage terms. [10] There was the “Works Progress Administration” which put millions to work (again when private capital would not) building the material infrastructure of automobility (e.g., 600,000 miles of roads and 75,266 bridges). [11] It should be emphasized that these reforms were forged out of struggle – strikes and mass militant action by unions, the unemployed councils, and other advocates for working rights. Moreover, these struggles were based on their own forms of exclusion. The production of “the American way of life” was a specifically white, male union identity. For example, the Wagner Act was passed by ignoring the concerns voiced by the NAACP over the racist legacies of union power – and migrant farm workers were simply excluded from the labor law entirely. Although he certainly promoted and passed “energy-specific” reforms (e.g., Rural Electrification), FDR never framed the New Deal as a new American “energy policy.” Yet, most of the reforms discussed above – labor law, housing policy, public investment in infrastructure, etc. – had profound effects on the ways in which people lived, and, in turn, used and consumed energy. While cars, suburban homes, and electrified households, were available to the upper classes as early as the 1920s, the New Deal extended this “way of life” to millions of workers; laying the basis for the postwar explosion of suburbanization and the historical “lock-in” of energy-intensive lifestyles. From Policy to Politics So, is there any way we can reverse this already existing sprawled geography of mass energy consumption? How could “policy” guide us? Take the example of our “oil addiction” which, although it is often conflated with electricity and energy in general, is mainly used as transportation fuel. Oil has powered a specific form of automobility that has defined the spatial layout of the sprawled American “Megalopolis”. [12] We tend to think of the solution to our oil addiction as purely a material problem of technology and urban spatial form. The “energy policy” consensus is that all we need to do is to design “smarter” and more “compact” cities based upon “new urbanist” walkable communities, public transit, bicycles and (only when absolutely necessary) electrified automobiles. Yet, this narrow “policy” lens again ignores the ways in which oil is deeply entrenched in a broader “politics of life.” Our consumption of oil is not just material – it is not just about the functional need to travel from point A to point B. The combustion of energy-dense gasoline often accompanies cultural ideas about freedom, mobility and deeply entangled normative geographies of home, work, family, and leisure. Indeed, although many historians have recognized the role of suburban populism in the rightward movement of American politics [13] – based on hostility toward taxes and government – they often don’t recognize the role of oil (and energy) in powering a privatized command over and experience of space. Oil is the liquid fossil fuel, and its very materiality is conducive to decentralization. It is cheaper to transport than any other form of energy, as it naturally flows through networks of pipelines, refineries, and tankers. The ubiquity of gasoline stations – and thus the ubiquity of fuel in the sprawled metropolitan areas of the United States – is made possible through the flowing liquidity of oil itself. Out of this liquid geography emerges a whole set of practices of social reproduction – driving, yard work, household maintenance, entertainment – that are effectively privatized. Into the postwar era, there was slowly but surely a mass cultural “forgetting” of the immense public investments that make these apparently privatized spaces possible (e.g., roads, mortgage insurance, public labor law, water and electricity provision). A consequence of this forgetting was the emergence of what I call a vision of “entrepreneurial life” where one’s individualized “life” is seen as a product of privatized choices, work ethic, and competitive tenacity. Entrepreneurial life is a vision of life threatened by “public” or “collectivist” interventions. [14] This vision of life has infiltrated our politics at large. This is why our attempts to craft a new “energy policy” often end up reproducing the same privatized logics of neoliberal hegemony: individualized “green” consumption; market based emission trading; price-incentives for new technology development. Indeed, as Andrew Ross provocatively argues, “sustainability” in places like metropolitan Phoenix simply reproduces pre-existing inequalities – a form of “eco-apartheid” wherein the rich carve out isolated spaces of “green living” while the poor are forced to live amongst the still all too common toxic byproducts of modern industrial life. [15] Moreover, it can be argued that the quarantining of “energy” or “environment” as its own separate “issue” – or field of policy intervention – is itself a historical product of the neoliberal celebration of fragmentation and “niche” markets. [16] Thus, the project to change our “energy policy” must first confront broader struggles over life, labor, and social inequality before our energy system could be changed in any sane, just and sustainable way. Indeed, at the core is the need to assert collective and democratic control over our energy system itself (it is now, of course, ruled by private capital with only one goal in mind: profit). It also must fundamentally be about offering an alternative vision of life; an alternative vision of freedom which, in the context of our oil-powered privatism, is simply equated with the right to be left alone from the invasive tentacles of “Big Government.” Like the New Deal, we need to begin to reimagine life and freedom as only possible through collective political struggle.

#### Capitalism causes multiple scenarios for extinction. It’s try or die.

Chengu 13 Garikai Chengu (fellow of the Du Bois Institute for African Research at Harvard University). “Capitalism: A Cancer That Threatens Humanity.” December 22nd, 2013. <http://bravenewworld.in/2013/12/22/capitalism-a-cancer-that-threatens-humanity/>

Capitalism is like cancer. Once it enters a host country’s economy, it will spread and devour labour, the environment, and any other impediment to the growth of profit. Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell. The essence of capitalism is to turn nature into commodities and commodities into capital. However, the world cannot continue to get richer as the earth becomes poorer. Just as the only inevitability in life is death, the only inevitability about our capitalist way of life, is the death of our planet. Capitalism is malignant. Think about it. For most of human history, we have lived on the edge of starvation. Nowadays, in our over-consumptive gluttony, we are starving the earth. The global food system produces more than enough for every man, woman and child; yet capitalism’s misdistribution of resources means that countless people starve to death. If you condense the earth’s history – about 4,54 billion years – to just one year, humans have been here for only about 23 minutes. Capitalism, as the dominant, global ideology, has existed for a matter of seconds. For over 130,000 years, mankind has lived harmoniously with the earth. It is only the last 500 years of capitalist ascendancy, which have caused the ongoing desecration of the earth. The classic pattern of cancer mutation and spread can be seen through the ongoing destruction of the planet’s vital organs: water, soil, air and biodiversity. It is said that if all insects on earth were wiped out, humans would cease to exist within 25 years. If all humans vanished, all other life forms would once again thrive. In many pre-capitalist societies and natural systems, resources and final products are interlinked. Organic matter circulates, being re-used constantly. There are no garbage dumps of unusable matter in nature. Mother Nature provides many renewable energy sources, such as sunlight, water and wind. But, many of the world’s largest corporations choose to ignore these resources, because they depend heavily on burning fossil fuels for profit. Such destructive processes cannot continue for long without destroying the host body. Military weapons are among the leading manufactured goods traded globally. So are cigarettes, junk food, carcinogenic chemicals, greenhouse gases and many other goods that are lethal for [hu]mankind. The uncontrolled spread of global capitalism not only threatens the environment; it also threatens another pillar of modern civilisation: democracy. Extractive Capitalism and the Divisions in the Latin American Progressive Camp A major step in the diagnosis of capitalism as a cancer is that in all cancerous pathologies, a living organism’s immune system fails to recognise the tumor. The media, universities, and governments do not recognise the destructive capitalist system’s malignant growth, but actively collaborate with it. Governments in democratic systems are supposed to defend the environment from the excesses of capitalism. The problem is that capitalism has infected democracy, such that governments put the interests of profit before the environment. Capitalist democracy inevitably leads to a dictatorship of capital. While the US political system remains democratic in form, because freedom of speech and association are preserved and elections are free; in essence, it is becoming a plutocracy. After all, can a nation be credibly called a democracy if it requires a candidate to raise $1 billion in campaign funds from corporations and Wall Street speculators? During the 1800s, governments would hang speculators. Nowadays, speculators take the form of Wall Street bankers who own governments. Wall Street regulates Congress, not the other way around. In the early 1800s, Thomas Jefferson prophetically remarked, “the end of democracy and the defeat of the American Revolution will occur when government falls into the hands of lending institutions and moneyed incorporations”. The rich finance the political candidates who protect their interests. Money becomes speech, silencing the poor. Campaign contributions become votes; thus, the poor are politically marginalised. A civilisation can be judged by how it treats its poorest members. Capitalism cuts public services that serve as immune systems to protect the poor, whilst increasing privatisation, which only benefits the rich. Private jets, private health care, private schools, private prisons, and private security. Then we wonder why our elite politicians cut public services? Profit maximization is the fundamental principle of capitalism. Profit, however, is indifferent to human suffering. In fact, profit is committed at every stage of its growth to the direct multiplication of itself. The similarities with a carcinogen are starkly evident. With all that said, the poison serves as its antidote: all-devouring capitalism will eventually devour itself. However, capitalism will be the dominant system for years to come because it appeals to Man’s worst qualities. The only question is whether civilisation can survive capitalism?

#### Cap kills value to life and precludes ethics.

Morgareidge 98 Morgareidge, Clayton, Prof of Philosophy at Lewis & Clark College, 1998, Why Capitalism is Evil 08/22 http://www.lclark.edu/~clayton/commentaries/evil.html

To show why this is the case, let me turn to capital's greatest critic, Karl Marx. **Under capitalism**, Marx writes, **everything** in nature and everything that human beings are and can do **becomes an object: a resource for**, or an obstacle to, **the expansion of production**, the development of technology, the growth of markets, and the circulation of money. For those who manage and live from capital, **nothing has value of its own. Mountain streams, clean air, human lives -- all mean nothing in themselves, but are valuable only** if they can be used **to turn a profit.** If capital looks at (not into) the human face, it sees there only eyes through which brand names and advertising can enter and mouths that can demand and consume food, drink, and tobacco products. If human faces express needs, then either products can be manufactured to meet, or seem to meet, those needs, or else, if the needs are incompatible with the growth of capital, then the faces expressing them must be unrepresented or silenced. Obviously what capitalist enterprises do have consequences for the well being of human beings and the planet we live on. Capital profits from the production of food, shelter, and all the necessities of life. The production of all these things uses human lives in the shape of labor, as well as the resources of the earth. If we care about life, if we see our obligations in each others faces, then we have to want all the things capital does to be governed by that care, to be directed by the ethical concern for life. But feeding people is not the aim of the food industry, or shelter the purpose of the housing industry. In medicine, making profits is becoming a more important goal than caring for sick people. As capitalist enterprises these activities aim single-mindedly at the accumulation of capital, and such purposes as caring for the sick or feeding the hungry becomes a mere means to an end, an instrument of corporate growth. Therefore **ethics**, the overriding commitment to meeting human need, **is left out of deliberations about what the heavyweight institutions of our society are going to do.** Moral convictions are expressed in churches, in living rooms, in letters to the editor, sometimes even by politicians and widely read commentators, but almost always with an attitude of resignation to the inevitable. People no longer say, "You can't stop progress," but only because they have learned not to call economic growth progress. They still think they can't stop it. And they are right -- as long as the production of all our needs and the organization of our labor is carried out under private ownership. Only a minority ("idealists") can take seriously a way of thinking that counts for nothing in real world decision making. **Only when the end of capitalism is on the table will ethics have a seat at the table.**

#### The alternative is recommitment to class struggle grounded in socialist humanism---pedagogical recommitment to Marxist struggle is key.

Peter McLaren 4, Education and Urban Schooling Division prof, UCLA—and Valerie Scatamburlo-D'Annibale; University of Windsor, Educational Philosophy and Theory, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2004, [www.freireproject.org/articles/node%2065/RCGS/class\_dismissed-val-peter.10.pdf](http://www.freireproject.org/articles/node%2065/RCGS/class_dismissed-val-peter.10.pdf)

These are the concrete realities of our time—realities that require a vigorous class analysis, an unrelenting critique of capitalism and an oppositional politics capable of confronting what Ahmad (1998, p. 2) refers to as ‘capitalist universality.’ They are realities that require something more than that which is offered by the prophets of ‘difference’ and post-Marxists who would have us relegate socialism to the scrapheap of history and mummify Marxism along with Lenin's corpse. Never before has a Marxian analysis of capitalism and class rule been so desperately needed. That is not to say that everything Marx said or anticipated has come true, for that is clearly not the case. Many critiques of Marx focus on his strategy for moving toward socialism, and with ample justification; nonetheless Marx did provide us with fundamental insights into class society that have held true to this day. Marx's enduring relevance lies in his indictment of capitalism which continues to wreak havoc in the lives of most. While capitalism's cheerleaders have attempted to hide its sordid underbelly, Marx's description of capitalism as the sorcerer's dark power is even more apt in light of contemporary historical and economic conditions. Rather than jettisoning Marx, decentering the role of capitalism, and discrediting class analysis, radical educators must continue to engage Marx's oeuvre and extrapolate from it that which is useful pedagogically, theoretically, and, most importantly, politically in light of the challenges that confront us. The urgency which animates Amin’s call for a collective socialist vision necessitates, as we have argued, moving beyond the particularism and liberal pluralism that informs the ‘politics of difference.’ It also requires challenging the questionable assumptions that have come to constitute the core of contemporary ‘radical’ theory, pedagogy and politics. In terms of effecting change, what is needed is a cogent understanding of the systemic nature of exploitation and oppression based on the precepts of a radical political economy approach (outlined above) and one that incorporates Marx’s notion of ‘unity in difference’ in which people share widely common material interests. Such an understanding extends far beyond the realm of theory, for the manner in which we choose to interpret and explore the social world, the concepts and frameworks we use to express our sociopolitical understandings, are more than just abstract categories. They imply intentions, organizational practices, and political agendas. Identifying class analysis as the basis for our understandings and class struggle as the basis for political transformation implies something quite different than constructing a sense of political agency around issues of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. Contrary to ‘Shakespeare’s assertion that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,’ it should be clear that this is not the case in political matters. Rather, in politics ‘the essence of the ﬂower lies in the name by which it is called’ (Bannerji, 2000, p. 41). The task for progressives today is to seize the moment and plant the seeds for a political agenda that is grounded in historical possibilities and informed by a vision committed to overcoming exploitative conditions. These seeds, we would argue, must be derived from the tree of radical political economy. For the vast majority of people today—people of all ‘racial classiﬁcations or identities, all genders and sexual orientations’—the common frame of reference arcing across ‘difference’, the ‘concerns and aspirations that are most widely shared are those that are rooted in the common experience of everyday life shaped and constrained by political economy’ (Reed, 2000, p. xxvii). While post-Marxist advocates of the politics of ‘difference’ suggest that such a stance is outdated, we would argue that the categories which they have employed to analyze ‘the social’ are now losing their usefulness, particularly in light of actual contemporary ‘social movements.’ All over the globe, there are large anti-capitalist movements afoot. In February 2002, chants of ‘Another World Is Possible’ became the theme of protests in Porto Allegre. It seems that those people struggling in the streets haven’t read about T.I.N.A., the end of grand narratives of emancipation, or the decentering of capitalism. It seems as though the struggle for basic survival and some semblance of human dignity in the mean streets of the dystopian metropoles doesn’t permit much time or opportunity to read the heady proclamations emanating from seminar rooms. As E. P. Thompson (1978, p. 11) once remarked, sometimes ‘experience walks in without knocking at the door, and announces deaths, crises of subsistence, trench warfare, unemployment, inﬂation, genocide.’ This, of course, does not mean that socialism will inevitably come about, yet a sense of its nascent promise animates current social movements. Indeed, noted historian Howard Zinn (2000, p. 20) recently pointed out that after years of single-issue organizing (i.e. the politics of difference), the WTO and other anti-corporate capitalist protests signaled a turning point in the ‘history of movements of recent decades,’ for it was the issue of ‘class’ that more than anything ‘bound everyone together.’ History, to paraphrase Thompson (1978, p. 25) doesn’t seem to be following Theory’s script. Our vision is informed by Marx's historical materialism and his revolutionary socialist humanism, which must not be conflated with liberal humanism. For left politics and pedagogy, a socialist humanist vision remains crucial, whose fundamental features include the creative potential of people to challenge collectively the circumstances that they inherit. This variant of humanism seeks to give expression to the pain, sorrow and degradation of the oppressed, those who labor under the ominous and ghastly cloak of ‘globalized’ capital. It calls for the transformation of those conditions that have prevented the bulk of humankind from fulfilling its potential. It vests its hope for change in the development of critical consciousness and social agents who make history, although not always in conditions of their choosing. The political goal of socialist humanism is, however, ‘not a resting in difference’ but rather ‘the emancipation of difference at the level of human mutuality and reciprocity.’ This would be a step forward for the ‘discovery or creation of our real differences which can only in the end be explored in reciprocal ways’ (Eagleton, 1996, p. 120). Above all else, the enduring relevance of a radical socialist pedagogy and politics is the centrality it accords to the interrogation of capitalism. We can no longer afford to remain indifferent to the horror and savagery committed by capitalist's barbaric machinations. We need to recognize that capitalist democracy is unrescuably contradictory in its own self-constitution. Capitalism and democracy cannot be translated into one another without profound efforts at manufacturing empty idealism. Committed Leftists must unrelentingly cultivate a democratic socialist vision that refuses to forget the ‘wretched of the earth,’ the children of the damned and the victims of the culture of silence—a task which requires more than abstruse convolutions and striking ironic poses in the agnostic arena of signifying practices. Leftists must illuminate the little shops of horror that lurk beneath ‘globalization’s’ shiny façade; they must challenge the true ‘evils’ that are manifest in the tentacles of global capitalism's reach. And, more than this, Leftists must search for the cracks in the edifice of globalized capitalism and shine light on those fissures that give birth to alternatives. Socialism today, undoubtedly, runs against the grain of received wisdom, but its vision of a vastly improved and freer arrangement of social relations beckons on the horizon. Its unwritten text is nascent in the present even as it exists among the fragments of history and the shards of distant memories. Its potential remains untapped and its promise needs to be redeemed.

#### Educational spaces must focus on resistance to the logic of capital by embracing socialism.

D’Annibale ’06 Valerie Scatamburlo-D’Annibale, award-winning author and educator, is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies @ University of Windsor “Imagining the Impossible: Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy Against the 21st Century American Imperium” International Journal of Progressive Education Vol: 2 Issue: 3

The Boy Emperor and his minions would have us believe that our only choice is to embrace the manic logic of American imperialist capitalism disguised as “democracy.” But as concerned citizens, activists, educators, workers, and students, we must vigorously challenge such an assertion. While they would like to have the citizens of the United States (indeed, the whole world) [to] sit back and let them take care of “democracy,” we need to remind ourselves that democracy is not a spectator sport. It cannot exist in a context where corporations rule the world and where the fruits produced by labouring humanity are horded by the global capitalist elite. It cannot exist when anyone who opposes the policies of the IMF, the World Bank, and/or th e WTO or any nation which rejects the “Washington consensus” runs the risk of being tarred and feathered with the label of “terrorist.” It cannot exist when governments lie to their citizens and when wars are fought to increase the profit margins of multinational corporations at the expense of innocents slaughtered and bodies mangled on battlefields strewn with limbs lost and dreams dashed. Democracy cannot exist when entire populations are being obliterated through genocide, when people are starving, when human rights are being trampled upon both at home and abroad. Capitalism, in short, cannot be “rescued for democracy” for “capitalism is beyond salvation” and so is the very notion of democracy “so long as it looks to capitalism to support it” (McLaren, 2007, xvii). At this point in history, McLaren (2005; 2006; 2007) urges us to expose the inner workings of the so-called “benevolent” imperialism of Pax Americana in all its social ugliness and to emphasize that the agenda of neoliberalism and its concomitant militarism is driven by corporate interests that are fundamentally at odds with the interests of working people. We need to start asking and exploring the “big” questions. We need a new vision of human sociality and we need to dare to speak the language of socialism. To that end, McLaren’s revolutionary critical pedagogy can offer us some valuable insights. Against Capital This is definitely not a postcapitalist world, nor is it a post-Marxist one (Foster, 2002, p. 43). Cutting ourselves off from Marx is to cut off our investigative noses to satisfy the superficial face of contemporary intellectual fashion (Harvey, 2000, p. 12). [i]mperialism has, from the beginning, been part and parcel of capitalism and will not be eliminated until capitalism itself is ended (Foster and McChesney, 2004, p. 11). McLaren points to a development that has troubled many progressive educators over the years, namely, the domestication of critical pedagogy within the academy. Once a fierce critic of U.S. imperialism and capitalist exploitation, critical pedagogy has become so “conceptually psychologized, so liberally humanized, so technologized, and so conceptually postmodernized that its current relationship to broader liberation struggles seems severely attenuated if not fatally terminated” (2005, p. 33). In light of such domesticating gestures, critical pedagogy seems to have lost its potential to serve as a trenchant challenge to globalized capital and U.S. imperialist aggression. As such McLaren’s attempts to revivify the political roots of critical pedagogy by reintroducing the language of class struggle and Marxist-humanism (under the rubric of revolutionary critical pedagogy) come at a much needed juncture. Since we live at a time when capitalism has become an unrepentant universal system, the basis of our struggles, of our resistance, of our revolutionary praxis must be grounded in an equally universalist narrative—that of socialism. We must transcend the deconstructive dalliances of those post-al theorists who have abandoned metanarratives—particularly those of Marxism and socialism—for in all of their deconstructive posturing they have ignored the most “meta of all metanarratives”—namely, the “creeping annexation of the globe for the dominance of capital over labouring humanity” (Ahmad, 1997, p. 364). It seems that in recent years, the only “ism” which hasn’t garnered the interest of many self-proclaimed radicals is that of capitalism. McLaren vividly calls our attention to this problematic void within so much of contemporary theory and urges us to utilize the tools of Marxist analysis to contest current social relations linked to the globalization of capital. He cautions us, however, that Marxist educationalists must also avoid the numbing altitudes of abstract cogitation that seldom touch political realities here on earth. Rather than speaking to one another in self-referential code, engaging in scholastic rituals, and navigating “theory for its own sake or for academic jollification,” they must demonstrate the utility of Marxism by applying it to political actualities and by working towards creating the “conditions for a social revolution” (McLaren, 2006, viii). This task has assumed an even greater importance in light of current conditions for as Jameson (1998, p. 136-137) reminds us we seem to be returning to “the most fundamental form of class struggle.” In this regard, the line of thought derived from Marx is far from obsolete. Given the entrenchment of neoliberal globalization practices and the global dominance of U.S. military might, McLaren (2006, p. 19) reminds us that class struggle is as important as it ever was, perhaps even more so. And as more and more of humanity faces the ravages of capitalism’s totalizing impulses and the savagery of wars fought on behalf of capital, his revolutionary critical pedagogy points to the need to understand and confront the “antagonistic relation between labor and capital” that “constitutes the essence of capitalism” (Ibid, p. 95). This entails a much different conceptualization of class than that offered by post-al theory which tends to view class as simply about habits and behaviour, cultural status, or social prestige, or that suggests that class is merely a language sign whose meaning is overpopulated with referents and therefore “undecidable.” Rather, class must be understood as both a lived culture and an objective entity. As an objective phenomenon, class is directly connected to where a person is located within the capitalist division of labor and it is labor that is the source of value. Capitalism is a system based on the imposition of “universal commodification, including centrally, the buying and selling of human-life time” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999, p. 9). Within capitalist forms of organization, human labor itself is a commodity which can be bought and sold just like any other. Such an arrangement reduces the creative capacities of humans and relegates them to the status of mere cogs in the machinery of various forms of production. Alienation, oppression, and the dissolution of democracy are inherent features in such an arrangement where labor-power is capitalized and commodified (McLaren, 2006). For these reasons and many others, it is imperative to work towards the de-commodification of human labor in ways that would reinvigorate its status as a form of meaningful, creative activity. This entails moving beyond a mere reformist agenda—one which calls for a friendlier, less brutalizing form of capitalism—to questioning the very nature of capital as a social relation rooted in the selling of human labor power. As McLaren (2006, p. 319) asserts, “we need to move towards a new social humanity . . . we need to work towards the goal of becoming associated producers, working under conditions . . . where the measure of wealth is not labor-time but solidarity, creativity, and the full development of human capacities.” This struggle, against a specific form of social being as a capitalized and commodified life form—the very struggle to be “human”—situates revolutionary Marxist-humanism “at the core of any project to implode capital’s social universe” (McLaren, 2006, p. 314). Contrary to those who have sounded the death knell of Marxism, Marxist-humanism is not straining against the boundaries of a closed ontology. Rather it is a set of living ideas that can help us better understand the world—and more importantly—can provide a point of departure on how to change it. Marxist-humanism can guide us in working towards the creation of a social universe outside of capital based on socialist principles and practices not just in the sense of negating today’s economic and political realities but of developing new human relations. It is after all capital that imposes on our lives certain forms of doing, certain forms of relating to one another, certain forms of being. Marxist-humanism can also educate us about the importance of class consciousness and class struggle in attempting to overcome the **brutal and** barbaric limits to human liberation set by capital.[xii] After all, the most powerful force on the planet is the working class—without their labor, the wheels of the machine would cease in turning. The only force that the capitalist class cannot do without is the working class that produces the food, processes the raw materials, educates the young, tends to the sick and the infirm, builds the arteries, moves the goods, and so on. Contrary to the conventional political wisdom and the post-al declarations that we live in an age without classes, the transnational working class is in fact growing—there are increasing numbers of people who “now depend—directly or indirectly—on the sale of their labor power for their own daily reproduction” (Panitch et al., 2000, p. ix). Although it is certainly apparent that there have been major changes in the class structure, they have not been in the direction that post-Marxists point to. In fact, the major changes have reinforced class differences and capitalist exploitation. Petras notes that there are now more “temporary wage workers than in the past” and that there are many more workers toiling in “unregulated labor markets (the so-called informal sector today) than in the past.” This issue of “unregulated exploitation” points not in the direction of “post-capitalism” but rather represents a return to “nineteenth century forms of labour exploitation” (1998, p. 5). That said, it is important to bear in mind that the bodies of work and the concepts produced by Marx to assess the intricacies of capitalism in the nineteenth century are not completely adequate for analyzing contemporary conditions. Any historical concept carries in itself specific historical indices and the structure it analyzes is an historical structure. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid the reification or “petrification” (to use of line from Marcuse, 1972) of Marxian concepts since that would violate the very core of Marx’s work—namely, the unity of theory and practice in relation to specific configurations of capitalism. Moreover, revolutionary praxis, is brought about by “approaching Marxism not as an inert body of ideas for contemplation but as a motive force for remaking society” (McLaren, 2007, p. 35). As such, it still provides the most powerful conceptual apparatus from which to construct a critique of contemporary capitalism and envision an alternative to it. The legacy of Marxist humanism and the revolutionary critical pedagogy espoused by McLaren remind[s] us that contrary to TINA, there are always alternatives. As a form of emancipatory critical knowledge that offers a systematic way of making sense of contemporary social life, the current configuration of imperial global capitalism, the alienating aspects of commodified human labor and their interconnectedness, revolutionary critical pedagogy simultaneously serves as an agent for changing the conditions which it condemns. It reminds us that whatever misunderstandings or confusion surrounding the notion of socialism—largely bound up with a mistaken identification of Marxism with its opposite, Stalinism—that the democratic and internationalist principles of socialism need to be reinvigorated among those serious about resisting the domination of capital. It reminds us—to paraphrase the words of Luxemburg (1971)—that the struggle for socialism must be created by the masses of labouring humanity who must break the chains of capitalism wherever they are forged. And above all, it reminds us that we cannot abandon hope. CONCLUSION: Hope Dies Last In the preface to the fifth edition of his landmark text, Life in Schools, McLaren declares that the “unfulfilled” democracy which he envisions is “unashamedly socialist.” In so doing, and in speaking as a “Marxist humanist who advocates a revolutionary praxis” (2007, p. xvii), he encourages us to think about a new humanism for the 21st century—one that is unrealized in any profound sense; one set against the 21st century American imperium; one which we can aspire to. This new humanism would confront the actual conditions of capitalist oppression, imperialism, neo-fascism and colonialism and not merely the texts of colonialism, imperialism and the like. It would give expression to the pain, sorrow, and degradation of the oppressed and the wretched of the earth as well as to their dreams of social change. This new humanism would recognize the creative potential of people to challenge and change collectively the circumstances which they inherit. It would be predicated on a firm commitment to human emancipation and the extension of human dignity and freedom to all people—a commitment to really universalize such values in concrete, practical and economic terms. It would go beyond calls for social justice that are embraced by liberals yet too often “antiseptically cleaved from the project of transforming capitalist social relations” (McLaren, 2007, p. 29). Rather, a new humanism would call for the transformation of those oppressive social arrangements, institutions and relations that have prevented the bulk of humankind from fulfilling its potential. The task of even imagining, let alone struggling for, such a new humanism may seem daunting but we must find our inspiration and strength in the emotion of hope. Hope is the freeing of possibility, with possibility serving as the dialectical partner of necessity. When hope is strong enough, it can bend the future backward towards the past, where, trapped between the two, the present can escape its orbit of inevitability and break the force of history’s hubris, so that what is struggled for no longer remains an inert idea frozen in the hinterland of “what is,” but becomes a reality out of “what could be.” Hope is the oxygen of dreams, and provides the stamina for revolutionary struggle. Revolutionary dreams are those in which dreamers dream until there are no longer dreamers but only the dreams themselves, shaping our everyday lives from moment to moment, and opening the causeways of possibility where abilities are nourished not for the reaping of profit, but for the satisfaction of needs and the full development of human potential (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2004, p. 89). In this passage McLaren beckons us to rescue the principle of hope from the abyss of cynicism, complacency, and apathy and to apply it to imagining something resembling a democratic form of socialism. He challenges us to safeguard the embers of hope smoldering amidst the rubble of war and to fuel even further the fires of hope wherever they may burn. And he challenges us, above all, to keep hope alive—whatever the circumstances—and to ensure, in the words of the legendary American historian, scholar, and activist Studs Terkel, that hope dies last.

### Link: Energy Politics

#### The aff’s focus on reforming the energy sector ignores the way in which energy is embedded in social and historical context, which reinforces capitalist structures of domination.

Huber 13 Matt “What do we mean by “Energy Policy”? Life, Capitalism, and the Broader Field of Energy Politics” State of Nature May 4th 2013 <http://www.stateofnature.org/?p=7138> JW

In the 1970s we saw the rise of a peculiar concept: “energy policy.” Since that volatile decade it has become conventional wisdom that we need a new, transformative policy with regard to energy production and consumption. In the United States, for example, every President since Richard Nixon has promised a policy change toward “energy independence.” Depending on political affiliation, this energy transformation would be achieved by either investing in “alternative” energy or ramping up production of conventional fossil fuel – drill, baby, drill! – by removing ‘burdensome’ environmental regulation. More broadly, “energy” is thought of as a specific and contained “sector” of the economy – in the U.S., the domain of the Secretary of Energy; the concern of engineers and scientists with expertise in energy technology; the field of investment for countless ‘cleantech’ startup companies and, of course, the entrenched industries of fossil fuel based accumulation. Emerging out of this contained “energy sector” is a whole host of political forms of contestation. There are the wonkish, energy technocrats who want to harness the power of the profit motive to embed clean energy within a greener form of capitalism – Amory Lovins and friends being the most notable example. [1] There are the movements around environmental justice focused on the often devastating impact of the energy extraction and processing – from the Niger Delta to the Tar Sands to Mountain Top Coal Removal. [2] There is the burgeoning climate movement with its focus on the fossil fuel industry as “public enemy number one”. [3] In many ways, “energy” (and perhaps its conjoined issue of “climate”) has become just another topic in the world of “single issue” politics focused on a set of fixed and contained “causes” whether it be, immigration, abortion, prisons, or environment. The problem with this contained view of “energy policy”, “energy politics” and the “energy sector”, is it belies the way energy (not to mention any other single issue or cause) is embedded within capitalist society as a whole. Most profoundly, energy cannot really be contained in any “sector”, but is ubiquitous within everyday practices of social reproduction. In his attempt to diffuse the controversy over Marx’s “base-superstructure” metaphor, Freidrich Engels laid out the “mission” of historical materialism as such: “According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the last resort, the production and reproduction of immediate life.” [4] Engels’s description harkens back to the original formulations in The German Ideology which posited “the real-life process” and the social relations that make life possible as the foundation of a historical materialist analysis. [5] From this perspective, energy is not simply a “sector” or a “policy domain” but the material foundation of life itself (no matter what the historical circumstances). From the calories expending in gathering and hunting, to the sweat and toil of slave labor; from the coal, soot, and smoke of the coal-fired steam engine, to the decentralized geographies made possible through electricity and oil-based transport, every “mode of production” harnesses energy in particular ways. And, the historically specific modes of energy extraction and delivery often reproduce sociopolitical relations of power and domination. Indeed, the development of the coal fired steam engine was just as much an attempt to limit the working class power of manual laborers as it was about “efficiency”. [6] The expansion of oil-based suburbanization in the postwar United States laid the basis for the right wing’s mobilization of an often suburban form of neoliberal populism based on a an ideology of privatism opposed to government, taxes, and indeed, toward urban city life itself. [7] In history, political economy, and social theory, we are only starting to take seriously the role of energy in larger social and political shifts. [8] These insights force us to re-conceptualize what we mean by “energy policy.” In the rest of this essay, I will argue that the most profound era of energy policy change in the last century was not the 1970s – or not today as some might hope – but rather, an era where “energy” was not seen as a problematic field in need of intervention, but rather as the basis for a new era of modernity and the technical mastery of nature – the 1930s. Energy for Life In 1933, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt took office, he confronted two major forces – a dramatic collapse of capitalism (both in terms of conventional economic indicators and in terms of cultural legitimacy) and a mass revolt of workers and the unemployed over layoffs, wage-cuts, and exploding poverty throughout the country. In response, the New Deal was forged within a broader cultural politics of “life” in the historical materialist sense. In his 1932 campaign, Roosevelt claimed, “every man has a right to life; and this means that he has also a right to make a comfortable living.” [9] The politics of the 1930s saw the rise of a new concept: “The American way of life.” Although the phrase was used before, the phrase “the American way” was more common. As figure 1 indicates the specific phrase “American way of life” spiked in the 1930s and into the postwar era – only to fall in usage with the breakdown of the postwar “class accord” between capital and labor in the 1970s. Figure 1 – “The American Way of Life” Frequency of phrase by percentage of ‘mentions’ in the scanned Google book catalog. The American Way of Life Source: Google’s Ngram viewer FDR couched his many economic reforms precisely in the terms of creating the conditions for a specifically “American way of life.” Precisely because employers, banks, and other private capital would not do it on their own, the state laid the material conditions for a “standard of living” based on single-family home ownership, automobility, and, most importantly, working class power embedded in unions. There was the Wagner Act which institutionalized the legal right of unions to organize and collectively bargain with their employers. Impossible if left to the paternalism of capital, this ensured wage increases with productivity gains. Workers could now afford new standards of consumption. There were the Federal Housing Administration and the Home Owners Loan Corporation which made low and fixed interest 30-year mortgages a possibility for mainly white male blue collar workers and their families (and eventually returning veterans from WWII). On their own, private banks were previously only willing to lend 50% of the value of a home for as little as 5-year mortgage terms. [10] There was the “Works Progress Administration” which put millions to work (again when private capital would not) building the material infrastructure of automobility (e.g., 600,000 miles of roads and 75,266 bridges). [11] It should be emphasized that these reforms were forged out of struggle – strikes and mass militant action by unions, the unemployed councils, and other advocates for working rights. Moreover, these struggles were based on their own forms of exclusion. The production of “the American way of life” was a specifically white, male union identity. For example, the Wagner Act was passed by ignoring the concerns voiced by the NAACP over the racist legacies of union power – and migrant farm workers were simply excluded from the labor law entirely. Although he certainly promoted and passed “energy-specific” reforms (e.g., Rural Electrification), FDR never framed the New Deal as a new American “energy policy.” Yet, most of the reforms discussed above – labor law, housing policy, public investment in infrastructure, etc. – had profound effects on the ways in which people lived, and, in turn, used and consumed energy. While cars, suburban homes, and electrified households, were available to the upper classes as early as the 1920s, the New Deal extended this “way of life” to millions of workers; laying the basis for the postwar explosion of suburbanization and the historical “lock-in” of energy-intensive lifestyles. From Policy to Politics So, is there any way we can reverse this already existing sprawled geography of mass energy consumption? How could “policy” guide us? Take the example of our “oil addiction” which, although it is often conflated with electricity and energy in general, is mainly used as transportation fuel. Oil has powered a specific form of automobility that has defined the spatial layout of the sprawled American “Megalopolis”. [12] We tend to think of the solution to our oil addiction as purely a material problem of technology and urban spatial form. The “energy policy” consensus is that all we need to do is to design “smarter” and more “compact” cities based upon “new urbanist” walkable communities, public transit, bicycles and (only when absolutely necessary) electrified automobiles. Yet, this narrow “policy” lens again ignores the ways in which oil is deeply entrenched in a broader “politics of life.” Our consumption of oil is not just material – it is not just about the functional need to travel from point A to point B. The combustion of energy-dense gasoline often accompanies cultural ideas about freedom, mobility and deeply entangled normative geographies of home, work, family, and leisure. Indeed, although many historians have recognized the role of suburban populism in the rightward movement of American politics [13] – based on hostility toward taxes and government – they often don’t recognize the role of oil (and energy) in powering a privatized command over and experience of space. Oil is the liquid fossil fuel, and its very materiality is conducive to decentralization. It is cheaper to transport than any other form of energy, as it naturally flows through networks of pipelines, refineries, and tankers. The ubiquity of gasoline stations – and thus the ubiquity of fuel in the sprawled metropolitan areas of the United States – is made possible through the flowing liquidity of oil itself. Out of this liquid geography emerges a whole set of practices of social reproduction – driving, yard work, household maintenance, entertainment – that are effectively privatized. Into the postwar era, there was slowly but surely a mass cultural “forgetting” of the immense public investments that make these apparently privatized spaces possible (e.g., roads, mortgage insurance, public labor law, water and electricity provision). A consequence of this forgetting was the emergence of what I call a vision of “entrepreneurial life” where one’s individualized “life” is seen as a product of privatized choices, work ethic, and competitive tenacity. Entrepreneurial life is a vision of life threatened by “public” or “collectivist” interventions. [14] This vision of life has infiltrated our politics at large. This is why our attempts to craft a new “energy policy” often end up reproducing the same privatized logics of neoliberal hegemony: individualized “green” consumption; market based emission trading; price-incentives for new technology development. Indeed, as Andrew Ross provocatively argues, “sustainability” in places like metropolitan Phoenix simply reproduces pre-existing inequalities – a form of “eco-apartheid” wherein the rich carve out isolated spaces of “green living” while the poor are forced to live amongst the still all too common toxic byproducts of modern industrial life. [15] Moreover, it can be argued that the quarantining of “energy” or “environment” as its own separate “issue” – or field of policy intervention – is itself a historical product of the neoliberal celebration of fragmentation and “niche” markets. [16] Thus, the project to change our “energy policy” must first confront broader struggles over life, labor, and social inequality before our energy system could be changed in any sane, just and sustainable way. Indeed, at the core is the need to assert collective and democratic control over our energy system itself (it is now, of course, ruled by private capital with only one goal in mind: profit). It also must fundamentally be about offering an alternative vision of life; an alternative vision of freedom which, in the context of our oil-powered privatism, is simply equated with the right to be left alone from the invasive tentacles of “Big Government.” Like the New Deal, we need to begin to reimagine life and freedom as only possible through collective political struggle.

### Link: Workers

#### Nuclear power’s flaws are a product of class society. The aff’s focus on banning the technology completely ignores its emancipatory potential for workers.

SLP 81 “Socialism and Nuclear Power” A Socialist Labor Party Statement 1981 <http://www.slp.org/res_state_htm/soc_nuc_power.html> JW

Socialists can bring many important insights to the questions and concerns raised by nuclear technology. However, two aspects of the socialist perspective on the nuclear power issue are primary. One is the socialist understanding that in a profit-motivated capitalist economy, nuclear power, like all other technology, will inevitably be developed and applied in an unsafe and environmentally destructive manner. The other is the realization that only in a socialist society democratically controlled by workers will it be possible to rationally assess how—or if—nuclear power can be safely harnessed. Certainly, no solution to the current nuclear danger can be found by taking the problem out of the social context in which it exists. The primary problem with any technology under capitalism—even nuclear technology, which admittedly poses special problems—is not that it is inherently safe or unsafe, but rather that it is controlled by a ruling-class minority which manipulates technology to serve its narrow economic interests. Accordingly, amidst the growing concern over the nuclear dangers posed both by commercial power plants and by the obscene proliferation of nuclear weapons, the task of Marxists is to consistently emphasize the need to free all technology from the fetters of capitalist productive relations. On the one hand, Marxists clearly favor technological progress and the general expansion of society's productive forces. Accordingly, Socialists do not see the answer to the problems posed by nuclear technology in a technological retrogression of capitalist society. For one thing, it is utopian to suggest that society can or will return to a lower level of material development. Moreover, workers' interests directionally lie in furthering, rather than circumscribing, economic progress. Socialists thus seek to transform society into one based on new social relationships that will allow the worker-majority to become the master of technology, rather than vice versa. On the other hand, this Marxist tenet does not mean that Socialists blindly support nuclear technology. All technological innovation is not progress, and a socialist society may well decide that the hazards of nuclear technology render it no more useful than red dye #2. Nor should Socialists foster the illusion that the hazards of nuclear power will miraculously disappear with the advent of socialism. Socialist revolution will clearly sound the death knell of the profit-motive and the militarism which have generated the nuclear threat. But socialism is no panacea. Socialists cannot alter the half-life of plutonium nor render living organisms immune to radiation. At the same time, Socialists do not preclude the possibility that nuclear power may be safely harnessed in the future. What can be said is that the future of nuclear power in a socialist society will be a matter of rationally applying scientific know-how rather than a question hinging on the rate of profit. Clearly, the socialist perspective has thus far failed to impress itself on the antinuclear movement. This movement continues to be dominated by antitechnology currents, apolitical opponents of nuclear technology, and capitalist politicians and other liberal reformers. Responsibility for this situation lies, in part, with groups on the left which have failed to bring to the antinuclear movement the Marxist clarity it needs. Typifying this failure are the U.S. Communist Party (CP) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Complicating the CP's views on nuclear power is the fact that its masters in Moscow, like their ruling-class counterparts in Washington, are committed to both nuclear weapons and atomic power plants. The CP has yet to find a satisfactory way of reconciling its opportunistic desire to capitalize on the antinuclear movement and its inability to oppose the reckless nuclear proliferation being directed from the Kremlin. Taking a page out of the CP's book of opportunism, the SWP is taking up the call to shut the nukes down now, all the while seeing little need to establish the capitalist cause of the nuclear danger or to advance a socialist solution. As if black lung were the socialist answer to radiation poisoning, the SWP says the answer to the nuclear hazard is to mine more coal. The SWP asserts, of course, that mining of more coal must be done safely, but a safe mine is as much a pipe dream under capitalism as the accident-proof reactors that supposedly existed on Three Mile Island. That a nuclear danger exists now is clear. But Socialists cannot expediently set aside the realization that the solution to this danger is to free nuclear technology from the limitations and distortions imposed by capitalism. To capitalism falls the task of justifying its technological horrors on the basis of picking the lesser evil. To socialism falls the task of turning technology from the horror it currently is to the benefactor of an emancipated working class.

### Link: Substitution

#### Nuclear energy empirically acts as a substitute for fossil fuels, which are more capitalist.

Walters 13 David (David Walters was a power plant operator for 20 years at an IBEW organized facility, where he was a Shop Steward. He is a member of Socialist Organizer in Pacifica, CA.) “A socialist defends nuclear energy” Climate & Capitalism November 14th 2013 <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2013/11/14/socialist-defends-nuclear-energy/> JW

Energy, the environment, global climate change, and sea level rise are all huge, vast interconnected subjects that generate much debate and controversy at every level of society. One expects this when the future of our species, and all other species, are at stake. The center of this discussion can be narrowed down to one technological and scientific issue: the generation, use, and distribution of energy. The historic application, or utilization, of various forms of energy is a measure of human progress. Even before the rise of civilizations such as the Indus, Greek, Persian, and others long gone were relegated to the anthropology text books and museums, and even before the development of class society, human use of energy set us apart from all other species, including the higher ones such as dolphins and apes. Heat to cook food or keep warm in colder climates was the first human use of energy generated by the chemical reaction (though unknown to early humans) of hydrocarbons when brought to a higher temperature. This was low-density energy from a strictly biological source: wood. Every step up the climb from pre-class society through the first civilizations, through the massive slave societies of the Egyptian and Roman empires through feudalism, and into and including our modern imperialist; with every advance in the mode of production; with every step forward in the application of scientific techniques for growing food, understanding the seasons, and increasing productivity of commodity creation; each has been intertwined dialectically with the discovery and deployment of ever more abundant, ever more useful, ever more dense forms of energy that could be deployed easily by growing numbers of people seeking to make their lives easier. The rise and uplifting of human culture has always depended on, and been a function of, this development and utilization of cheaper, abundant and denser energy. Most on the socialist left have forgotten this. The development of energy use by humans shows an evolution from wood to water/hydro and wind to coal and later to petroleum and gas, and finally to nuclear power. Each has provided vaster quantities, and qualities, of energy for human use. Each one has beendenser than the last, that is, more energy could be extracted from each subsequent form per measured unit of weight or volume. This aided the expansion of the forces of production and the utilization of more labor-saving devices and techniques, and led to higher-quality goods and superior means of distribution. It this development of the productive forces that Marx saw as being increasingly in conflict with the mode of production we know as capitalism. Thus, he saw the increase in production per capita as a goal, a human species goal, and something to strive for. Capitalism was beginning to hold this back, and thus one of the main underpinnings of Marxism was established: showing the contradictory nature of capitalism and how historically it sows its own doom. But what does this have to do with the central question raised earlier? In the left today, and the much broader Green and environmental movements, this expansion of production is considered a “bad thing.” It causes pollution, ecological collapse, and climate change. No doubt, the rapid expansion of industry under capitalism in the 19th & 20th centuries has caused these terrible changes. But it also has allowed humans to develop solutions through techniques that could alleviate these problems were such forms of production placed under the democratic control of society, that is, what we call socialism. Marx understood at least under communism, production would have to increase to alleviate the grinding poverty that prevailed in 90% of the world’s population of his day. In his 1847 essay The Principles of Communism, he posed the following question and provided an answer: What will be the consequences of the ultimate disappearance of private property? Society will take all forces of production and means of commerce, as well as the exchange and distribution of products, out of the hands of private capitalists and will manage them in accordance with a plan based on the availability of resources and the needs of the whole society. In this way, most important of all, the evil consequences which are now associated with the conduct of big industry will be abolished. There will be no more crises; the expanded production, which for the present order of society is overproduction and hence a prevailing cause of misery, will then be insufficient and in need of being expanded much further. Instead of generating misery, overproduction will reach beyond the elementary requirements of society to assure the satisfaction of the needs of all; it will create new needs and, at the same time, the means of satisfying them. It will become the condition of, and the stimulus to, new progress, which will no longer throw the whole social order into confusion, as progress has always done in the past. Big industry, freed from the pressure of private property, will undergo such an expansion that what we now see will seem as petty in comparison as manufacture seems when put beside the big industry of our own day. This development of industry will make available to society a sufficient mass of products to satisfy the needs of everyone. The same will be true of agriculture, which also suffers from the pressure of private property and is held back by the division of privately owned land into small parcels. Here, existing improvements and scientific procedures will be put into practice, with a resulting leap forward which will assure to society all the products it needs. In this way, such an abundance of goods will be able to satisfy the needs of all its members. This holds as true today as it ever did in the imagination of Karl Marx before the 1848 upheavals across the European continent. For today’s 7 billion (and growing) people, socialism, which can only be built by harnessing the productive forces of the entire planet, promises what Marx wrote of in 1847. But we can do it wisely, anddemocratically, only if we eliminate the global imperialist system. Such a world of abundance will require more, not less energy. Yet, there is a belief, especially in the advanced Western countries of Europe and North America among socialists and activists for social change, that humans “use too much.” This is an idea that has been absorbed from the forces around the Greens and others who think there are too many people, that we cannot possibly sustain so many people on Earth, and that if we brought the standard of living of the entire world up to that enjoyed by workers in these Western countries, the planet would be ruined. Doing so under capitalism, the world would be ruined. Capitalism has no way to lift the masses from poverty. Consider the following: There are 1.6 billion people with no electricity. Billions of people have no access to energy efficient mass transportation. Billions of people have little or no access to education and health care. Increasingly vicious wars and privatization continue to cause grinding poverty, dislocation and environmental destruction. Capitalism is the cause. To bring the entire world to the (rapidly dropping) levels of Western workers or “middle income” families would require not simply a fundamental increase in wealth redistribution and energy, but a vast per-capita increase in both. But the refrain from many environmentalists and even socialists continued: “We use too much!” This is as reactionary as wanting to bust unions or launch wars of aggression of neo-colonial conquest. These same leftists put their hopes in the false panacea of what has been called a “100% fossil fuel-free/nuclear-free carbon-free renewable energy economy.” Many academic papers have been written seeking to prove the practicality of such a project. An equal number of papers destroy this myth; that is not the purpose of this essay. Rather, consider several points about energy. The advance of civilization has been predicated on the accessibility of and increased per-capita use of energy, but every paper advocating renewable energy is based on a massive reduction in per-capita energy use. While arguing renewable energy can power a high-tech civilization on a planetary scale, authors believe that such an endeavor itself could be carbon-free. Consider one example: according to almost all studies, land-based wind energy, the only kind being built in the United States, uses 8 to 12 times the amount of concrete per unit of energy compared to nuclear power. Concrete uses massive amounts of dirty natural gas in its production. It uses more steel, copper, and aluminum, not to mention that far more intensive extraction-mining of rare earth metals is required for wind generators than for nuclear power. Because wind and solar energy have actual usable energy production, or capacity factors (CFs), that are very low, massive overbuilding of these systems will be needed. Nuclear energy in the United States is around 90% CF; that is, 90% of the time, a 1,000 MW plant produces 1,000 MWs. In some countries, it is even higher. Wind’s CF on land-based wind farms is only 33%. Solar is only 20% because the sun is only at its useable height in the sky from about 10am to 3pm. What to do? There is a lot of talk about storage, big batteries, or using hot molten salts to store power. This can be done, but can it be done on a genuine utility-scale basis? The costs are overwhelming, as every solar and wind plant utilizing storage has proven. And they have remained in the experimental stage for more than a decade. Nuclear is safe. This sounds like an outrageous claim in light of Fukushima and Chernobyl. In fact, the number of deaths per amount of energy for nuclear is way lower than it is for fossil fuel. It is lower than wind and solar if installation and industrial accidents are taken into account. People will argue about the numbers, but given what our species face with respect to global climate change, this is the wrong argument. Those numbers are going to be outrageous; they already are. Fukushima could have been prevented. The capitalist board of directors of Fukushima’s operator TEPCO had its seawall only to minimum “recommendations” when common practice in other countries, for private or public utilities, is to build beyond specs. They also built their fuel tanks for the auxiliary diesel generators powering their auxiliary cooling system right on the water at their intake structure, rather than locating them behind the plant up on the hill from where the video was taken of the tsunami hitting the plant. There would have been no “Fukushima accident” had TEPCO put safety ahead of profits. However, there were no deaths from the accident itself (compared to the 20,000 who died from the earth quake and tsunami itself!) and many experts believe there will likely be no fatalities because the population was exposed to so very little radiation after the accident. Chernobyl, a truly horrific accident that caused 4,000 treatable thyroid cancer incidents (a number most likely vastly under-reported), was a one-off incident. A converted military-style reactor built by the U.S.S.R using a design banned in all but two countries of the world, exploded. The explosion sent dozens of tons of fuel into the atmosphere. There are still 10 such reactors online and yet, despite Chernobyl and despite the collapse of the U.S.S.R., there have been exactly zero other accidents of the type that happened there at any of those plants. Why? The nuclear industry in Russia stepped up and engineered out the ability of humans to cause such an accident, and began to add large, heavy containment to existing plants and design it into future plants. The Russians also stopped building this type of Chernobyl-style reactor. Even under capitalism, the nuclear industry, despite corruption, despite the profit motive, has proved superior to the fossil fuel industry (including both privately run and publicly owned plants) in the number of deaths incurred through normal operations. Any comparison of fossil fuel plants and nuclear favors nuclear technology shows this to be the case. Socialists argue that, like any technology, nuclear energy would be far better employed in a democratically run, worker- and consumer-controlled public power grid. Of this there can be no doubt. But we are talking about technologies that are being employed under capitalism generally. Many developing countries are delving into nuclear energy and developing nuclear plants or at least the safety regimes required by international law as a prerequisite to building a nuclear grid. Countries currently building nuclear grids include China, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, the UAE, South Africa/Azania, and many more. They do this without influence from the “Nuclear Industry” or other lobby groups but after reviewing all the alternatives. Some of these same countries are also building new coal and gas plants and, at the same time, investing massive amounts to develop wind and solar power. France is the world’s premier user of nuclear energy. The French ruling class decided that France had to eliminate its reliance on burning oil for power generation. In 15 years, France went from zero to 79% of its grid powered by 54 nuclear power plants. When an electric car gets plugged into the wall at night for recharging, or an aluminum plant is running to produce the millions of tons of aluminum needed in a modern society, everyone in France knows it is nuclear, not fossil fuel, providing the power. France has demonstrated that even a capitalist economy can rid itself of fossil fuels if it deploys nuclear. There is nothing objectionable about wind and solar power per se. They can be useful and should be deployed in a limited fashion depending on local conditions (their ability to displace coal and gas is overstated; they are married to both, as the experiences of Germany and Denmark, where wind and solar power are deployed widely, have shown). But it is nuclear power that socialists should be fighting for: it is power on demand 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year; and every megawatt produced by a nuclear plant can displace, permanently, an equal number of MWs produced from fossil fuels. No renewable source of energy, save for hydro-electricity (which has limited potential) can make the same claim. This fact alone should disqualify renewables for serious consideration as the solution to climate change. While massive amounts of renewable energy has been deployed in Europe, not a single fossil-fuel plant has been phased out as a result. Nuclear, however, immediately displaces a fossil-fuel generation plant. China, which today has 30 nuclear plants under construction, would be building 30 coal-fired plants if the nation could not or was not allowed to go nuclear. Socialists should not only be defending the right of developing countries to build nuclear power plants, we should be demanding the bosses’ governments do so, and expand its deployment. We should be fighting for workers governments to come to power to organize society along the lines outlined here. Socialists should oppose waste and inefficiency. These problems are worse in underdeveloped countries than in the advanced countries, but because per-capita energy use is much higher in the latter any amount of wasted energy generally compounds already existing problems from garbage to overextraction of resources to pollution, as well as climate change. We should be for conservation and efficiency as a function of any rational society based on human needs and not profit. But this doesn’t mean lowering anyone’s standard of living (except the bankers and bosses, of course!). It really means a full-on reorganization of our productive and consumption capacity with the goal of raising the development level of the underdeveloped world in a rational and democratic manner, no longer under the jackboot of imperialism. What does this mean, really, in many underdeveloped countries where only 10% of the population has access to electricity? Does it mean a 50″ flat-screen LCD television? A 24-cubic-foot Sub-Zero refrigerator? Central air conditioning and two SUVs in the front of a 3,000-square-foot home? Of course not. And yet, this seems to be what so many think when they object to raising the standard of living of the billions in underdeveloped countries to those of the West. No, it means this: it means the right to generate and use electricity. The right to the ubiquitous light switch we take for granted in the West. It means electric light available day and night, whenever an individual decides he or she wants to read, whenever a student wants to study. It means at least a small refrigerator where leftovers can be chilled without spoiling. It means a laptop computer and access to the Internet. It means, perhaps, a small television. It means some air conditioning, perhaps only in one room, so children don’t suffer diseases brought on by increasing temperatures in our world. It means an electric hotplate or stove top so the 30,000 women and children who die every year in India from cooking with charcoal indoors can live. That is what energy means, and that is why we need more of it, a lot more, and why it has to be carbon free. This is what it will take to make all of Africa, India, and most of South Asia “developed.” The anti-nuclear movement condemns billions of people to decades’ more energy starvation because of misplaced liberal guilt over greenhouse gas emissions. Rather than coming up with truly better ways to produce energy, this movement wants us to down-gear and “use less.” This is why anti-nuclear idealism should be characterized as a reactionary response to the climate crisis, and it explains why socialists who adapt to the Green ideology have lost their bearings. Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) of 30MW to 300MWs can be built in mass production lines, lowering their cost. They can be set up in rural parts of any country and have an electricity grid literally built around them that could, eventually, be connected to and form a national grid that would enhance development and raise people’s standard of living. There are only two things holding this up: Imperialism, which has been breaking up countries, fomenting civil wars, and destroying the national economies of these countries. The anti-nuclear/Green movement, which views any development in general as harming the planet, and sees nuclear energy as particularly evil. For socialists to recapture the true vision of Marxism and the early revolutionaries of the 19thand 20th centuries means learning the lessons of the downside of the development of the productive forces such as climate change. It means using science and technology to alleviate and reverse the environmental damage capitalism has created, so we can live up to Marx’s vision of a new society: “Society will take all forces of production and means of commerce, as well as the exchange and distribution of products, out of the hands of private capitalists and will manage them in accordance with a plan based on the availability of resources and the needs of the whole society. In this way, most important of all, the evil consequences which are now associated with the conduct of big industry will be abolished. “There will be no more crises; the expanded production, which for the present order of society is overproduction and hence a prevailing cause of misery, will then be insufficient and in need of being expanded much further.”

### Impact: Extinction

#### Capitalism causes multiple scenarios for extinction. It’s try or die.

Chengu 13 Garikai Chengu (fellow of the Du Bois Institute for African Research at Harvard University). “Capitalism: A Cancer That Threatens Humanity.” December 22nd, 2013. <http://bravenewworld.in/2013/12/22/capitalism-a-cancer-that-threatens-humanity/>

Capitalism is like cancer. Once it enters a host country’s economy, it will spread and devour labour, the environment, and any other impediment to the growth of profit. Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell. The essence of capitalism is to turn nature into commodities and commodities into capital. However, the world cannot continue to get richer as the earth becomes poorer. Just as the only inevitability in life is death, the only inevitability about our capitalist way of life, is the death of our planet. Capitalism is malignant. Think about it. For most of human history, we have lived on the edge of starvation. Nowadays, in our over-consumptive gluttony, we are starving the earth. The global food system produces more than enough for every man, woman and child; yet capitalism’s misdistribution of resources means that countless people starve to death. If you condense the earth’s history – about 4,54 billion years – to just one year, humans have been here for only about 23 minutes. Capitalism, as the dominant, global ideology, has existed for a matter of seconds. For over 130,000 years, mankind has lived harmoniously with the earth. It is only the last 500 years of capitalist ascendancy, which have caused the ongoing desecration of the earth. The classic pattern of cancer mutation and spread can be seen through the ongoing destruction of the planet’s vital organs: water, soil, air and biodiversity. It is said that if all insects on earth were wiped out, humans would cease to exist within 25 years. If all humans vanished, all other life forms would once again thrive. In many pre-capitalist societies and natural systems, resources and final products are interlinked. Organic matter circulates, being re-used constantly. There are no garbage dumps of unusable matter in nature. Mother Nature provides many renewable energy sources, such as sunlight, water and wind. But, many of the world’s largest corporations choose to ignore these resources, because they depend heavily on burning fossil fuels for profit. Such destructive processes cannot continue for long without destroying the host body. Military weapons are among the leading manufactured goods traded globally. So are cigarettes, junk food, carcinogenic chemicals, greenhouse gases and many other goods that are lethal for [hu]mankind. The uncontrolled spread of global capitalism not only threatens the environment; it also threatens another pillar of modern civilisation: democracy. Extractive Capitalism and the Divisions in the Latin American Progressive Camp A major step in the diagnosis of capitalism as a cancer is that in all cancerous pathologies, a living organism’s immune system fails to recognise the tumor. The media, universities, and governments do not recognise the destructive capitalist system’s malignant growth, but actively collaborate with it. Governments in democratic systems are supposed to defend the environment from the excesses of capitalism. The problem is that capitalism has infected democracy, such that governments put the interests of profit before the environment. Capitalist democracy inevitably leads to a dictatorship of capital. While the US political system remains democratic in form, because freedom of speech and association are preserved and elections are free; in essence, it is becoming a plutocracy. After all, can a nation be credibly called a democracy if it requires a candidate to raise $1 billion in campaign funds from corporations and Wall Street speculators? During the 1800s, governments would hang speculators. Nowadays, speculators take the form of Wall Street bankers who own governments. Wall Street regulates Congress, not the other way around. In the early 1800s, Thomas Jefferson prophetically remarked, “the end of democracy and the defeat of the American Revolution will occur when government falls into the hands of lending institutions and moneyed incorporations”. The rich finance the political candidates who protect their interests. Money becomes speech, silencing the poor. Campaign contributions become votes; thus, the poor are politically marginalised. A civilisation can be judged by how it treats its poorest members. Capitalism cuts public services that serve as immune systems to protect the poor, whilst increasing privatisation, which only benefits the rich. Private jets, private health care, private schools, private prisons, and private security. Then we wonder why our elite politicians cut public services? Profit maximization is the fundamental principle of capitalism. Profit, however, is indifferent to human suffering. In fact, profit is committed at every stage of its growth to the direct multiplication of itself. The similarities with a carcinogen are starkly evident. With all that said, the poison serves as its antidote: all-devouring capitalism will eventually devour itself. However, capitalism will be the dominant system for years to come because it appeals to Man’s worst qualities. The only question is whether civilisation can survive capitalism?

### Impact: V2L & Ethics

#### Cap kills value to life and precludes ethics.

Morgareidge 98 Morgareidge, Clayton, Prof of Philosophy at Lewis & Clark College, 1998, Why Capitalism is Evil 08/22 http://www.lclark.edu/~clayton/commentaries/evil.html

To show why this is the case, let me turn to capital's greatest critic, Karl Marx. **Under capitalism**, Marx writes, **everything** in nature and everything that human beings are and can do **becomes an object: a resource for**, or an obstacle to, **the expansion of production**, the development of technology, the growth of markets, and the circulation of money. For those who manage and live from capital, **nothing has value of its own. Mountain streams, clean air, human lives -- all mean nothing in themselves, but are valuable only** if they can be used **to turn a profit.** If capital looks at (not into) the human face, it sees there only eyes through which brand names and advertising can enter and mouths that can demand and consume food, drink, and tobacco products. If human faces express needs, then either products can be manufactured to meet, or seem to meet, those needs, or else, if the needs are incompatible with the growth of capital, then the faces expressing them must be unrepresented or silenced. Obviously what capitalist enterprises do have consequences for the well being of human beings and the planet we live on. Capital profits from the production of food, shelter, and all the necessities of life. The production of all these things uses human lives in the shape of labor, as well as the resources of the earth. If we care about life, if we see our obligations in each others faces, then we have to want all the things capital does to be governed by that care, to be directed by the ethical concern for life. But feeding people is not the aim of the food industry, or shelter the purpose of the housing industry. In medicine, making profits is becoming a more important goal than caring for sick people. As capitalist enterprises these activities aim single-mindedly at the accumulation of capital, and such purposes as caring for the sick or feeding the hungry becomes a mere means to an end, an instrument of corporate growth. Therefore **ethics**, the overriding commitment to meeting human need, **is left out of deliberations about what the heavyweight institutions of our society are going to do.** Moral convictions are expressed in churches, in living rooms, in letters to the editor, sometimes even by politicians and widely read commentators, but almost always with an attitude of resignation to the inevitable. People no longer say, "You can't stop progress," but only because they have learned not to call economic growth progress. They still think they can't stop it. And they are right -- as long as the production of all our needs and the organization of our labor is carried out under private ownership. Only a minority ("idealists") can take seriously a way of thinking that counts for nothing in real world decision making. **Only when the end of capitalism is on the table will ethics have a seat at the table.**

### Impact: Oppression

#### Class focus must come first-it is the root cause of oppression.

Kovel 7 Kovel, Prof. of Social Studies @ Bard, 2007 [Joel, “The Enemy of Nature”, p. 140-]

If, however, we ask the question of efficacy, that is, which split sets the others into motion, then priority would have to be given to class, for the plain reason that class relations entail the state as an instrument of enforcement and control, and it is the state that shapes and organizes the splits that appear in human ecosystems. Thus class is both logically and historically distinct from other forms of exclusion (hence we should not talk of "classism" to go along with "sexism" and "racism," and "species-ism"). This is, first of all, because class is an essentially man-made category, without root in even a mystified biology. We cannot, in other words, imagine a human world without gender distinctions - although we can imagine a world without domination by gender. But a world without class is eminently imaginable - indeed, such was the human world for the great majority of our species' time on earth, during all of which considerable fuss was made over gender. Historically, the difference arises because "class" signifies one side of a larger figure that includes a state apparatus whose conquests and regulations create races and shape gender relations. Thus there will be no true resolution of racism so long as class society stands, inasmuch as a racially oppressed society implies the activities of a class-defending state." Nor can gender inequality be legislated away so long as class society, with its state, demands the super-exploitation of woman's labor. Class society continually generates gender, racial, ethnic oppressions, and the like, which take on a life of their own, as well as profoundly affecting the concrete relations of class itself. It follows that class politics must be fought out in terms of all the active forms of social splitting. It is the management of these divisions that keeps state society functional. Thus though each person in a class society is reduced from what s/he can become, the varied reductions can be combined into the great stratified regimes of history - this one becoming a fierce warrior, that one a routine-loving clerk, another a submissive seamstress, and so on, until we reach today's personifications of capital and captains of industry.

### Impact: Poverty

#### Capitalism is the root cause of poverty. The Kritik turns case.

Wainwright ‘13

Hilary Wainwright. The Poverty of Capitalism: roundtable. <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2013-12-17/the-poverty-of-capitalism-roundtable>

The Poverty of Capitalism starts from the gross injustice of contemporary capitalism and goes on to identify global multinational corporations as the real sources of power behind capitalism. John, can you tell us a bit about how and why you came to write the book? John The book is designed to situate all of the things that War on Want works on, all the injustices around the world, very firmly within the struggle against capitalism and the globalised capitalist economy. The starting point is that we have just come through this massive crisis of capitalism, and yet in just a trice you have the whole system being remade in exactly the same form. It’s as if you have a terrible heart attack and surgery, you’ve just come out of intensive care and the doctor says there’s no need to change anything of your previous life, don’t exercise much and keep up your intake of fatty foods! It’s got that sense that we’ve learnt nothing at all, just going back to exactly where we were and hoping to avoid the same problems. Doreen Exactly. We have to look at the structural causes of the poverty that John is talking about, a poverty that has been grotesquely exacerbated over the last four decades of neoliberalism. If we say we have to look at causes rather than symptoms, the underlying argument is that poverty isn’t a matter of distribution, so it can’t be solved by redistribution. What’s at issue is reorganising the structures that have produced the poverty in the first place. John We have learnt as a result of the crisis that capitalism is at the heart of the problem – a system set up for the benefit of the few and based on the impoverishment of the many. Doreen In a sense neoliberalism has forced the issues onto the agenda in a way that I don’t think was the case under social democracy. To me that means we must seize this moment and have a particularly aggressive attack on inequality. Francisco And let’s not forget that neoliberalism didn’t start in the UK or US. It started in Chile in 1973 and was so brutal that democracy had to be destroyed and 10,000 people assassinated for them to implement what they wanted. The levels of exploitation, abuse, imposition, the way the sovereignty of the country was sold out, the wave of privatisation and the horrible consequences for the population . . . it makes you sick. Had they been able to privatise air, they would have done. But even where formal liberal-democratic institutions aren’t assaulted so directly as in Chile under Allende, markets have effectively overridden any pretence of democratic representation. Doreen Yes absolutely. We need to talk about democracy because the accumulation of power into capital under neoliberalism hasn’t only exacerbated inequality in terms of income and poverty but has absolutely eviscerated democracy. Inequality is not only economic but about voice, political voice and political interest.

### Impact – Racism

#### Capitalism is the root cause of racism.

IBT 93 “Capitalism and Racism,” International Bolshevik Tendency. 1993. http://www.bolshevik.org/1917/no12/no12capitalismandracism.html

The absence of any scientific basis for distinguishing one "race" from another makes the whole concept meaningless. Yet biological refutation does not affect the social reality. As Richard Fraser, a veteran American Trotskyist, pointed out in "The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution," a document written in the 1950s and recently republished, race remains "a reality in spite of the fact that science reveals that it does not exist." Fraser wrote that: "The concept of race has now been overthrown in biological science. But *race*as the keystone of exploitation remains. Race is a social relation and has only a social reality." **Racism is rooted in** the historical development of **cap**italism as a world system**.** It has proved through several centuries to be a useful and flexible tool for the possessing classes. It justified the brutal wars of conquest and genocide, which established the European colonial empires. It rationalized **the slave trade**, which **produced** the primitive accumulation of **capital necessary for the industrial revolution.** Today racism in its various guises remains an important ideological mainstay for the capitalist elites, providing a rationale for the barbaric oppression of minorities. **Racism "explains,"** for example, **why black people in America fail to get a piece of the "American Dream" one generation after another.** It can be used to "explain" why Japanese capitalism has been much more successful than its European and North American rivals. The arguments offered by **racists**, whether the psychotic ravings of a lumpenized skinhead or the "objective," pseudo-scientific scholarship of a Harvard professor, **seek to direct popular anger away from** the workings of an irrational and decaying **cap**italist system **to** some group of **"outsiders." Racism** has proved integral and necessary for the proper functioning of capitalist society for a variety of reasons. In the first place, it **provides one of the essential axes along which the working class can be divided against itself, encouraging one segment of the proletariat to identify with the exploiters. This impedes** the development of **class consciousness and undermines** the **unity necessary to challenge cap**italist rule**.** The working class of every imperialist country has been so poisoned with chauvinism and racism (also promoted by pro-capitalist misleaderships within the workers' movement) that in "normal" periods, workers often identify their interests with those of their "own" oppressors and exploiters rather than with those of workers in other countries. Secondly, racism, in common with other forms of biological determinism, has an essential ideological function. The bourgeoisie rose to ascendancy under the banner of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Yet for hundreds of millions of people daily reality in the world capitalist order is misery, oppression and poverty. Even in the so-called advanced capitalist countries there is a growing cynicism about the electoral process, with most adults recognizing that the "equality" of the ballot box is no different from the "equality of the market place—every dollar is equal, and big money takes all. Racists are not burdened with the obligation to prove that capitalist society is egalitarian. Instead, they openly claim that the inequalities of class society are based on natural distinctions.

#### The AC flatly ignores that white supremacy is not the product of the agency of the white proletarian, but a tool of capital to divide labor.

Sawyer 72 Alan Sawyer “A Critique of “White Blindspot”: A Contribution to the Struggle against a Petty-Bourgeois Line on the Question of Working Class Unity” Encyclopedia of Anti-Revisionism On-Line 1972 <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/wbs-critique.htm>

But what of the deal itself? According to the paper **the masses of white workers are supposed to go out and conquer the world’s colored** laboring **masses in return for a few crumbs**. We ask: how are they supposed to do this? **In** modern **capitalist society the** usual **method of conquering is** through **the** large standing **army**. But what color is this army? **Do we not see large numbers of Black and Third World people in the army?** Now, **why would** Black and Third World **people join the army if they are not getting these few crumbs** that the whites have made a deal to get in return for which the whites are supposed to be in the army? **Possibly because there is a gun to their heads?** And quite possibly **there is also a gun to the heads of the whites** also? In other words, it is not any particular “deal” that is the main reason why whites (and Blacks and Third World people) help the bourgeoisie enslave the non-white majority of the earth’s laboring forces, but it is the coercive force of state power that forces the whites and Blacks and Third World people to do this, against their wills. **If** race **privilege enters** in **at all, it is to make coercion more palatable for some** whites,to confuse the issues **and divide the working class**. But as a means of compulsion, it is absolutely secondary and therefore a mistake to put it primary as the DEAL does.

#### The paradigm of “whiteness” rests on a flawed conception of racism which encourages ignorance of the underlying cause of racism, promotes an interminable racial struggle between minority and white proletarians, and settling for pathetic bourgeois compromise solutions which at best promise equal exploitation for all.

Sawyer 72 Alan Sawyer “A Critique of “White Blindspot”: A Contribution to the Struggle against a Petty-Bourgeois Line on the Question of Working Class Unity” Encyclopedia of Anti-Revisionism On-Line 1972 <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/wbs-critique.htm>

**The** principal **mistake in** the WBS **[whiteness theory] is its conception of racism**. WBS **[Whiteness theory] states: the** material **basis of white chauvinism is the practice of white supremacy**. (p. 3 WBS) **This is a circular argument. Where does white supremacy come from? Does it fall from the sky?** It is the equivalent of saying: class antagonism comes from the practice of class exploitation. This leaves out the material basis of class exploitation – the capitalist system. Any combating of exploitation that does not seek to destroy the capitalist system can only leave the basis for class antagonisms and exploitation intact. Likewise, **any combating of** the practice of **white supremacy, unconnected to the capitalist system** from which it springs and which nurtures it, **leaves** white chauvinism and **white supremacy intact**. **This failure to understand that the basis of** white chauvinism and **white supremacy lies**, in the final analysis, **in the world capitalist system**, leads to many errors. It **leads to not placing the struggle against white supremacy as part of** the main struggle, **the struggle against capitalism.** Flowing from the principal error, WBS **[whiteness] places the principal contradiction** as a contradiction **among the people, the contradiction between white and Black workers, and not the contradiction between the people and the enemy, the** contradiction between **the bourgeoisie** and the proletariat and its allies. Conversely, WBS does not understand that contained within the struggle to unite the people, to combat white supremacy, is the struggle against the bourgeoisie and the capitalist system because it is from these that white supremacy and racism spring. WBS **[Whiteness theory] calls for a more equitable division of the “pie” under capitalism as a means for combating white supremacy. 8% unemployment for all.** Black and white together, then we can march together, shouts WBS. This is completely in line with making the principal contradiction among the people and not understanding that unemployment, white supremacy and white chauvinism are connected to the capitalism system. **To leave us kicking about within the manifestations of the** injustices of the capitalist **system** without attacking capitalism, **leaves us** directionless, forever **condemned to** warding off blows and **not attacking our oppressors**.

### Alt: Socialist Humanism

#### The alternative is recommitment to class struggle grounded in socialist humanism---pedagogical recommitment to Marxist struggle is key.

Peter McLaren 4, Education and Urban Schooling Division prof, UCLA—and Valerie Scatamburlo-D'Annibale; University of Windsor, Educational Philosophy and Theory, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2004, [www.freireproject.org/articles/node%2065/RCGS/class\_dismissed-val-peter.10.pdf](http://www.freireproject.org/articles/node%2065/RCGS/class_dismissed-val-peter.10.pdf)

These are the concrete realities of our time—realities that require a vigorous class analysis, an unrelenting critique of capitalism and an oppositional politics capable of confronting what Ahmad (1998, p. 2) refers to as ‘capitalist universality.’ They are realities that require something more than that which is offered by the prophets of ‘difference’ and post-Marxists who would have us relegate socialism to the scrapheap of history and mummify Marxism along with Lenin's corpse. Never before has a Marxian analysis of capitalism and class rule been so desperately needed. That is not to say that everything Marx said or anticipated has come true, for that is clearly not the case. Many critiques of Marx focus on his strategy for moving toward socialism, and with ample justification; nonetheless Marx did provide us with fundamental insights into class society that have held true to this day. Marx's enduring relevance lies in his indictment of capitalism which continues to wreak havoc in the lives of most. While capitalism's cheerleaders have attempted to hide its sordid underbelly, Marx's description of capitalism as the sorcerer's dark power is even more apt in light of contemporary historical and economic conditions. Rather than jettisoning Marx, decentering the role of capitalism, and discrediting class analysis, radical educators must continue to engage Marx's oeuvre and extrapolate from it that which is useful pedagogically, theoretically, and, most importantly, politically in light of the challenges that confront us. The urgency which animates Amin’s call for a collective socialist vision necessitates, as we have argued, moving beyond the particularism and liberal pluralism that informs the ‘politics of difference.’ It also requires challenging the questionable assumptions that have come to constitute the core of contemporary ‘radical’ theory, pedagogy and politics. In terms of effecting change, what is needed is a cogent understanding of the systemic nature of exploitation and oppression based on the precepts of a radical political economy approach (outlined above) and one that incorporates Marx’s notion of ‘unity in difference’ in which people share widely common material interests. Such an understanding extends far beyond the realm of theory, for the manner in which we choose to interpret and explore the social world, the concepts and frameworks we use to express our sociopolitical understandings, are more than just abstract categories. They imply intentions, organizational practices, and political agendas. Identifying class analysis as the basis for our understandings and class struggle as the basis for political transformation implies something quite different than constructing a sense of political agency around issues of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. Contrary to ‘Shakespeare’s assertion that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,’ it should be clear that this is not the case in political matters. Rather, in politics ‘the essence of the ﬂower lies in the name by which it is called’ (Bannerji, 2000, p. 41). The task for progressives today is to seize the moment and plant the seeds for a political agenda that is grounded in historical possibilities and informed by a vision committed to overcoming exploitative conditions. These seeds, we would argue, must be derived from the tree of radical political economy. For the vast majority of people today—people of all ‘racial classiﬁcations or identities, all genders and sexual orientations’—the common frame of reference arcing across ‘difference’, the ‘concerns and aspirations that are most widely shared are those that are rooted in the common experience of everyday life shaped and constrained by political economy’ (Reed, 2000, p. xxvii). While post-Marxist advocates of the politics of ‘difference’ suggest that such a stance is outdated, we would argue that the categories which they have employed to analyze ‘the social’ are now losing their usefulness, particularly in light of actual contemporary ‘social movements.’ All over the globe, there are large anti-capitalist movements afoot. In February 2002, chants of ‘Another World Is Possible’ became the theme of protests in Porto Allegre. It seems that those people struggling in the streets haven’t read about T.I.N.A., the end of grand narratives of emancipation, or the decentering of capitalism. It seems as though the struggle for basic survival and some semblance of human dignity in the mean streets of the dystopian metropoles doesn’t permit much time or opportunity to read the heady proclamations emanating from seminar rooms. As E. P. Thompson (1978, p. 11) once remarked, sometimes ‘experience walks in without knocking at the door, and announces deaths, crises of subsistence, trench warfare, unemployment, inﬂation, genocide.’ This, of course, does not mean that socialism will inevitably come about, yet a sense of its nascent promise animates current social movements. Indeed, noted historian Howard Zinn (2000, p. 20) recently pointed out that after years of single-issue organizing (i.e. the politics of difference), the WTO and other anti-corporate capitalist protests signaled a turning point in the ‘history of movements of recent decades,’ for it was the issue of ‘class’ that more than anything ‘bound everyone together.’ History, to paraphrase Thompson (1978, p. 25) doesn’t seem to be following Theory’s script. Our vision is informed by Marx's historical materialism and his revolutionary socialist humanism, which must not be conflated with liberal humanism. For left politics and pedagogy, a socialist humanist vision remains crucial, whose fundamental features include the creative potential of people to challenge collectively the circumstances that they inherit. This variant of humanism seeks to give expression to the pain, sorrow and degradation of the oppressed, those who labor under the ominous and ghastly cloak of ‘globalized’ capital. It calls for the transformation of those conditions that have prevented the bulk of humankind from fulfilling its potential. It vests its hope for change in the development of critical consciousness and social agents who make history, although not always in conditions of their choosing. The political goal of socialist humanism is, however, ‘not a resting in difference’ but rather ‘the emancipation of difference at the level of human mutuality and reciprocity.’ This would be a step forward for the ‘discovery or creation of our real differences which can only in the end be explored in reciprocal ways’ (Eagleton, 1996, p. 120). Above all else, the enduring relevance of a radical socialist pedagogy and politics is the centrality it accords to the interrogation of capitalism. We can no longer afford to remain indifferent to the horror and savagery committed by capitalist's barbaric machinations. We need to recognize that capitalist democracy is unrescuably contradictory in its own self-constitution. Capitalism and democracy cannot be translated into one another without profound efforts at manufacturing empty idealism. Committed Leftists must unrelentingly cultivate a democratic socialist vision that refuses to forget the ‘wretched of the earth,’ the children of the damned and the victims of the culture of silence—a task which requires more than abstruse convolutions and striking ironic poses in the agnostic arena of signifying practices. Leftists must illuminate the little shops of horror that lurk beneath ‘globalization’s’ shiny façade; they must challenge the true ‘evils’ that are manifest in the tentacles of global capitalism's reach. And, more than this, Leftists must search for the cracks in the edifice of globalized capitalism and shine light on those fissures that give birth to alternatives. Socialism today, undoubtedly, runs against the grain of received wisdom, but its vision of a vastly improved and freer arrangement of social relations beckons on the horizon. Its unwritten text is nascent in the present even as it exists among the fragments of history and the shards of distant memories. Its potential remains untapped and its promise needs to be redeemed.

#### Educational spaces must focus on resistance to the logic of capital by embracing socialism.

D’Annibale ’06 Valerie Scatamburlo-D’Annibale, award-winning author and educator, is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies @ University of Windsor “Imagining the Impossible: Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy Against the 21st Century American Imperium” International Journal of Progressive Education Vol: 2 Issue: 3

The Boy Emperor and his minions would have us believe that our only choice is to embrace the manic logic of American imperialist capitalism disguised as “democracy.” But as concerned citizens, activists, educators, workers, and students, we must vigorously challenge such an assertion. While they would like to have the citizens of the United States (indeed, the whole world) [to] sit back and let them take care of “democracy,” we need to remind ourselves that democracy is not a spectator sport. It cannot exist in a context where corporations rule the world and where the fruits produced by labouring humanity are horded by the global capitalist elite. It cannot exist when anyone who opposes the policies of the IMF, the World Bank, and/or th e WTO or any nation which rejects the “Washington consensus” runs the risk of being tarred and feathered with the label of “terrorist.” It cannot exist when governments lie to their citizens and when wars are fought to increase the profit margins of multinational corporations at the expense of innocents slaughtered and bodies mangled on battlefields strewn with limbs lost and dreams dashed. Democracy cannot exist when entire populations are being obliterated through genocide, when people are starving, when human rights are being trampled upon both at home and abroad. Capitalism, in short, cannot be “rescued for democracy” for “capitalism is beyond salvation” and so is the very notion of democracy “so long as it looks to capitalism to support it” (McLaren, 2007, xvii). At this point in history, McLaren (2005; 2006; 2007) urges us to expose the inner workings of the so-called “benevolent” imperialism of Pax Americana in all its social ugliness and to emphasize that the agenda of neoliberalism and its concomitant militarism is driven by corporate interests that are fundamentally at odds with the interests of working people. We need to start asking and exploring the “big” questions. We need a new vision of human sociality and we need to dare to speak the language of socialism. To that end, McLaren’s revolutionary critical pedagogy can offer us some valuable insights. Against Capital This is definitely not a postcapitalist world, nor is it a post-Marxist one (Foster, 2002, p. 43). Cutting ourselves off from Marx is to cut off our investigative noses to satisfy the superficial face of contemporary intellectual fashion (Harvey, 2000, p. 12). [i]mperialism has, from the beginning, been part and parcel of capitalism and will not be eliminated until capitalism itself is ended (Foster and McChesney, 2004, p. 11). McLaren points to a development that has troubled many progressive educators over the years, namely, the domestication of critical pedagogy within the academy. Once a fierce critic of U.S. imperialism and capitalist exploitation, critical pedagogy has become so “conceptually psychologized, so liberally humanized, so technologized, and so conceptually postmodernized that its current relationship to broader liberation struggles seems severely attenuated if not fatally terminated” (2005, p. 33). In light of such domesticating gestures, critical pedagogy seems to have lost its potential to serve as a trenchant challenge to globalized capital and U.S. imperialist aggression. As such McLaren’s attempts to revivify the political roots of critical pedagogy by reintroducing the language of class struggle and Marxist-humanism (under the rubric of revolutionary critical pedagogy) come at a much needed juncture. Since we live at a time when capitalism has become an unrepentant universal system, the basis of our struggles, of our resistance, of our revolutionary praxis must be grounded in an equally universalist narrative—that of socialism. We must transcend the deconstructive dalliances of those post-al theorists who have abandoned metanarratives—particularly those of Marxism and socialism—for in all of their deconstructive posturing they have ignored the most “meta of all metanarratives”—namely, the “creeping annexation of the globe for the dominance of capital over labouring humanity” (Ahmad, 1997, p. 364). It seems that in recent years, the only “ism” which hasn’t garnered the interest of many self-proclaimed radicals is that of capitalism. McLaren vividly calls our attention to this problematic void within so much of contemporary theory and urges us to utilize the tools of Marxist analysis to contest current social relations linked to the globalization of capital. He cautions us, however, that Marxist educationalists must also avoid the numbing altitudes of abstract cogitation that seldom touch political realities here on earth. Rather than speaking to one another in self-referential code, engaging in scholastic rituals, and navigating “theory for its own sake or for academic jollification,” they must demonstrate the utility of Marxism by applying it to political actualities and by working towards creating the “conditions for a social revolution” (McLaren, 2006, viii). This task has assumed an even greater importance in light of current conditions for as Jameson (1998, p. 136-137) reminds us we seem to be returning to “the most fundamental form of class struggle.” In this regard, the line of thought derived from Marx is far from obsolete. Given the entrenchment of neoliberal globalization practices and the global dominance of U.S. military might, McLaren (2006, p. 19) reminds us that class struggle is as important as it ever was, perhaps even more so. And as more and more of humanity faces the ravages of capitalism’s totalizing impulses and the savagery of wars fought on behalf of capital, his revolutionary critical pedagogy points to the need to understand and confront the “antagonistic relation between labor and capital” that “constitutes the essence of capitalism” (Ibid, p. 95). This entails a much different conceptualization of class than that offered by post-al theory which tends to view class as simply about habits and behaviour, cultural status, or social prestige, or that suggests that class is merely a language sign whose meaning is overpopulated with referents and therefore “undecidable.” Rather, class must be understood as both a lived culture and an objective entity. As an objective phenomenon, class is directly connected to where a person is located within the capitalist division of labor and it is labor that is the source of value. Capitalism is a system based on the imposition of “universal commodification, including centrally, the buying and selling of human-life time” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999, p. 9). Within capitalist forms of organization, human labor itself is a commodity which can be bought and sold just like any other. Such an arrangement reduces the creative capacities of humans and relegates them to the status of mere cogs in the machinery of various forms of production. Alienation, oppression, and the dissolution of democracy are inherent features in such an arrangement where labor-power is capitalized and commodified (McLaren, 2006). For these reasons and many others, it is imperative to work towards the de-commodification of human labor in ways that would reinvigorate its status as a form of meaningful, creative activity. This entails moving beyond a mere reformist agenda—one which calls for a friendlier, less brutalizing form of capitalism—to questioning the very nature of capital as a social relation rooted in the selling of human labor power. As McLaren (2006, p. 319) asserts, “we need to move towards a new social humanity . . . we need to work towards the goal of becoming associated producers, working under conditions . . . where the measure of wealth is not labor-time but solidarity, creativity, and the full development of human capacities.” This struggle, against a specific form of social being as a capitalized and commodified life form—the very struggle to be “human”—situates revolutionary Marxist-humanism “at the core of any project to implode capital’s social universe” (McLaren, 2006, p. 314). Contrary to those who have sounded the death knell of Marxism, Marxist-humanism is not straining against the boundaries of a closed ontology. Rather it is a set of living ideas that can help us better understand the world—and more importantly—can provide a point of departure on how to change it. Marxist-humanism can guide us in working towards the creation of a social universe outside of capital based on socialist principles and practices not just in the sense of negating today’s economic and political realities but of developing new human relations. It is after all capital that imposes on our lives certain forms of doing, certain forms of relating to one another, certain forms of being. Marxist-humanism can also educate us about the importance of class consciousness and class struggle in attempting to overcome the **brutal and** barbaric limits to human liberation set by capital.[xii] After all, the most powerful force on the planet is the working class—without their labor, the wheels of the machine would cease in turning. The only force that the capitalist class cannot do without is the working class that produces the food, processes the raw materials, educates the young, tends to the sick and the infirm, builds the arteries, moves the goods, and so on. Contrary to the conventional political wisdom and the post-al declarations that we live in an age without classes, the transnational working class is in fact growing—there are increasing numbers of people who “now depend—directly or indirectly—on the sale of their labor power for their own daily reproduction” (Panitch et al., 2000, p. ix). Although it is certainly apparent that there have been major changes in the class structure, they have not been in the direction that post-Marxists point to. In fact, the major changes have reinforced class differences and capitalist exploitation. Petras notes that there are now more “temporary wage workers than in the past” and that there are many more workers toiling in “unregulated labor markets (the so-called informal sector today) than in the past.” This issue of “unregulated exploitation” points not in the direction of “post-capitalism” but rather represents a return to “nineteenth century forms of labour exploitation” (1998, p. 5). That said, it is important to bear in mind that the bodies of work and the concepts produced by Marx to assess the intricacies of capitalism in the nineteenth century are not completely adequate for analyzing contemporary conditions. Any historical concept carries in itself specific historical indices and the structure it analyzes is an historical structure. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid the reification or “petrification” (to use of line from Marcuse, 1972) of Marxian concepts since that would violate the very core of Marx’s work—namely, the unity of theory and practice in relation to specific configurations of capitalism. Moreover, revolutionary praxis, is brought about by “approaching Marxism not as an inert body of ideas for contemplation but as a motive force for remaking society” (McLaren, 2007, p. 35). As such, it still provides the most powerful conceptual apparatus from which to construct a critique of contemporary capitalism and envision an alternative to it. The legacy of Marxist humanism and the revolutionary critical pedagogy espoused by McLaren remind[s] us that contrary to TINA, there are always alternatives. As a form of emancipatory critical knowledge that offers a systematic way of making sense of contemporary social life, the current configuration of imperial global capitalism, the alienating aspects of commodified human labor and their interconnectedness, revolutionary critical pedagogy simultaneously serves as an agent for changing the conditions which it condemns. It reminds us that whatever misunderstandings or confusion surrounding the notion of socialism—largely bound up with a mistaken identification of Marxism with its opposite, Stalinism—that the democratic and internationalist principles of socialism need to be reinvigorated among those serious about resisting the domination of capital. It reminds us—to paraphrase the words of Luxemburg (1971)—that the struggle for socialism must be created by the masses of labouring humanity who must break the chains of capitalism wherever they are forged. And above all, it reminds us that we cannot abandon hope. CONCLUSION: Hope Dies Last In the preface to the fifth edition of his landmark text, Life in Schools, McLaren declares that the “unfulfilled” democracy which he envisions is “unashamedly socialist.” In so doing, and in speaking as a “Marxist humanist who advocates a revolutionary praxis” (2007, p. xvii), he encourages us to think about a new humanism for the 21st century—one that is unrealized in any profound sense; one set against the 21st century American imperium; one which we can aspire to. This new humanism would confront the actual conditions of capitalist oppression, imperialism, neo-fascism and colonialism and not merely the texts of colonialism, imperialism and the like. It would give expression to the pain, sorrow, and degradation of the oppressed and the wretched of the earth as well as to their dreams of social change. This new humanism would recognize the creative potential of people to challenge and change collectively the circumstances which they inherit. It would be predicated on a firm commitment to human emancipation and the extension of human dignity and freedom to all people—a commitment to really universalize such values in concrete, practical and economic terms. It would go beyond calls for social justice that are embraced by liberals yet too often “antiseptically cleaved from the project of transforming capitalist social relations” (McLaren, 2007, p. 29). Rather, a new humanism would call for the transformation of those oppressive social arrangements, institutions and relations that have prevented the bulk of humankind from fulfilling its potential. The task of even imagining, let alone struggling for, such a new humanism may seem daunting but we must find our inspiration and strength in the emotion of hope. Hope is the freeing of possibility, with possibility serving as the dialectical partner of necessity. When hope is strong enough, it can bend the future backward towards the past, where, trapped between the two, the present can escape its orbit of inevitability and break the force of history’s hubris, so that what is struggled for no longer remains an inert idea frozen in the hinterland of “what is,” but becomes a reality out of “what could be.” Hope is the oxygen of dreams, and provides the stamina for revolutionary struggle. Revolutionary dreams are those in which dreamers dream until there are no longer dreamers but only the dreams themselves, shaping our everyday lives from moment to moment, and opening the causeways of possibility where abilities are nourished not for the reaping of profit, but for the satisfaction of needs and the full development of human potential (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2004, p. 89). In this passage McLaren beckons us to rescue the principle of hope from the abyss of cynicism, complacency, and apathy and to apply it to imagining something resembling a democratic form of socialism. He challenges us to safeguard the embers of hope smoldering amidst the rubble of war and to fuel even further the fires of hope wherever they may burn. And he challenges us, above all, to keep hope alive—whatever the circumstances—and to ensure, in the words of the legendary American historian, scholar, and activist Studs Terkel, that hope dies last.

## 2NR

### Explanation of Alt

Extend **McLaren-** pedagogical spaces are key to rethinking cap and crafting new policies; we never achieve any change outside of the pedagogical since cap is so deeply entrenched in our society and our field of view that we need to completely rethink our thought processes. **This controls the internal link to the political space- I’m not ceding the political; I’m reinventing the political.** **The only difference is that the perm concedes that some parts of the system are good, which prevents this rethinking.**

### AT: Alt isn’t concrete

#### Rejecting capitalism is the first step. Capital isn’t sustained by policies, but by beliefs. The alt topples the empire.

Monbiot 4 (George Monbiot, Professor of Philosophy at Bristol and Professor of Politics at Keele. Author, columnist, and political activist. “Manifesto for a New World Order.” p. 249)

It costs nothing to agree that something should be done; indeed people like us have been accepting this proposition for decades, and waiting for someone else to act on it. Constitutional change will begin only when we reach the more dangerous conclusion that 'I must act'. There have been many occasions over the past few years on which we have won the argument and lost the war. The campaigners who have exposed the injustices of the current global system often succeed in generating a widespread demand for change, and just as often discover that this demand has no outlet. Our opinions, in these circumstances, count for nothing until we act upon them. Until we present a direct constitutional challenge to its survival, or, through such measures as a threatened conditional default, alter the circumstances in which it operates, those who maintain the dictatorship of vested interests will read what we write and listen to what we say without the slightest sense of danger. In 16-19, after recoiling from the satisfaction he felt upon completing one of his revolutionary pamphlets, Gerrard Winstanley noted 'my mind was not at rest, because nothing was acted, and ... words and writings were all nothing. and must die, for action is the life of all, and if thou dost not act, thou dost nothing'. This manifesto, and all the publications like it, is worthless unless it provokes people to action. There are several reasons why we do not act. In most cases, the personal risk involved in the early stages of struggle outweighs the potential material benefit. Those who catalyse revolution are seldom the people who profit from it. In this struggle, most of us are not yet directly confronting armed force (though this may well change as we become effective), so the risks to which we expose ourselves and our families are, as yet, slighter than those encountered by other revolutionaries. Nor, of course, are the potential benefits of resistance as obvious, for those activists who live in the rich world, as the benefits of overthrowing Nazi occupation or deposing an indigenous tyrant, or breaking away from a formally constituted empire. While most of the people of the poor world have an acute need to change the circumstances which govern the way they live, the problems the protesters in rich nations contest belong to the second order of concern: we are not confronted by imminent starvation or death through waterborne disease, but by distant wars, economic instability, climate change and the exhaustion of resources; issues which seldom present immediate threats to our survival. But while the proposals in this manifesto offer little by way of material self-advancement to activists in the rich world, there is, in collective revolutionary action, something which appears to be missing from almost every other enterprise in modern secular life. It arises, I think, from the , intensity of the relationships forged in a collective purpose concentrated by adversity. It is the exultation which Christians call 'joy', but which, in the dry discourse of secular politics, has no recognized equivalent. It is the drug for which, once sampled, you will pay any price. All those with agency are confronted by a choice. We can use that agency to secure comfortable existence. We can for ourselves a safe and use our life, that one unrepeatable product of four billion years of serendipity and evolution, to earn a little more, to save a little more, to win the approval of our bosses and the envy of our neighbours. We can place upon our walls those tombstones which the living erect to themselves: the framed certificates of their acceptance into what Erich Fromm has called the 'necrophiliac' world of wealth and power. We can, quite rationally, subordinate our desire for liberty to our desire for security. Or we can use our agency to change the world, and, in changing it, to change ourselves. We will die and be forgotten with no less certainty than those who sought to fend off death by enhancing their material presence on the earth, but we will live before we die through the extremes of feeling which comfort would deny us. I do not presume to lecture those who have little agency -among them the majority who live in the poor world on how to manage their lives. Over the past five years in many of the countries of the poor world -though this is seldom reported in the West - people have tried to change their circumstances through explosive demonstrations of grief, anger and hope. I have sought, with this manifesto, simply to enhance that hope, by demonstrating that there may be viable alternatives to the systems that subjugate them. But for most of the people of the rich world, and the more prosperous people of the poor world, revolution offers the possibility of freedom from the constraints we impose upon ourselves. Freedom is the ability to act upon our beliefs. It expands, therefore, with the scope of the action we are prepared to contemplate. If we know that we will never act, we have no freedom: we will, for the rest of our lives, do as we are told. Almost everyone has some sense that other people should be treated as she would wish to be. Almost everyone, in other words, has a notion of justice, and for most people this notion, however formulated, sits somewhere close to the heart of their system of beliefs. If we do not act upon this sense of justice, we do not act upon one of our primary beliefs, and our freedom is restricted accordingly. To be truly free, in other words, we must be prepared to contemplate revolution. Another reason why we do not act is that, from the days of our birth, we are immersed in the political situation into which we are born, and as a result we cannot imagine our way through it; we cannot envisage that it will ever come to an end. This is why imagination is the first qualification of the revolutionary. A revolutionary is someone who recognizes the contingency of power. What sustains coercive power is not force of arms, or even capital, but belief. When people cease to believe -to believe in it as they would believe in a god, in its omnipotence, its unassailability and its validity -and when they act upon that belief, an empire can collapse, almost overnight. Those who possess power will surrender it only when they see that the costs -physical or psychological –of retaining it are higher than the costs of losing it. There have been many occasions on which rulers possessed the means of suppressing revolt -the necessary tanks and planes or cannons and cavalry divisions -but chose not to deploy them, because they perceived that the personal effort of retaining power outweighed the effort of relinquishing it. One of the surprises of history is the tendency of some of the most inflexible rulers suddenly to give up, for no evident material reason. They give up because they are tired, so tired that they can no longer sustain the burning purpose required to retain power. They are tired because they have had to struggle against the unbelief of their people, to reassert, through a supreme psychological effort, the validity of their power.

#### Rejection is critical to moving away from capitalism—the system is only inevitable if we treat it as such.

Holloway, 05 (John, Ph.D in Political Science from the University of Edinburgh, “Can we change the World without taking power”, A debate between Holloway and Alex Callinicos, August 16th, <http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/5616>)

I don't know the answer. Perhaps we can change the world without taking power. Perhaps we cannot. The starting point: for all of us, I think: is uncertainty, not knowing, a common search for a way forward. Because it becomes more and more clear that capitalism is a catastrophe for humanity. A radical change in the organisation of society, that is, revolution, is more urgent than ever. And this revolution can only be world revolution if it is to be effective. But it is unlikely that world revolution can be achieved in one single blow. This means that the only way in which we can conceive of revolution is as interstitial revolution, as a revolution that takes place in the interstices of capitalism, a revolution that occupies spaces in the world while capitalism still exists. The question is how we conceive of these interstices, whether we think of them as states or in other ways. In thinking about this, we have to start from where we are, from the many rebellions and insubordinations that have brought us to Porto Alegre. The world is full of such rebellions, of people saying NO to capitalism: NO, we shall not live our lives according to the dictates of capitalism, we shall do what we consider necessary or desirable and not what capital tells us to do. Sometimes we just see capitalism as an all-encompassing system of domination and forget that such rebellions exist everywhere. At times they are so small that even those involved do not perceive them as refusals, but often they are collective projects searching for an alternative way forward and sometimes they are as big as the Lacandon Jungle or the Argentinazo of three years ago or the revolt in Bolivia just over a year ago. All of these insubordinations are characterised by a drive towards self-determination, an impulse that says, 'No, you will not tell us what to do, we shall decide for ourselves what we must do.' These refusals can be seen as fissures, as cracks in the system of capitalist domination. Capitalism is not (in the first place) an economic system, but a system of command. Capitalists, through money, command us, telling us what to do. To refuse to obey is to break the command of capital.

#### Details aren’t key. Trying to envision an exact blueprint for socialism is undemocratic.

Frase 10 Peter Frase (Sociology, CUNY Graduate Center). “Do They Owe Us a Living?” February 3rd, 2010. http://www.peterfrase.com/2010/02/do-they-owe-us-a-living/

Serious debate about our visions for the future is always welcome, so it’s nice to see Jason Schulman and David Schweickart debating “market socialism” and related things on this site. I don’t have a lot more to add about formal models of the socialist economy, because frankly I’m not all that interested in them. Schemes for socialist economies–whether market or planned or whatever–tend to come off as a a bit of an exercise in what Marx derisively referred to as “writing recipes for the kitchens of the future”. **Trying to predict exactly what socialism will look like is foolhardy–and** moreover **anti-democratic, since it pre-empts** the actions and **decisions of the actual masses who will have to make a post-capitalist world happen. So while** these **thought experiments** about alternative economic models **can be useful** in clarifying our principles, **I don’t think we need to take** the **details all that seriously.**

#### Super-detailed visions of the future have never ensured fundamental social change. The alternative provokes crisis within capitalism which is preferable.

Frase 10 Peter Frase (Sociology, CUNY Graduate Center). “Do They Owe Us a Living?” February 3rd, 2010. http://www.peterfrase.com/2010/02/do-they-owe-us-a-living/

**I can’t predict in advance what the solution would be. And I don’t have to**. That’s really the most important point I want to make here. I think the lesson of history is that **momentous social change never happens because someone came up with a detailed plan** for the future**, won people over to it, and** then **implemented it**. The **chaos of real people making their own history** always **overwhelms** such **neat plans**. And I want to suggest that **socialists, armed with an analysis of capitalism** and a set of basic principles for the future, **shouldn’t be afraid of a politics that aims to provoke** a **crisis without knowing exactly where it will lead**. The idea of a basic income that breaks our dependence on wage labor is a proposal for pushing toward that productive crisis, and for that reason I find it far more compelling than all the sterile blueprints for economic democracies and democratic plans and Parecons and what have you.

#### Activists must concern themselves with theory and discourse before action.

Philip 1 Kavita Philip (2001) Seeds of Neo-Colonialism? Reflections on Ecological Politics in the New World Order, Capitalism Nature Socialism, 12:2, 3-47,

One of the most prolific and widely known South Asian environmentalist is Vandana Shiva, director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy. Shiva has forged a mix of activism, research, and policy-making, successfully using the tools of academia, media, and direct action to effect social change. Her work has facilitated genuine gains for Indian farmers, such as the setting up of community seed banks and the contestation of corporate intellectual property rights to neem compounds. While her activist agenda continues to grow in scope and power, her theoretical paradigms have aged poorly. Shiva’s critique of the “patriarchal domination” of a metaphysically valued earth was a logical outgrowth of a 1970s style eco-feminism, but its essentialist over-generalizations and historical inaccuracies have been critiqued by succeeding generations of ever more theoretically savvy eco-critics. The critiques have been largely accurate in terms of identifying Shiva’s tendency to assume a natural, or inherent, link between women and an anti-exploitative, “nurturing” relationship with the earth; but their effect has been blunted by the suspicion that marks the relationship of green activists to green theorists. Those who favor “action” over “analysis” tend to dismiss the theorists’ critique because the language of theory appears inaccessible, specialized, and pretentious.40 Specifically, critiques of Shiva’s “essentializing” rhetoric are countered with questions such as: Why should activists bother to take account of mere rhetorical critiques of their arguments? Aren’t activists more concerned with the practical results of their work, rather than with linguistic accuracy or rhetorical elegance? Theorists, for their part, have often failed to demonstrate (or seemed unconcerned with) the practical consequences, or ideological politics, following from particular kinds of theoretical sloppiness. In Shiva’s case, two so-called theoretical issues seem worrying in practical ways; they are evidence of a theory-praxis nexus that needs to be addressed dialectically rather than dichotomously. First, it is not just Shiva’s model of womanhood that is static and essentialist; science and technology suffer the same fate, and nature itself is rendered sacred (and thus also static; not to be sullied by profane technology). Second, this “rediscovery” of the authentically indigenous “sanctity” of nature brings Shiva uncomfortably close to a traditionalist religious nationalism, with disturbing implications for the kind of communitarianism she envisions. Let us look more closely at these two issues. Shiva’s simple (often simplistic) subsistence model, undergirded by a nature-ethic that seems transcendentalist and romanticist, leaves little room for a detailed critique of capitalism and the relationship of human production to nature. While Shiva certainly opposes corporate ownership of nature, the main villain is “science” per se (rather than a specifically capitalist, or bourgeois science). Shiva sees science and technology as inherently evil, and advocates a return to a pre-techno logical existence and a subsistence model of production, implying that self-sufficient peasant societies insulated from global trade will automatically be egalitarian and respectful of nature. Such a position is reminiscent of nineteenth-century British romanticists and American transcendentalists, who could afford to worship a mystical nature only because they could access it via the privilege of their elite social positions. Left Business Observer editor Doug Henwood identifies this ideology accurately when he rejects the “elitist asceticism” of anti globalizing romantics (among whom he includes David Korten, Doug Tompkins, Jerry Mander, and Vandana Shiva). Henwood, noting that “[t]he ecofeminist Vandana Shiva views technology as a male disruption of the sacred woman-nature dyad, and advocates a ‘subsist ence’ economic model,” says, bluntly, of the anti-technological anti globalizers: “[Their] dream of local self-sufficiency is suffocating and reactionary.”41

### AT: Pragmatism (small steps)

#### Rejecting capitalism is key to opening up new alternatives. Only complete refusal, not piecemeal reform, can prevent otherwise inevitable slavery and extinction.

Herod, 04 (James, <http://site.www.umb.edu/faculty/salzman_g/Strate/GetFre/4thEd/4-index.htm>, Getting Free, 4th EditionA sketch of an association of democratic, autonomous neighborhoods and how to create it, Fourth Edition, January 2004

It is time to try to describe, at first abstractly and later concretely, a strategy for destroying capitalism. This strategy, at its most basic, calls for pulling time, energy, and resources out of capitalist civilization and putting them into building a new civilization. The image then is one of emptying out capitalist structures, hollowing them out, by draining wealth, power, and meaning out of them until there is nothing left but shells. This is definitely an aggressive strategy. It requires great militancy, and constitutes an attack on the existing order. The strategy clearly recognizes that capitalism is the enemy and must be destroyed, but it is not a frontal attack aimed at overthrowing the system, but an inside attack aimed at gutting it, while simultaneously replacing it with something better, something we want. Thus capitalist structures(corporations, governments, banks, schools, etc.) are not ***seized*** so much as simply ***abandoned.*** Capitalist relations are not ***fought*** so much as they are simply ***rejected***. We stop participating in activities that support (finance, condone) the capitalist world and start participating in activities that build a new world while simultaneously undermining the old. We create a new pattern of social relations alongside capitalist relations and then we continually build and strengthen our new pattern while doing every thing we can to weaken capitalist relations. In this way our new democratic, non-hierarchical, non-commodified relations can eventually overwhelm the capitalist relations and force them out of existence. This is how it has to be done. This is a plausible, realistic strategy. To think that we could create a whole new world of decent social arrangements overnight, in the midst of a crisis, during a so-called revolution, or during the collapse of capitalism, is foolhardy. Our new social world must grow within the old, and in opposition to it, until it is strong enough to dismantle and abolish capitalist relations. Such a revolution will never happen automatically, blindly, determinably, because of the inexorable, materialist laws of history. It will happen, and only happen, because we want it to, and because we know what we’re doing and know how we want to live, and know what obstacles have to be overcome before we can live that way, and know how to distinguish between our social patterns and theirs. But we must not think that the capitalist world can simply be ignored, in a live and let live attitude, while we try to build new lives elsewhere. (There *is* no elsewhere.) There is at least one thing, wage-slavery, that we can’t simply stop participating in (but even here there are ways we can chip away at it). Capitalism must be ***explicitly refused*** and replaced by something else. This constitutes War, but it is not a war in the traditional sense of armies and tanks, but a war fought on a daily basis, on the level of everyday life, by millions of people. It is a war nevertheless because the accumulators of capital will use coercion, brutality, and murder, as they have always done in the past, to try to block any rejection of the system. They have always had to force compliance; they will not hesitate to continue doing so. Nevertheless, there are many concrete ways that individuals, groups, and neighborhoods can gut capitalism, which I will enumerate shortly. We must always keep in mind how we became slaves; then we can see more clearly how we can cease being slaves. We were forced into wage-slavery because the ruling class slowly, systematically, and brutally destroyed our ability to live autonomously. By driving us off the land, changing the property laws, destroying community rights, destroying our tools, imposing taxes, destroying our local markets, and so forth, we were forced onto the labor market in order to survive, our only remaining option being to sell, for a wage, our ability to work. It’s quite clear then how we can overthrow slavery. We must reverse this process. We must begin to reacquire the ability to live without working for a wage or buying the products made by wage-slaves (that is, we must get free from the labor market and the way of living based on it), and embed ourselves instead in cooperative labor and cooperatively produced goods. Another clarification is needed. This strategy does not call for ***reforming*** capitalism, for changing capitalism into something else. It calls for ***replacing*** capitalism, totally, with a new civilization. This is an important distinction, because capitalism has proved impervious to reforms, as a system. We can sometimes in some places win certain concessions from it (usually only temporary ones) and win some (usually short-lived) improvements in our lives as its victims, but we cannot reform it piecemeal, as a system. Thus our strategy of gutting and eventually destroying capitalism requires at a minimum a totalizing image, an awareness that we are attacking an entire way of life and replacing it with another, and not merely reforming one way of life into something else. Many people may not be accustomed to thinking about entire systems and social orders, but everyone knows what a lifestyle is, or a way of life, and that is the way we should approach it. The thing is this: in order for capitalism to be destroyed millions and millions of people must be dissatisfied with their way of life. They must *want something else* and see certain existing things as obstacles to getting what they want. It is not useful to think of this as a new ideology. It is not merely a belief-system that is needed, like a religion, or like Marxism, or Anarchism. Rather it is a new prevailing vision, a dominant desire, an overriding need. What must exist is a pressing desire to live a certain way, and not to live another way. If this pressing desire were a desire to live free, to be autonomous, to live in democratically controlled communities, to participate in the self-regulating activities of a mature people, then capitalism could be destroyed. Otherwise we are doomed to perpetual slavery and possibly even to extinction.

#### Single-issue movements will be co-opted by capitalism—only complete structural challenges have any hope.

Meszaros, 95 (Istivan, professor emeritus at the University of Sussex, Beyond Capital, pg. 39-40)

To aggravate the situation, everything is further complicated by the fact that it is not feasible to find partial solutions to the problems that must be faced. Thus, no ‘single issue’ can be realistically considered a ‘single issue.’ If nothing else, this circumstance has been forcefully highlighted by the disconcerting marginalization of the Green movement on the success of which so much hope has been placed in recent times, even among former socialists. In the past up to a few decades ago it was possible to squeeze out of capital what appeared to be significant concessions—such as relative gains for the socialist movement (which later turned out to be reversible both as legislative measures for working class action and as gradually improving standard of living), obtained through the defensive organizations of labour: its trades unions and parliamentary parties. These gains could be conceded by capital so long as they could be assimilated and integrated by the system as a whole and turned to its productive advantage in the course of its self-expansion. Today, by contrast, confronting even partial issues with any hope of success implies the necessity of challenging the capital system as such. For in our own historical epoch, when productive self-expansion is no longer a readily available way out of the accumulating difficulties and contradictions (hence the purely wishful thinking of getting rid of the black hope of indebtedness by ‘growing out of it’), the global capital system of necessity frustrates all attempts at interfering even to a minimal extent with its structural parameters. In this respect the obstacles to be overcome are actually shared by labour—that is, labour as the radical alternative to capital’s social metabolic order—and the ‘single issue’ movements. For the historic failure of social democracy clearly underlined that only integrable demands can gain legitimacy under the rule of capital. Environmentalism by its very nature—just like the great historic cause of women’s liberation—is non-integrable. Consequently no such cause will for the capital system conveniently fade way, irrespective of how many setbacks and defeats the politically organized forms of ‘single issue’ movements might have to suffer in the foreseeable future. However, historically/epochally defined non-integrability, no matter how important for the future, cannot guarantee success on its own. Switching the allegiance of disappointed socialists from the working class to so-called ‘new social movements’ (praised now in opposition to, and by discarding altogether the emancipatory potential of, labour) must be considered, therefore, far too premature and naïve. Single issue movements, even if they fight for non-integrable issue, can be picked off and marginalized one by one, because they cannot lay claim to representing a coherent and comprehensive alternative to the given order as a mode of social metabolic control and system of societal reproduction. This is what makes focusing on the socialist emancipatory potential of labour more important today than ever before. For labour is not only non-integrable (in contrast to some historically specific political manifestations of labour, like reformist social democracy, which may be rightly characterized as integrable and indeed in the last few decades also completely integrated), but—precisely as the only feasible structural alternative to capital—can provide the comprehensive strategic framework within which all ‘single issue’ emancipatory movements can successfully make their common cause for the survival of humanity.

### AT: Cede the Political

#### 1. Non unique – the political has already been ceded. The right controls the system now, we either stick with it and see no change occur like they want, or fight for change with the K. That means it’s try or die.

#### 2. Their “cede the political” argument would only make sense if it were possible to survive in a capitalist world. Reform contributes to the illusion that only quick fixes are needed. We need to admit that rejecting capitalism is our only hope.

Duchrow, 95 (Ulrich Duchrow, professor of systematic theology at the University of Heidelberg specialising in ecumenical theology and theology-economy issues. “Alternatives to Global Capitalism,” p. 230-234)

If one affirms life and life-bringing economic systems, then one must reject economic systems and structures which bring about death. One objection often raised in this respect says that total dissent would mean losing all political credibility, and that the political possibilities of relative improvement can no longer be seized when tone rejects certain basic elements of the capitalist economy. This argument presupposes that the changes in the world economic system that are necessary for survival can be achieved with the existing political institutions. Only when the fundamental, death-inducing mechanisms have been recognised and eliminated can a political strategy be formulated which may be able to help avoid the predictable catastrophes. It is not the desire to constantly criticise bur the necessity avoid illusion when dealing with life-sustaining alternatives for life which compels us to specify what must be rejected, so that the best can be achieved from this basis. Exactly what is it that has to be rejected on principle in the present global system, and to which we have to find alternatives for life's sake? It is the mechanisms which, uncontrolled and unimpeded, gear economic activity to the accumulation of money by those who already have it, with the aid of the absolute principle of competition in the global market. Nature and people are, accordingly, subordinated to this end, as far as possible. In concrete terms, the mechanisms referred to are: the transnational money matkets, in so far as they can and do escape national and international institutions, provided they tolerate or favor the pure capitalist market; and also the ideological instruments connected with science, the media, schools, universities and churches, which orient people towards achieving this goal or whose potential for resistance to the deadly wealth accumulation market is not used. But because the money mechanism only functions with the inclusion of the commodity-money relationship, all people, provided they have the money and are consumers with purchasing power, are actively caught up in the machinery of wealth accumulation (incidentally, so are those without much purchasing power, in so far as they – understandably – strive for a share in consumption rather than seeking alternatives to the commodity-money system). That means, however, that although the totalitarian character of the money-oriented system originates from the power of the world market, the market can only exercise this power because so many players, right down to individual human beings, facilitate its operation. Rejection in this case is, therefore, not an attitude adopted with external reference only to identifiable players in the world market. It involves a fundamental change at all levels, including that of the individual. Before we examine this dimension of rejection more closely, we should consider once more the need for it. From a social point of view, the totalitarian character of the deregulated and competitive world market, centred around wealth accumulation, is leading to dramatic levels of pauperisation and exclusion of more and more people, not only in the South but increasingly in the East and also in the West. Today we have reached a point where at least two thirds of the world's population are either dying of hunger or living on or below the poverty line. These people are subsequently excluded from the formal economy. From an environmental point of view, our planet and the basic conditions for life will be destroyed if the transformation of nature into commodities-money for the purpose of wealth accumulation continues to accelerate. It is, therefore, imperative that the focus of the economy be shifted from money accumulation to the people's needs. A mere 'taming' of the system is not sufficient, although this must be considered when reflecting upon the question of relative political opinions. The only satisfactory solution can be one that takes into account the lives of' not just a few privileged Northerners or even of all people alive today but also of future generations, and ensures that they have the renewable natural resources necessary for survival and procreation. Such a solution would result in the elimination of the money-accumulation economy and its associated structures. This must be recognised before embarking upon any attempt to find concrete alternatives and new regulatory instruments. Any other starting point would be potentially dangerous because it would only create illusions. E. Altvatet was right when he said that anybody who maintains that within the framework of a capitalist economy, the environmental catastrophe can be held at bay in the long run is either opportunistic or naive. The same conclusion was also reached by R. Kurz and L. Mayer, who have been quoted already, and, indirectly – As a result of what started with the "cut-throat competition" between the northern Italian city-states, the whole of humanity is degenerating into a mass of competing individuals, who no longer accept their mutual limitations and dependence, instead striving endlessly for profit and success without considering the rising tide of violence and the effects on the weak. Competitiveness for unlimited money accumulation is the objective and subjective basic structure, the "god" of our market society, which determines the whole. Accordingly, the core of what we must reject is the absolute value attributed to competition and the total absence of limits set on the cancerous growth of capital. The liberation must, therefore, be comprehensive, just as the 'spirit' of capitalism is comprehensive. In other words, the spiritual side is not one of many dimensions but decisive for the whole.

3) Cross apply **McLaren 4-** pedagogical spaces are key to rethinking cap and crafting new policies; we never achieve any change outside of the pedagogical since cap is so deeply entrenched in our society and our field of view that we need to completely rethink our thought processes. **This controls the internal link to the political space- I’m not ceding the political; I’m reinventing the political.** **The only difference is that the perm concedes that some parts of the system are good, which prevents this rethinking.**

4) The fear of ceding the political reinforces capitalism and strengthens the right. Dean 8

(Joan, Politics Without Politics, political theorist, [http://publishing.eur.nl/ir/darenet/asset/15161/oratiejodidean.pdf)JFS](http://publishing.eur.nl/ir/darenet/asset/15161/oratiejodidean.pdf%29JFS)

Democracy, though, is inadequate as a language and frame for left political aspiration. Here are two reasons why; there are others. First, the right speaks the language of democracy. It voices its goals and aspirations in democratic terms. One of the reasons given for the U.S. invasion of Iraq, for example, was the goal of bringing democracy to the Middle East. Similarly, leftists in the United States urge inclusion and participation, and so do those on the political right. The rightcomplains about the exclusion of conservatives from the academy and God from politics. They, too, try to mobilize grass-root support and increase participation. Thereis nothing particularly left**,** then**,** about inclusion and participation. These are elements of democracy the right also supports. This rightwing adoption of democratic ideals prevents the left from occupying the position of a political alternative to the right—if left positions are the same right ones then the left isn’t an alternative. Slavoj Zizek describes this situation where one’s enemy speaks one’s language as “victory in defeat” (2008, p. 189). When one's enemy accepts one's terms, one's point of critique and resistance is lost, subsumed. The dimension of antagonism (fundamental opposition) vanishes**.** A second reason democracy is inadequate as an expression of left aspiration is that contemporary democratic language employs and reinforces **the rhetoric of** capitalism: free choice, liberty, satisfaction, communication, connection, diversity. Like any media savvy corporation, democratic activists want to ensure that voices **are heard** and opinions registered. Corporations and activists alike are united in their preoccupation with awareness: people need to be aware of issues, of products, of products as signs of issues. In this concrete sense, Zizek is right to claim that attachment to democracy is the form our attachment to capital takes (2002, p. 273; 2008, p. 184). In the consumption and entertainment-driven setting of the contemporary United States, one’s commitments to capitalism are expressed as commitments to democracy. They are the same way of life, the same daily practices of “aware-ing” oneself and expressing one’s opinion, of choosing and voting and considering one’s choice a vote and one’s vote a choice.

### AT: Perm

#### 1. Any permutation is severance if I win the links. Your reps were capitalist which means it’s impossible to sever out of them since the alternative is complete refusal of capital. That’s a voting issue- kills clash and strat since I have no stable neg options.

#### 2. Cooption disad – pretending like we always need to act fractures the movement and moots solvency.

Zizek 4 (Slavoj, Professor of Sociology at the Institute for Sociology, Ljubljana University, “Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle” P. 71-73

The stance of simply condemning the postmodern Left for its accommodation, however, is also false, since one should ask the obvious difficult question: what, in fact, was the alternative? If today’s ‘post-politics’ is opportunistic pragmatism with no principles, then the predominant leftist reaction to it can be aptly characterized as ‘principled opportunism’: one simply sticks to the old formulae (defence of the welfare state, and so on) and calls them ‘principles’, dispensing with the detailed analysis of how the situation ahs changed – and thus retaining one’s position of Beautiful Soul. The inherent stupidity of the ‘principled’ Left is clearly discernible in its standard criticism of any analysis which proposes a more complex picture of criticism of any analysis which proposes a more complex picture of the situation, renouncing any simple prescriptions on how to act: ‘there is no clear political stance involved in your theory’ – and this from people with no stance but their ‘principled opportunism’. Against such a stance, one should have the courage to affirm that, in a situation like today’s, the only way really to remain open to a revolutionary opportunity is to renounce facile calls to direct action, which necessarily involve us in an activity where things change so that the totality remains the same. Today’s predicament is that, if we succumb to the urge of directly ‘doing something’ (engaging in the anti-globalist struggle, helping the poor…), we will certainly and undoubtedly contribute to the reproduction of the existing order. The only way to lay the foundations for a true, radical change is to withdraw from the compulsion to act, to ‘do nothing’ – thus opening up the space for a different kind of activity.

#### 3. State action can never be a part of the alternative- legal measures are always skewed in favor of the rich.

**Organise 10**

Organise! (an organization that spoke out against the 2010 Australian election). “Capitalist Democracy: The Illusion of Choice.” Libcom. August 15th, 2010. <https://libcom.org/library/capitalist-democracy-illusion-choice>

Consider the following facts: 1. Capitalist society is class society. Despite the claims made by the most powerful people in our society—who, we might add, have vested interests in doing so—**the unity of the** nation-**state is** an **illusory** one, **because capitalist society is divided into** economic **classes**. On the one hand we have those who own and control social resources, and who enjoy the economic and social privileges that accompanies such ownership and control, and on the other those who lack such ownership and control and are obliged by the circumstances of their birth to sell their labour for a wage, which is generally most of us. 2. **Exploitation is inherent to class society.**The foundation of meaningful freedom is economic independence, and economic independence on a social level derives from the ability of each of us to control the fruits of our labour. This is a basic human right. In capitalist society the propertied classes own and control the tools of production, the places where we work and the things we work with, which means that those of us who don't own and control the tools of production are forced to work for those who do. Needless to say, this situation deprives us of our economic independence and forces us into a position of submission and subservience. But it gets worse. **The capitalist class generates profits from the wage system by paying workers less in wages than the value of the product of our labour**, which they take for themselves. This is exploitation, period, and any sort of exploitation is inconceivable in a free society, because as long as one person can be exploited none of us are free. The only difference between chattel slaves and wage workers is that the former were owned, whereas the latter are rented. Seen in the cold hard light of day, wage labour is really wage-slavery. Suffice it to say that the economic and social privileges that the propertied classes enjoy in our society depends for their existence on the denial of elementary human rights to the vast majority of society. 3. The exploitation inherent to capitalist society is protected by the state. The denial of the basic human right of economic independence to the working class is protected by the institutionalied violence of the state, by the police, military and judiciary. **The primary function of the state is to protect** and defend **the** social and economic **privileges of the propertied classes**. It is an institution of class domination which lords over the whole of society and imposes economic dependence and servitude on the great mass of humanity in the service of an opulent minority. (Some will argue in the defense of the state that it 1) maintains order and 2) protects us from violent crime. To this we pose the counter-arguments as follows: 1) what sort of order and in whose interests, and 2) that being 'protected' against 'crime' by the state is like being 'protected' against 'crime' by the mafia, and that as the state bequeaths its 'protection' to the working classes, facilitating the theft of the wealth it produces, so too does it perpetuate crime in the name of stopping it. Since the system of deterrence has failed to stop violent crime, we suggest alternative strategies such as addressing the causes). 4. The primary function of the state as a defender of privilege and injustice is reflected in capitalist law. The character of the state as an institution of class domination and the nature of its basic function (to protect the privileges of the propertied classes from the rest of us) forms the basis of capitalist law. The golden rule is that those with the gold make the rules. **The basic fraud behind** the doctrine of **equality before the law, the foundation for capitalist democracy, derives** then **from the fact that the laws are made by and for the rich**. The fact then that, in applying the same law to all, capitalist law has overcome the arbitrariness of kingly despotism is ultimately irrelevant for those of us in a state of economic servitude, since the law itself is unjust**;** being **grounded as it is in** the **protection of elite privilege** and the perpetuation of the master-slave relationship at the core of the wage system, it perpetuates the arbitrary rule—the despotism—of a class.

### AT: Theory

#### Theory’s a link. Debate is a rigged game to protect oppressive power structures- enforcing strict rules ensures domination of capital.

Spanos 11 William V. Spanos (distinguished professor of English and Comparative Literature at the SUNY Binghamton) “Interview Questions” September 15th 2011 kdebate <http://kdebate.com/spanos.html>

The reason I asked you that question is because I've always thought that the debate system is a rigged process, by which I mean, in your terms, it's framed to exclude anything that the frame can't contain and domesticate. To frame also means to "prearrange" so that a particular outcome is assured," which also means the what's outside of the frame doesn't stand a chance: it is "framed" from the beginning. It was, above all, the great neo-Marxist Louis Althusser's analysis of the "problematic" - the perspective or frame of reference fundamental to knowledge production in democratic-capitalist societies -- that enabled me to see what the so called distinterestness of empirical inquiry is blind to or, more accurately willfully represses in its Panglossian pursuit of the truth. Althusser's analysis of the "problematic" is too complicated to be explained in a few words. (Anyone interested will find his extended explanation in his introduction --"From Capital\* to Marx's Philosophy" -- to his and Etienne Balibar's book \*Reading Capital\*. It will suffice here to say that we in the modern West have been \*inscribed\* by our culture --"ideological state apparatuses (educational institutions, media, and so on)-- by a system of knowledge production that goes by the name of "disinterested inquiry," but in reality the "truth" at which it arrives is a construct, a fiction, and thus ideological. And this is precisely because, in distancing itself from earthly being --the transience of time --this system of knowledge production privileges the panoptic eye in the pursuit of knowledge. This is what Althusser means by the "problematic": a frame that allows the perceiver to see only what it wants to see. Everything that is outside the frame doesn't exist to the perceiver. He /she is blind to it. It's nothing or, at the site of humanity, it's nobody. Put alternatively, the problematic -- this frame, as the very word itself suggests, \*spatializes\* or \*reifies\* time -- reduces what is a living, problematic force and not a thing into a picture or thing so that it can be comprehended (taken hold of, managed), appropriated, administered, and exploited by the disinterested inquirer. All that I've just said should suggest what I meant when, long ago, in response to someone in the debate world who seemed puzzled by the strong reservations I expressed on being informed that the debate community in the U.S. was appropriating my work on Heidegger, higher education, and American imperialism. I said then -- and I repeat here to you -- that the traditional form of the debate, that is, the hegemonic frame that rigidly determines its protocols-- is unworldly in an ideological way. It willfully separates the debaters from the world as it actually is-- by which I mean as it has been produced by the dominant democratic I capitalist culture --and it displaces them to a free-floating zone, a no place, as it were, where all things, nor matter how different the authority they command in the real world, are equal. But in \*this\* real world produced by the combination of Protestant Christianity and democratic capitalism things -- and therefore their value --are never equal. They are framed into a system of binaries-Identity/ difference, Civilization/barbarism I Men/woman, Whites/blacks, Sedentary/ nomadic, Occidental/ oriental, Chosen I preterit (passed over), Self-reliance I dependent (communal), Democracy I communism, Protestant Christian I Muslim, and so on -- in which the first term is not only privileged over the second term, but, in thus being privileged, is also empowered to demonize the second. Insofar as the debate world frames argument as if every position has equal authority (the debater can take either side) it obscures and eventually effaces awareness of the degrading imbalance of power in the real world and the terrible injustices it perpetrates. Thus framed, debate gives the false impression that it is a truly democratic institution, whereas in reality it is complicitous with the dehumanized and dehumanizing system of power that produced it. It is no accident, in my mind, that this fraudulent form of debate goes back to the founding of the U.S. as a capitalist republic and that it has produced what I call the "political class" to indicate not only the basic sameness between the Democratic and Republican parties but also its fundamental indifference to the plight of those who don't count in a system where what counts is determined by those who are the heirs of this quantitative system of binaries.

### AT: Cap Inevitable

#### 1. Try or die – capitalism causes extinction. That’s Chengu 13. Means that even if revolution is hard, it’s our only option to try. Risk of alt solvency outweighs.

#### 2. Their inevitability claims reflect the false consciousness of the working class. We must remain committed to a better future without capitalism.

Feenberg and Leiss 7 Andrew Feenberg and William Leiss. “The Essential Marcuse: Selected Writings of Philosopher and Social Critic Herbert Marcuse.” Introduction. Beacon Publishing. April 1st, 2007. http://www.beacon.org/client/PDFs/1433\_intro.pdf

[Brackets in original] At the time when they wrote such lines, Horkheimer and Marcuse would have had the reality of their own circumstances clearly in mind: they were among those who had ﬂed for their lives from a regime that would have arrested, tortured, and killed them either for their thoughts or their ethnicity, or both. As the darkness of fascism descended over the land of his birth, Marcuse reduced critical theory to its barest essentials: In **replying to the question, “What may I hope?,” would point** less to eternal bliss and inner freedom than **to the already possible unfolding and fulﬁllment of needs and wants.** In a situation where such a future is a real possibility, **fantasy is an important instrument in** the task of continually holding the goal up to view. As we shall see, Marcuse never wavered in his adherence to this standpoint. His faith in fantasy was closely connected to beliefs about art that predated his turn to critical theory and survived the disappointments that led his closest colleague, Max Horkheimer, to abandon it at the end of the Second World War.12 That **unwavering commitment** to utopia, to **the possibility of a better future**, is a deﬁning feature of his life’s work and the most striking aspect of it that clearly sets him apart from the other principal ﬁgures identiﬁed with the Frankfurt School, with the possible exception of Walter Benjamin, who died at the beginning of World War II. Although the Institute for Social Research was eventually reestablished at the University of Frankfurt in 1951, the heroic period of the Frankfurt School was over. The gap between Marcuse and his former colleagues is evident in discussions held in 1947 as to when and how to restart the Institute’s main publication, the Journal of Social Research, which had been suspended during their period of exile. In this context Marcuse drafted a programmatic document for Horkheimer in which he proposes that **the theory must be adjusted to current circumstances and become more closely tied to practice**, that is, to explorations of how the dream of the better future might be realized.13This untitled document argues that after the war the world of nations is split into neo-fascist and Soviet camps, and “what remains of democratic-liberal forms will be crushed between the two camps or absorbed by them.” Further, it remains true to the vision that a society of free persons can only result from the actions of **a “revolutionary working class”** because “it **alone has the** real **power to abolish** the **existing relations of production** and the entire apparatus that goes with it.” The document acknowledges that **the working class** of the time **is not ready** to play this role **because its** own needs and **perceptions have become “habituated” to** the structures of the existing **capitalist society.** Thus traditional class antagonisms are frozen in place, and one cannot imagine any longer the possibility of a revolutionary consciousness arising spontaneously in the working class, as Marx had assumed it would. Therefore Marcuse draws the “logical” but to us rather startling conclusion that all **this** “**has conﬁrmed the correctness of the Leninist** conception of the **vanguard party as the subject of the revolution.**”

# More Stuff

### Noah’s Links

#### The socialist product doesn’t run on deconstruction and de-development—it runs on energy. We need to harness energy and power the movement away from worse forms of energy and production that will destroy the world. Nuclear is key. Walters ‘11

FUKUSHIMA, NUCLEAR ENERGY AND A SOCIALIST PROGRAM by David Walters on Socialist Arguments for Nuclear Power June 14, 2011. <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2011/06/14/socialist-arguments-for-nuclear-power/> Climate and Capitalism Cut 9/3 NS

**Most on the left** are at best confused by this and at worse, **seek a return to some sort of pastoral green, “democratic” pre-industrial utopia.** As Marxists **we should reject this “we use too much” scenario** that has infected the left across the world**. We certainly should use energy more wisely**, more efficiently **and with a sense of conservation. This can happen only when the profit motive is removed and scarcity in basic necessities is a thing of the past.** No one should object to this. But these things do not produce one watt of power, especially if you consider what we have to do**. These include: Switching off from fossil fuels completely** (they should be used only as chemical feedstock, i.e. as the basic material to make chemicals and lubricants) **Increasing the development of the productive forces** especially in the developing world. This means developing whole electrical grids, new, primarily non-fossil fuel, forms of generation and the infrastructure to support this, for the billions without any electrical usage at all **Freeing up the productive forces to eliminate all forms of want as the material basis for a true socialist mode of production. Using nuclear energy is both the cheapest and safest way to do this**. George Monbiot in his latest entry on his blog\* challenges the renewable energy advocates with some hard questions. No socialist by any means, Monbiot has brought attention to the issue of energy and what it will take to reduce carbon emissions. He notes, writing on Britain, among other things: “1. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions means increasing electricity production. It is hard to see a way around this. Because low-carbon electricity is the best means of replacing the fossil fuels used for heating and transport, electricity generation will rise, even if we manage to engineer a massive reduction in overall energy consumption. The Zero Carbon Britain report published by the Centre for Alternative Technology envisages a 55% cut in overall energy demand by 2030 – and a near-doubling of electricity production.” How is this electricity going to be produced in a sustained and regular way? We know wind generated power is erratic and variable, a problem only partially solvable by new continental wide electricity grids. We know other forms of low carbon power – tidal, coal with carbon capture and storage, large scale solar – are experimental and even if viable are likely to turn out more expensive than nuclear. **We get no answer from so-called socialist Greens** on this problem, at least not yet. They simply have not considered the real issues. Monbiot goes on: “3. The only viable low-carbon alternative we have at the moment is nuclear power. This has the advantage of being confined to compact industrial sites, rather than sprawling over the countryside, and of requiring fewer new grid connections (especially if new plants are built next to the old ones). It has the following disadvantages: “a. The current generation of power stations require uranium mining, which destroys habitats and pollutes land and water. Though its global impacts are much smaller than the global impacts of coal, the damage it causes cannot be overlooked. “b. The waste it produces must be stored for long enough to be rendered safe. It is not technically difficult to do this, with vitrification, encasement and deep burial, but governments keep delaying their decisions as a result of public opposition. “Both these issues (as well as concerns about proliferation and security) could be addressed through the replacement of conventional nuclear power with thorium or integral fast reactors but, partly as a result of public resistance to atomic energy, neither technology has yet been developed. (I’ll explore the potential of both approaches in a later column).” I want to address this last point. Monbiot is slowly seeing his way to something that has taken a long time: that nuclear energy is really the only way to go, even in light of the “big three” accidents: Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima. These new technologies he mentions, the Liquid Fluoride Thorium Reactor (which doesn’t require any uranium mining, enrichment or long term disposal of spent fuel) and the Integral Fast Reactor, provide the material basis for eliminating all fossil fuels and for a future society without want, wars or exploitation, that is a socialist one. Where Monbiot and I come together is not, obviously, the socialist requirement to get rid of capitalism. **It is over the need for more energy, not less**. It is over the realization that **renewables cannot do it except in the most utopian of fantasies.** The real “Great Divide” is between those among the Greens who run on fear and fantasy, and those socialists that have a materialist understanding of the need to move toward a society based not just on current human needs alone, but on expanding humanity’s ability to power such a society. Only nuclear can do this.

#### This aff is ludicrous and not part of the true socialist movement—destroying entire populations’ source for wellbeing is not practical. This destroys our ability to engage in a true movement. King ‘11

FUKUSHIMA, THE LEFT, AND NUCLEAR POWER by Stuart King on Socialist Arguments for Nuclear Power June 14, 2011. <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2011/06/14/socialist-arguments-for-nuclear-power/> Climate and Capitalism Cut 9/3 NS

Now just a moment’s thought by any serious thinking socialist would have revealed what a ludicrous demand this was. In Britain something like 19% of electricity comes from our nuclear power plants. **Shutting them down immediately would lead to rolling blackouts across the country.** In the medium term it would lead to electricity being produced by more CO2 polluting forms of electricity production – gas and coal – increasing global warming with all the dangers that entails. **And in France where almost 80% of the country’s electricity comes from nuclear? The economy would shut down and workers would be burning their furniture in the dark to keep warm.** Now **that would be a real vote winner!** The pat reply to this argument will be that nuclear can by replaced by renewables – wind, wave and solar power – and by better energy efficiency in homes, offices etc. Well it can’t – the figures don’t add up. Building offshore wind farms, **renewing the grid** to use them, developing wave power etc **will take** years if not **a decade or more**, even if a socialist government threw all its resources behind it. Even a massive public works programme on energy conservation in homes and offices would take many years. At the same time we need to phase out all coal-fired power stations within the next decade or so, a really important demand in relation to CO2 emissions – and in Britain they still produce just under a third of our electricity. Renewables cannot fill the gap if we take out nuclear power as an option. **As socialists we cannot magic away these problems. We can bury our heads in the sand, raise demands that no one takes seriously** (even ourselves) or provide some scientific based and socialist answers to the problems we face – the major one being how we put forward a program to massively reduce CO2 emissions on a world scale to prevent global warming. Nuclear power as a low CO2 producing energy source, for all its draw-backs and dangers, will certainly be part of the solution. The lesson of Fukushima is not, as Socialist Worker would have it, that nuclear power is an impossibly dangerous industry, but that it is far too dangerous an industry to be in private hands and to be driven by the profit motive. Of the ten commercially operating nuclear plants in the UK seven were built between 1962 and 1970. They are old technology, as was Fukushima, more dangerous to run than the new generation of nuclear power stations. They need to be phased out and replaced by new ones as part of an energy mix where renewables are the major source of electric power, a mix where coal and gas are phased out.

#### This outweighs: a) nuclear power is necessary; even if industries are bad generally, this one’s a good one and b) the nuclear industry is a tiny drop in the global neoliberal market—you obviously don’t solve industry so uniqueness overwhelms the link. If nuclear power is good, that should be the true tie-breaker.

#### You push energy into other industries, which a) do not solve the problem and b) makes it worse. Nuclear power is the most regulated industry. Walters ‘11

FUKUSHIMA, NUCLEAR ENERGY AND A SOCIALIST PROGRAM by David Walters on Socialist Arguments for Nuclear Power June 14, 2011. <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2011/06/14/socialist-arguments-for-nuclear-power/> Climate and Capitalism Cut 9/3 NS

**Nuclear** has been somewhat different historically from other forms of power generation, given the dangerous nature of generating energy from atomic fission. **Everywhere it is highly regulated.** This is true even in Japan where government and corporations are incestuously entangled with one other. In other countries, regulators have degrees more independence. Overall, **there is no more regulated industry in the world than nuclear.** But, as Japan shows, there are still vital safety issues that need to be addressed. On a personal note, my own minimum experience with nuclear energy in the US and having being a shop steward in a union local with 800 nuclear workers, has educated me on the importance of safety, of following regulatory guidelines, and seeing the consequences of not following those guidelines for workers involved. I was convinced after visiting nuclear power plants and talking to my fellow union workers, that I didn’t want to work in such an environment. Because it was unsafe? No, for just the opposite reason, in fact. **The tremendous amount of** NRC (**Nuclear Regulatory Agency**) **oversight, training, regulations and paperwork, that is**, the **“safety culture**”, was simply too great for me to want to deal with. The workers there take these issues so seriously that I didn’t believe I could tolerate this work environment. In the beginning of May of this year the New York Times ran an editorial, disguised as an “article” (one of the authors being an anti-nuclear ideologue from Greenpeace), supposedly showing the “near misses” and accidents that were missed or not noted by the NRC. There is no doubt that some of this is true, while giving a false overall picture of the issue. But it’s also true that despite these incidents, not one of these resulted in injury to the public or work force. The fact is that, **thanks to the workers involved in operating these plants, most of whom are union members, the safety record of** the **US civilian nuclear energy industry** and the sound regulatory oversight, has made even this, flawed, for-profit industry**, the safest of any major industry in the US for the last 50 years. Can we say the same about** the refinery, pharmaceutical, chemical, **coal, gas and oil industries? No, we cannot.** The relative risk of these industries has to be looked at, and anti-nuclear “investigative” journalism routinely ignores this.

#### The alt is to empower nuclear workers to socialize nuclear power. A rejection of nuclear power is impractical and doesn’t solve—it pushed power back into the hands of new government agencies and corporations. Only an empowerment movement solves. King ‘11

FUKUSHIMA, THE LEFT, AND NUCLEAR POWER by Stuart King on Socialist Arguments for Nuclear Power June 14, 2011. <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2011/06/14/socialist-arguments-for-nuclear-power/> Climate and Capitalism Cut 9/3 NS

**The whole of the nuclear industry** (apart from decommissioning) **has been privatised and is run by multinationals like EDF. It needs to be nationalized with the profit motive removed.** But **it cannot be run by state bureaucrats who are as keen on cost cutting as any capitalist. It needs to be placed under the control of the workers who run it (and know the safety issues) alongside the communities that exist side by side with nuclear plants. Together they can monitor and control safety and management and should be given the resources by the state to employ their own experts and technicians to be able to do so.**

## Generic Links

### Link: rights

#### The aff’s concept of right further isolates individuals and reinforces capitalism. This is a prior question to the aff.

Rosen The Marxist Critique of Morality and the Theory of Ideology1 Michael Rosen Scholar.harvard.edu,. 2015. Accessed September 25 2015. <http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/michaelrosen/files/the_marxist_critique_of_morality_and_the_theory_of_ideology.pdf>.

The nature of Marx's objections to morality is clarified further in the comments on the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1791) and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1793) to be found in his article "On the Jewish Question" (written, again, in 1843). Marx there takes issue with the idea of the rights of man in general: ... the so-called rights of man, as distinct from the rights of the citizen, are quite simply the rights of the member of civil society, i.e. of egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community.12 Marx's objection here resembles those already raised in the Critique of Hegel's `Philosophy of Right'. The rights that are institutionalized in the political sphere do not counter the isolation of individuals from one another that is characteristic of their economic life ("civil society"); on the contrary, the conception of rights at stake simply mirrors the egoistic and individualistic structure of civil society, Marx asserts. Marx makes similar points when it comes to the discussion of specific rights such as the right to liberty. He quotes the two declarations' definitions of the right to liberty as follows: "Liberty is the power which belongs to man to do anything that does not harm the rights of others", or according to the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1791: "Liberty consists in being able to do anything which does not harm others." Marx's comments on these definitions again focus on the claim that such rights presuppose the "egoism" of the individuals whose freedom is being guaranteed: Liberty is therefore the right to do and perform everything which does not harm others. The limits within which each individual can move without harming others are determined by law, just as the boundary between two fields is determined by a stake. The liberty we are here dealing with is that of man as an isolated monad who is withdrawn into himself... [The] right of man to freedom is not based on the association of man with man but rather on the separation of man from man. It is the right of this separation, the right of the restricted individual, restricted to himself.14 We shall return to these criticisms below, but, for the present, it is significant to note the distance that Marx has covered from the original, Hegelian criticism of Kantian Moralität. For Hegel, the objection to the idea of acting from duty was simply that the content of such duties remained indeterminate. For Marx, on the one hand, the target is much broader: the criticism of abstract morality does not just apply to the Kantian categorical imperative but, apparently, to rights-based moral theory in general. Moreover, Marx's objection is not just to the failure of the categorical imperative to determine the content of moral principles, but something rather different: he objects to the "egoism" and "separation" that are, he claims, presupposed by the notion of rights.

#### Their conception of morality privileges abstract thought over material conditions which supports the ruling class and entrenches capitalism.

Rosen 2 The Marxist Critique of Morality and the Theory of Ideology1 Michael Rosen Scholar.harvard.edu,. 2015. Accessed September 25 2015. <http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/michaelrosen/files/the_marxist_critique_of_morality_and_the_theory_of_ideology.pdf>.

The separation between mental and manual labour, Marx maintains, explains the formal, abstract character of moral ideas, but it does not lead to the formation of autonomous ideas in fact; the ideologists who produce ideas are still part of the ruling class whose interests their ideas represent. In this way the division of labour offers an explanation as to why such ideas should be accepted by those, the dominated classes, whose interests they go against. They are accepted because they are apparently disinterested. The ideologist, on this view, is like a bribed referee: able to influence the outcome of a game all the more effectively for the fact that he is falsely believed to be impartial. The ideologist is not engaged in deception, however. On the contrary. According to Marx, ideologists are sincere -- and, because they sincerely believe in the independence and objective validity of their own ideas, they are able to persuade others to accept them as such all the more effectively. Here, however, is the problem. How are we to suppose it to be true that the ideologists should both be constrained so that they produce ideas in the interests of the ruling class of which they are, appearances to the contrary, a part and that they (and those who accept the ideas from them) remain sincerely unaware of the nature of this connection? Why do they think that they are independent when in fact they are not? And, if they are not independent, how do their shared class interests with the rest of the ruling class assert themselves?

### Link: Choice/Autonomy

Emphasis on choice and will is a capitalist tactic to divide resistance. Zizek ‘05

ZiZek, 2005, July 15 [“Against Human Rights” New Left Review] Pgs. 115-131 Unfreedom of  choice

**As to freedom of choice: I have written elsewhere of the pseudo-choice offered to the adolescents of Amish communities who, after the strictest of upbringings, are invited at the age of seventeen to plunge themselves into every excess of contemporary capitalist culture**—a whirl of fast cars, wild sex, drugs, drink and so forth .2 After a couple of years, they are allowed to choose whether they want to return to the Amish way. **Since they have been brought up in virtual ignorance of American society, the youngsters are quite unprepared to cope with such permissiveness, which in most cases generates a backlash of unbearable anxiety. The** 2 ‘The constitution is dead. Long live proper politics’, Guardian, 4 June 2005. 118 n lr 34 **vast majority vote to return to the seclusion of their communities. This is a perfect case of the difficulties that invariably accompany ‘freedom of choice’:** **while Amish children are formally given a free choice, the conditions in which they must make it render the choice unfree.** The problem of pseudo-choice also demonstrates the limitations of the standard liberal attitude towards Muslim women who wear the veil: acceptable if it is their own free choice rather than imposed on them by husbands or family. However, the moment a woman dons the veil as the result of personal choice, its meaning changes completely: it is no longer a sign of belonging to the Muslim community, but an expression of idiosyncratic individuality. In other words, **a choice is always a meta-choice, a choice of the modality of the choice itself:** it is only the woman who does not choose to wear a veil that effectively chooses a choice. This is why, in our secular liberal democracies, people who maintain a substantial religious allegiance are in a subordinate position: their faith is ‘tolerated’ as their own personal choice, but the moment they present it publicly as what it is for them—a matter of substantial belonging—they stand accused of ‘fundamentalism’. **Plainly, the ‘subject of free choice’, in the ‘tolerant’, multicultural sense, can only emerge as the result of an extremely violent process of being uprooted from one’s particular life-world.** The material force of the ideological notion of ‘free choice’ within capitalist democracy was well illustrated by the fate of the Clinton Administration’s ultra-modest health reform programme. The medical lobby (twice as strong as the infamous defence lobby) succeeded in imposing on the public the idea that universal healthcare would somehow threaten freedom of choice in that domain. Against this conviction, all enumeration of ‘hard facts’ proved ineffective. **We are here at the very nerve-centre of liberal ideology: freedom of choice, grounded in the notion of the ‘psychological’ subject, endowed with propensities which he or she strives to realize. And this especially holds today, in the era of a ‘risk society’ in which the ruling ideology endeavours to** **sell us the very insecurities caused by the dismantling of the welfare state as the opportunity for new freedoms.** If labour flexibilization means you have to change jobs every year, why not see it as a liberation from the constraints of a permanent career, a chance to reinvent yourself and realize the hidden potential of your personality? If there is a shortfall on your standard health insurance and retirement plan, meaning you have to žižek: Human Rights 119 opt for extra coverage, why not perceive it as an additional opportunity to choose: either a better lifestyle now or long-term security? Should this predicament cause you anxiety, the ‘second modernity’ ideologist will diagnose you as desiring to ‘escape from freedom’, of an immature sticking to old stable forms. Even better, **when this is inscribed into the ideology of the subject as the ‘psychological’ individual, pregnant with natural abilities, you will automatically tend to interpret all these changes as the outcome of your personality, not as the result of being thrown around by market forces.**

### Link: Universal Ethics

And, ethical frameworks that dictate universal obligations ignore the inequality produced by the application of rules in class-divided societies—means attempts at universal ethics in a capitalist society are ineffective. **Llorente ‘03**

Renzo Llorente. “Maurice Cornforth’s Contribution to Marxist Metaethics.” NATURE, SOCIETY, AND THOUGHT Vol. 16, No. 3 (2003). <http://homepages.spa.umn.edu/~marquit/nst163a.pdf>

Let me begin with what is undoubtedly the central feature of Cornforth’s critique of analytic moral philosophy in *Marxism and the Linguistic Philosophy* (and a basic component of what I have called a Marxist metaethics), namely his insistence on the inherent injustice of attempting to universalize ethical norms in class-divided societies. Before reviewing the substance and scope of Cornforth’s criticism, however, it will be helpful to say a word about the principle of universalizability and its importance in ethics.In moral philosophy, or ethics (for our present purposes we may use the two terms synonymously), we say that a judgment is universalizable if, to quote R. M. Hare, “it logically commits the speaker to making a similar judgment about anything which is either exactly like the subject of the original judgment or like it in the relevant respects” (1963, 139, cited in Cornforth 1965, 214).8 Put more simply, this principle holds that “what is right (or wrong) for one person is right (or wrong) for any similar person in similar circumstances” (Singer 1999, 941); the mere fact that individuals differ from one another—as opposed to finding themselves in situations that are dissimilar (or being themselves dissimilar) *in a morally relevant sense*9—in and of itself never justifies the application of different moral standards or the imposition of different moral duties. Universal applicability is, according to this thesis, a formal feature of all moral principles, indeed, a necessary condition for any proposition or judgment to qualify as a moral principle. While the basic intuition reflected in this criterion was first explicitly developed by Immanuel Kant, we owe the stron- gest modern statement and elucidation of this principle to R. M. Hare, who is for this reason—and because of his stature as one of the leading figures in twentieth-century analytical moral philoso- phy—the main target of Cornforth’s criticism in the pages devoted to ethics within *Marxism and the Linguistic Philosophy*.Cornforth does not take exception to the principle of universalizability as such. To the contrary, he, like the great majority of contemporary philosophers, acknowledges its validity, noting that it “is a consequence of the essentially social natureof morality. . . . [I]t is simply the result of the fact that such principles are enunciated for the purpose of regulating social life” (1965, 235). The problem, argues Cornforth, concerns the contradiction between a demand for, and injunction to, universalizability as the guarantee of fairness and impartiality, on the one hand, and the inherent injustice and unfairness of seeking to universalize moral norms and precepts in class-divided societies. For the insistence on universalizability, save in a situation of rough equality of condition, imposes very different burdens on the agents subject to this demand, and thus proves inherently unfair, a violation of the fundamental moral precept, already formulated by Aristotle, of equality of treatment for equals.10 As Cornforth puts it, “How, in a class-divided society in which the profits of one class are derived from the labour of another, can public policies and social aims be judged by a criterion of universal acceptability?” (228). Or again, putting the same point a bit differently (i.e., in terms of *interests*): “Until all exploitation of man by man is ended, morality cannot be based on a generalised human standpoint, expressing a common human point of view and interest” (357). We shall return to Cornforth’s remarks on interests shortly. Before doing so, let us first consider Cornforth’s discussion of the consequences attending the attempt to comply with the imperative of universalizability in class-divided societies. As Cornforth shows, two outcomes are possible. On the one hand, insofar as determinate moral principles are established as universally valid and used to regulate social life, the result is the enshrinement of a system of moral rules that is intrinsically unfair and inevitably class-biased. As Cornforth observes, “Where there are class divisions and one class interest is dominant within the given form of association, the corresponding obligations and rights express the dominant class interest, and the corresponding moral code becomes class-biased, not a code of universal but of class-biased morality” (1965, 354).11 In other words, if class divisions preclude the rough equality of condition necessary for the principle of universalizability to function properly (i.e., impartially), then the prevailing moral code will normally comprise duties, obligations, and so on that favor the dominant classes,12 since their interests are sure to take precedence in a situation in which there exist divergent, mutually exclusive interests and they alone possess the economic and political resources to ensure that their interests prevail.13

### Link: Individual Ethics

And, frameworks that view each act in isolation and emphasize the responsibility of individuals over social responsibility undermine the fight against capitalism. **Pepper ‘93**

Pepper, doctorate in theoretical physics from St John's College, Oxford ,’93[David, Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice p. 141-145]

<Green political naivety is compounded by a stubborn overemphasis on the power of ideas—of value and attitude change and educational enlightenment—especially at the level of the individual. These, greens have consistently asserted, are what drives history and economics: The basic solutions involve dramatic and rapid changes in human attitudes, especially those relating to reproductive behaviour, economic growth technology, the environment and conflict resolution. (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1972) This approach to social change starts from the assumption that one of the main determinants of a society’s structure and dynamics is the individual’s values, beliefs, attitudes and concerns. In other words, any change in individual values and attitudes will manifest as changes in all aspects of society. (MacNulty, in Ekins 1986) As we think, see, love and do, so our economies are. As we change the way we think, see, love and do, so our economies change. (Dauncey 1988) The consequence of this idealism is that insufficient political attention is given to the need to instigate changes in the mode of material production, and to how they can be effected in the light of the powerful vested interests in capitalism which will resist them. Idealistic individualism can breed an apparent selfishness or, at best, a naive conservatism, as is starkly illustrated by the response of New Age communards to questions on how to deal with exploitation and mass unemployment: Third world people are exploited. They can’t control this. But they can control how they feel. They can walk around in a victim consciousness or they can walk around enjoying everything. You go to Sri Lanka and you see the kids happy, happy, happy. You go to America and they’re not happy as a race…. You can be happy living in cardboard boxes. Don’t worry about unemployment. This and other problems will go away when enough people tune in to their spiritual benignness. They must not view poverty as a drudge but as a gift. Some of the best things in life are learned when you are poor. (cited in Pepper 1991, 110, 167) Thus, you create your own reality, which means your own oppression. ‘From this it follows that if you choose to believe that “I am no longer oppressed” then the oppression is suddenly gone’ (Sjoo 1992). Such sentiments illustrate how the whole New Age package is a mind-bending and soul-destroying enterprise, its main aim being to uphold present power relations…in practice, my observation is that radical politics are denounced as the distressed product of victim consciousness, while conservative ideology and practice are accepted without much question…. For, in essence, New Age philosophies fit very comfortably with laissez-faire individualistic Thatcherite economics…. When faced with problems of oppression or hostility, New Agers advise us to ‘just let go of your anger …of your emotional attachments to your cause…. Do not, for God’s sake, stay with your feelings of anger, distress or whatever, do not recognise their source and act on them, including fighting for social change’. (Francis 1991, 12-13) And this counter-revolutionary attitude is also inherent in the elevation of the individual as key actor in social change. Not only does this celebrate the central tenet in liberalism, it puts the onus for any lack of social or environmental improvement on to the individual. Thus, as Coward (1989) points out, alternative medicine meshes well with British Conservative government policy towards people’s health. For it suggests that when illness strikes, or improvement fails to come, the patient is to blame: for leading an unhealthy lifestyle, or for failing to exercise sufficient mental will to get better. As Francis puts it: For most ordinary people, if you got your foot deliberately stomped on you would speak out your pain and anger. For New Agers…the pain you experienced in your stomped-on foot was your own creation…. If you are suffering from crippling poverty, the solution is simple enough, because you, and you alone, are responsible for creating your own reality. …It is your victim consciousness that has created the illusion of poverty, disease, rape and genocide…. Your pain is suddenly your responsibility, nothing to do with external agents. How convenient for our oppressors! This displacement of responsibility means that your failure to think yourself better, or better off, or your failure to lead a sufficiently pure ecological lifestyle, can all lead to the ultimate triumph of the bourgeois weapon of guilt, after which disillusionment and withdrawal from the struggle is but a short step, and the personal ceases to be political any more (Pepper and Hallam 1988). The failure to set issues in a historical materialist context, i.e. in relation to changing modes of production, is most clearly illustrated in the population-resources issue. A historical approach to this is outlined in Chapter 3.5. An ahistorical approach by contrast refuses to ask what are the symptoms of supposed overpopulation, and why those symptoms could not be the outcome of poverty, unemployment and wealth maldistribution produced by capitalist productive relations. It continues the neo-Malthusian fixation of early 1970s’ limits-to-growth theorists, and still insists apocalyptically on the ‘reality of a finite planet’ and he unsurprising fact that exponential population growth, combined with increasing per capita consumption of resources combined with increasing destruction and exploitation of the natural environment, is unsustainable, is already resulting in calamity and will result in catastrophe sooner rather than later if current trends are not reversed. (Ekins 1986) Ahistoricism extends to a predilection for blaming ‘soul-destroying, lifedestroying industrialism’ or ‘the industrial paradigm’ (Porritt 1984) for the ‘crisis’, but not specifying its form. Does the fault lie in all industrial production, or could we, by adopting proper socialist arrangements, produce, transform nature, reap benefits from science and technology and have growth in needs satisfaction and in life quality: all without bringing on ecological crisis? Socialists unequivocally say ‘yes’: greens are frequently equivocal, vague or just confused. And there is often ahistoricism over technology. The 1970s’ environmentalist messages about technology have been repeated in the 1980s, say Goldman and O’Connor (1988, 92), and they slight or ignore ‘the problem of technology as the content and context of social domination, exploitation of labour and accumulation of capital’. Standard environmental texts on technology may assess it simply in terms of cost/risk-benefit analysis, or may see technological harm as a result of lack of appropriate values (Schumacher 1973). Neither approach relates technology to the specific production arrangements or relations of capitalism, or any other mode of production. Neither sees technology, in other words, as an embodiment of specific social relations. Some ecocentrism may be aware of the vested financial interests behind high technology, but it fails to follow this through by confronting the issue of how to reduce the power which big corporations have over it. Even radicals like Commoner, Carson and van den Bosch, while relating, ‘As in most liberal thought, the economic function of “bad” technology’ to ‘increased profits’ and simple greed and vested interests, do not realise that these explanations are too simple. The economic and social structure of capitalism, and how specific technologies serve the central aim of dominating and exploiting labour, must be addressed. Albury and Schwartz (1982) do in fact do this, showing how technologies as disparate as the Davy miners’ lamp, green revolution agriculture, and information technology were developed specifically to serve this exploitative aim. Neither they, nor any other technologies, are neutral, and the key issue is not just who controls them. The non-exploitative technology of ecological socialism would be a different technology from that of the capitalist mode of production. It is not just liberals, but many on the left who fail to grasp this. Making a similar point, Winner (1986, 64-6) accuses the alternative technology movement of mere ‘sociological tinkering’ rather than confronting capitalism. Thus Whole Earth Catalog was about technology, and avoided technological politics. Winner’s review of ‘New Age’ writers who focused centrally on technology—Marcuse, Mumford, Roszak, Goodman, Ellul—shows that they identified the problems as human aggressiveness, the machine mentality, the subject-object split, the obsession with technique, rational thought or the second law of thermodynamics. They did not face squarely, he says, the facts of organised political and social power, or examine technology’s history (as did Albury and Schwartz) to find out why some choices were made rather than others. Shying away from underlying socio-economic structures to concentrate instead on the surface manifestations of such structures: this postmodern weakness appears to extend from alternative technology to questions of scale and regionalism. Much ecocentrism identifies spatial reorganisation into small-scale communities (Sale 1985) as the key to an ecological society. Most geographers, however, would testify that **spatial form reflects socio-economic structure, not the other way around**. Hence any change to the former could not be sustained without accompanying or prior radical change in the latter. But **bioregionalism** (Chapter 4.5), in postmodern style, **mistakes the surface manifestation for the structural reality**. Thus, one of its gurus, Leopold Kohr (1957, 145) claimed that economic decline was the result of no particular economic system but of size. Production units and markets are too big, and business cycles ‘result from overgrowth’ rather than the converse. Marx’s only error was to attribute ‘to the system of capitalism what was solely due to the overgrowth of its institutions’ (p. 155). Modern disciples reiterate this view of size as a causal factor, advocating a green economics whose ‘…goals should be the decentralisation and democratisation of money and banking’ (Weston 1992), not their abolition. It follows that, for Marxists, **ecological improvement must be clearly related to a non-capitalist society**. They advocate not merely a redistribution of wealth but a socialist society, consisting of a free association of producers. This, says Hulsberg (1985) is what distinguishes eco-socialists from eco-libertarians: the latter have no fixed image of the economics of their desired society. ‘Industrialism’ is the problem: who owns the means of production is a secondary issue for them. >

Emphasis on moral behavior prevents an examination of the amoral material forces of production that support capitalism—its focus on individual behavior and the obligations that individuals have prevents the social mobilization that overthrowing capitalism requires.

### Link: Democracy/Polls

Prioritizing democracy frameworks is a great way to neuter the revolution. **Zizek ‘2K**

Zizek, 2k1(“Repeating Lenin” Professor of Philosophy at the University of Ljubljana, Slavoj Zizek)

What are we to say to this? Again, the problem resides in the implicit qualifications which can be easily discerned by the "concrete analysis of the concrete situation," as Lenin himself would have put it. "**Fidelity to the democratic consensus" means the acceptance of the present liberal-parlamentary consensus, which precludes any serious questioning of how this liberal-democratic order is complicit in the phenomena it officially condemns, and, of course, any serious attempt to imagine a society whose socio-political order would be different. In short, it means: say and write whatever you want - on condition that what you do does not effectively question or disturb the predominant political consensus**. So **everything is allowed, solicited even, as a critical topic: the prospects of a global ecological catastrophe, violations of human rights, sexism, homophobia, antifeminism, the growing violence not only in the far-away countries, but also in our megalopolises, the gap between the First and the Third World, between the rich and the poor, the shattering impact of the digitalization of our daily lives... there is nothing easier today than to get international, state or corporate funds for a multidisciplinary research into how to fight the new forms of ethnic, religious or sexist violence. The problem is that all this occurs against the background of a fundamental** Denkverbot, the **prohibition to think. Today's liberal-democratic hegemony is sustained by a kind of unwritten** Denkverbot **(Prohibition to think)**  similar to the infamous Berufsverbot in Germany of the late 60s - **the moment one shows a minimal sign of engaging in political projects that aim to seriously challenge the existing order, the answer is immediately: "Benevolent as it is, this will necessarily end in a new Gulag!" The ideological function of the constant reference to the holocaust, gulag and the more recent Third World catastrophes is thus to serve as the support of this** Denkverbot**(Prohibition to think)** **by constantly reminding us how things may have been much worse:** **"Just look around and see for yourself what will happen if we follow your radical notions**!" And **it is exactly the same thing that the demand for "scientific objectivity" means: the moment one seriously questions the existing liberal consensus, one is accused of abandoning scientific objectivity for the outdated ideological positions.** **This is the point on which one cannot and should not concede:** today, the actual freedom of thought means the freedom to question the predominant liberal-democratic "post-ideological" consensus - or it means nothing.

### Link: Race

Slavery was not based on racial antagonism but economic exploitation.  A myopic focus on racial violence elides this production relationship that constituted slavery—that prevents radical collective organizing. **Reed ‘13**

Reed, professor of political science – University of Pennsylvania, ’13 (Adolph, “Django Unchained, or, The Help: How “Cultural Politics” Is Worse Than No Politics at All, and Why,” Nonsite Issue #9, February 25th, <http://nonsite.org/feature/django-unchained-or-the-help-how-cultural-politics-is-worse-than-no-politics-at-all-and-why>)

On reflection, it’s possible to see that **Django** Unchained **and The Help are** basically **different versions of the same movie. Both dissolve political economy** and social relations **into individual quests** and interpersonal transactions **and** thus effectively **sanitize**, respectively, **slavery and Jim Crow by dehistoricizing them.** The problem is not so much that each film invents cartoonish fictions; it’s that the point of the cartoons is to take the place of the actual relations of exploitation that anchored the regime it depicts. In The Help the buffoonishly bigoted housewife, Hilly, obsessively pushes a pet bill that would require employers of black domestic servants to provide separate, Jim Crow toilets for them; in Django Unchained the sensibility of 1970s blaxploitation imagines “comfort girls” and “Mandingo fighters” as representative slave job descriptions. **It’s as if Jim Crow had nothing to do with cheap labor and slavery had nothing to do with making slave owners rich.** And the point here is not just **that** they get the past wrong—it’s that the particular way they get it wrong enables them to get the present just as wrong **and** so **their politics are** as **misbegotten** as their history. Thus, for example, it’s only the dehistoricization that makes each film’s entirely neoliberal (they could have been scripted by Oprah) happy ending possible. The Help ends with Skeeter and the black lead, the maid Aibileen, embarking joyfully on the new, excitingly uncharted paths their book—an account of the master-servant relationship told from the perspective of the servants—has opened for them. But dehistoricization makes it possible not to notice the great distance between those paths and their likely trajectories. For Skeeter the book from which the film takes its name opens a career in the fast track of the journalism and publishing industry. Aibileen’s new path was forced upon her because the book got her fired from her intrinsically precarious job, more at-whim than at-will, in one of the few areas of employment available to working-class black women in the segregationist South—the precise likelihood that had made her and other maids initially reluctant to warm to Skeeter’s project. Yet Aibileen smiles and strides ever more confidently as she walks home because she has found and articulated her voice. The implication is that having been fired, rather than portending deeper poverty and economic insecurity, was a moment of liberation; Aibileen, armed with the confidence and self-knowledge conferred by knowing her voice, was now free to venture out into a world of unlimited opportunity and promise. This, of course, is pure neoliberal bullshit, of the same variety that permits the odious Michelle Rhee to assert with a straight face that teachers’ defined-benefit pensions deny them “choice” and thereby undermine the quality of public education. But who knows? Perhaps Skeeter brought with her from the 2000s an NGO to arrange microcredit that would enable Aibileen to start up a culturally authentic pie-making venture or a day spa for harried and stressed domestic servants. In the Jackson, Mississippi of 1963, no such options would exist for Aibileen. Instead, she most likely would be blackballed and unable to find a comparable menial job and forced to toil under even more undesirable conditions. Django Unchained ends with the hero and his lady fair riding happily off into the sunset after he has vanquished evil slave owners and their henchmen and henchwomen. Django and Broomhilda—whose name is spelled like that of the 1970s comic strip character, not the figure in Norse mythology, presumably a pointless Tarantino inside joke—are free. However, their freedom was not won by his prodigious bloodletting; it was obtained within the legal framework that accepted and regulated property rights in slaves. Each had been purchased and manumitted by the German bounty hunter who, as others have noted, is the only character in the film to condemn slavery as an institution. Django is no insurrectionist. His singular focus from beginning to end is on reclaiming his wife from her slave master. Presumably, we are to understand this solipsism as indicative of the depth and intensity of his love, probably also as homage to the borderline sociopathic style of the spaghetti western/blaxploitation hero. Regardless, Django’s quest is entirely individualist; he never intends to challenge slavery and never does. Indeed, for the purpose of buttressing the credibility of their ruse, he even countermands his bounty hunter partner’s attempt to save—through purchase, of course—a recalcitrant “Mandingo fighter” from being ripped apart by dogs. He is essentially indifferent to the handful of slaves who are freed as incidental byproducts of his actions. The happy ending is that he and Broomhilda ride off together and free in a slavocracy that is not a whit less secure at the moment of celebratory resolution than it was when Django set out on his mission of retrieval and revenge. In both films the bogus happy endings are possible only because they characterize their respective regimes of racial hierarchy in the superficial terms of interpersonal transactions. In The Help segregationism’s evil was small-minded bigotry and lack of sensitivity; it was more like bad manners than oppression. In Tarantino’s vision**,** slavery’s definitive injustice was **its** gratuitous and sadistic brutalization and sexualized degradation. Malevolent, ludicrously arrogant whites owned slaves most **conspicuously** to degrade and torture them**.** Apart from serving a formal dinner in a plantation house—and Tarantino, the Chance the Gardener of American filmmakers (and Best Original Screenplay? Really?) seems to draw his images of plantation life from Birth of a Nation and Gone With the Wind, as well as old Warner Brothers cartoons—and the Mandingo fighters and comfort girls, **Tarantino’s slaves do no actual work at all; they’re present only to be brutalized**. In fact, **the cavalier** sadism **with which owners and traders treat them** belies the fact **that** slaves were**, first and foremost,** capital investments**. It’s not for nothing that New Orleans has a monument to the** estimated 20,000-**30,000 antebellum Irish immigrants who died constructing the New Basin Canal; slave labor was too valuable for such lethal work.** The Help trivializes Jim Crow by reducing it to its most superficial features and irrational extremes. The master-servant nexus was**, and is,** a labor relation**.** And **the problem of labor** **relations particular to the segregationist regime wasn’t employers’** bigoted **lack of respect** or failure to hear the voices of the domestic servants, **or** even benighted **refusal to recognize their** equal **humanity. It was that** the labor relation was structured within and sustained by a politicaland institutional order that **severely** impinged on, when it didn’t altogether deny, black citizens’ avenues for pursuit of grievances and standing before the law. **The crucial lynchpin** **of that order** was neither myopia nor malevolence; it was suppression of black citizens’ capacities for direct participation in civic and political life, with racial disfranchisement and the constant threat of terror intrinsic to substantive denial of equal protection and due process before the law as its principal mechanisms. And the point of the regime **wasn’t** racial hatred **or enforced disregard; its** roots lay in the much more prosaic concern of **dominant elites** to maintain their political and economic hegemony by suppressing potential opposition and in the linked ideal of maintaining access to a labor force with no options but to accept employment on whatever terms employers offered. (Those who liked The Help or found it moving should watch The Long Walk Home, a 1990 film set in Montgomery, Alabama, around the bus boycott. I suspect that’s the film you thought you were watching when you saw The Help.) Django Unchained trivializes slavery by reducing it to its most barbaric and lurid excesses. **Slavery** also **was fundamentally a labor relation. It was a form of forced labor regulated—systematized, enforced and sustained—through a political and institutional order that specified it as a civil relationship granting owners** absolute **control over** the life, liberty, and fortunes of others defined as eligible for enslavement, including most of all control of the conditions of their **labor** **and** appropriation of its **product.** Historian Kenneth M. Stampp quotes a slaveholder’s succinct explanation: “‘For what purpose does the master hold the servant?’ asked an ante-bellum Southerner. ‘Is it not that by his labor, he, the master, may accumulate wealth?’”1 That absolute **control permitted** horrible, **unthinkable brutality**, to be sure, **but** perpetrating such **brutality was neither the point** of slavery **nor its essential injustice. The master-slave relationship could, and did, exist without brutality, and certainly without sadism** and sexual degradation. In Tarantino’s depiction, however, it is not clear that slavery shorn of its extremes of brutality would be objectionable. **It does not diminish the** historical injustice and **horror of slavery to note that it** **was not the product of** sui generis, **transcendent Evil but a terminus on a continuum of bound labor that was more norm than exception in the Anglo-American world until well into the eighteenth century**, if not later. As legal historian Robert **Steinfeld points out, it is not so much** **slavery, but the emergence of the notion of free labor**—as **the absolute control of a worker over** **her person—that is the historical anomaly that needs to be explained**.2 **Django** Unchained **sanitizes the essential injustice** of slavery **by not problematizing it and by focusing instead on** the extremes of **brutality** and degradation it permitted, to the extent of making some of them up, just as does The Help regarding Jim Crow. The Help could not imagine a more honest and complex view of segregationist Mississippi partly because it uses the period ultimately as a prop for human interest cliché, and Django Unchained’s absurdly ahistorical view of plantation slavery is only backdrop for the merger of spaghetti western and blaxploitation hero movie. Neither film is really about the period in which it is set. Film critic Manohla Dargis, reflecting a decade ago on what she saw as a growing Hollywood penchant for period films, observed that such films are typically “stripped of politics and historical fact…and instead will find meaning in appealing to seemingly timeless ideals and stirring scenes of love, valor and compassion” and that “the Hollywood professionals who embrace accuracy most enthusiastically nowadays are costume designers.”3 That observation applies to both these films, although in Django concern with historically accurate representation of material culture applies only to the costumes and props of the 1970s film genres Tarantino wants to recall. To make sense of how Django Unchained has received so much warmer a reception among black and leftoid commentators than did The Help, it is useful to recall Margaret **Thatcher’s** 1981 dictum that “economics are the method: the object is to change the soul.”4 Simply put, she and her element have **won. Few observers**—among opponents and boosters alike—**have noted how** deeply and **thoroughly both films are embedded in the practical ontology of neoliberalism, the complex of unarticulated assumptions and unexamined first premises that provide its common sense**, its lifeworld. Objection to The Help has been largely of the shooting fish in a barrel variety: complaints about the film’s paternalistic treatment of the maids, which generally have boiled down to an objection that the master-servant relation is thematized at all, as well as the standard, predictable litany of anti-racist charges about whites speaking for blacks, the film’s inattentiveness to the fact that at that time in Mississippi black people were busily engaged in liberating themselves, etc. An illustration of this tendency that conveniently refers to several other variants of it is Akiba Solomon, “Why I’m Just Saying No to ‘The Help’ and Its Historical Whitewash” in Color Lines, August 10, 2011, available at: http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/08/why\_im\_just\_saying\_no\_to\_the\_help.html. **Defenses** of Django Unchained **pivot on claims about** the social significance of the narrative of a black hero. One node of this argument emphasizes **the need to validate a history of autonomous black agency and “resistance”** as a politico-existential desideratum. **It** accommodates a view that **stresses the importance of recognition of rebellious or militant individuals** and revolts in black American history. Another centers on a notion that exposure to fictional black heroes can inculcate the sense of personal efficacy necessary **to overcome** the psychological effects of **inequality** and to facilitate upward mobility and may undermine some whites’ negative stereotypes about black people. In either register assignment of **social** or political **importance** to depictions of black heroes **rests on presumptions about the nexus of mass cultural representation, social commentary, and racial justice** that are more significant politically than the controversy about the film itself. In both versions, **this** argument **casts political and economic problems in psychological terms.** Injustice appears as a matter of disrespect and denial of due recognition, and the remedies proposed—which are all about images projected and the distribution of jobs associated with their projection—look a lot like self-esteem engineering. Moreover, nothing could indicate more strikingly the extent of neoliberal **ideological** hegemony than the idea **that** the mass culture industry and its representational practices constitute a meaningful terrain for struggle to advance egalitarian interests**.** It is possible to entertain that view seriously only by **ignoring the fact that the** production and consumption of mass culture is **thoroughly** embedded in capitalist material and ideological imperatives**.** That, incidentally, is why I prefer the usage “mass culture” to describe this industry and its products and processes, although I recognize that it may seem archaic to some readers. The mass culture v. popular culture debate dates at least from the 1950s and has continued with occasional crescendos ever since.5 For two decades or more, instructively in line with the retreat of possibilities for concerted left political action outside the academy, the popular culture side of that debate has been dominant, along with its view that the products of this precinct of mass consumption capitalism are somehow capable of transcending or subverting their material identity as commodities, if not avoiding that identity altogether. **Despite the** dogged **commitment of** several generations of American Studies and **cultural studies** graduate **students who want to** **valorize** watching television and immersion in hip-hop or other specialty market niches centered on youth recreation and the most ephemeral **fads as both intellectually avant-garde and politically “resistive,” it should be time to admit that that** earnest disposition **is** intellectually shallow and an **ersatz politics.** **The idea of** “popular” **culture posits a spurious autonomy** and organicism **that** actually **affirm mass industrial processes by effacing them, especially in the** putatively rebel, **fringe, or underground** market **niches that depend on the fiction of the authentic to announce the birth of new product cycles.** The power of the hero is a cathartic trope that connects mainly with the sensibility of adolescent boys—of whatever nominal age. Tarantino has allowed as much, responding to black critics’ complaints about the violence and copious use of “nigger” by proclaiming “Even for the film’s biggest detractors, I think their children will grow up and love this movie. I think it could become a rite of passage for young black males.”6 This response stems no doubt from Tarantino’s arrogance and opportunism, and some critics have denounced it as no better than racially presumptuous. But he is hardly alone in defending the film with an assertion that it gives black youth heroes, is generically inspirational or both. Similarly, in a January 9, 2012 interview on the Daily Show, George Lucas adduced this line to promote his even more execrable race-oriented live-action cartoon, Red Tails, which, incidentally, trivializes segregation in the military by reducing it to a matter of bad or outmoded attitudes. The ironic effect is significant understatement of both the obstacles the Tuskegee airmen faced and their actual accomplishments by rendering them as backdrop for a blackface, slapped-together remake of Top Gun. (Norman Jewison’s 1984 film, A Soldier’s Story, adapted from Charles Fuller’s A Soldier’s Play, is a much more sensitive and thought-provoking rumination on the complexities of race and racism in the Jim Crow U.S. Army—an army mobilized, as my father, a veteran of the Normandy invasion, never tired of remarking sardonically, to fight the racist Nazis.) Lucas characterized his film as “patriotic, even jingoistic” and was explicit that he wanted to create a film that would feature “real heroes” and would be “inspirational for teenage boys.” Much as Django Unchained’s defenders compare it on those terms favorably to Lincoln, Lucas hyped Red Tails as being a genuine hero story unlike “Glory, where you have a lot of white officers running those guys into cannon fodder.” Of course, the film industry is sharply tilted toward the youth market, as Lucas and Tarantino are acutely aware. But Lucas, unlike Tarantino, was not being defensive in asserting his desire to inspire the young; he offered it more as a boast. As he has said often, he’d wanted for years to make a film about the Tuskegee airmen, and he reports that he always intended telling their story as a feel-good, crossover inspirational tale. Telling it that way also fits in principle (though in this instance not in practice, as Red Tails bombed at the box office) with the commercial imperatives of increasingly degraded mass entertainment. Dargis observed that the ahistoricism of the recent period films is influenced by market imperatives in a global film industry. The more a film is tied to historically specific contexts, the more difficult it is to sell elsewhere. That logic selects for special effects-driven products as well as standardized, decontextualized and simplistic—“universal”—story lines, preferably set in fantasy worlds of the filmmakers’ design. As Dargis notes, these films find their meaning in shopworn clichés puffed up as timeless verities, including uplifting and inspirational messages for youth. But something else underlies the stress on inspiration in the black-interest films, which shows up in critical discussion of them as well. All these films—The Help, Red Tails, Django Unchained, even Lincoln and Glory—make a claim to public attention based partly on their social significance beyond entertainment or art, and they do so because they engage with significant moments in the history of the nexus of race and politics in the United States. There would not be so much discussion and debate and no Golden Globe, NAACP Image, or Academy Award nominations for The Help, Red Tails, or Django Unchained if those films weren’t defined partly by thematizing that nexus of race and politics in some way. **The pretensions to social significance that fit** these films **into their particular market niche don’t conflict with** the mass-market film industry’s imperative of **infantilization because those** **pretensions** are only part of the show; they **are little more than empty bromides, product differentiation** in the patter **of** “seemingly timeless **ideals” which** the mass entertainment **industry constantly recycles**. (Andrew O’Hehir observes as much about Django Unchained, which he describes as “a three-hour trailer for a movie that never happens.”7) That comes through in the defense of these films, in the face of evidence of their failings, that, after all, they are “just entertainment.” **Their substantive content is ideological**; **it is their contribution to the naturalization of neoliberalism’s ontology as they propagandize its universalization across spatial, temporal, and social contexts.** Purportedly in the interest of popular education cum entertainment, Django Unchained and The Help, and Red Tails for that matter, read the sensibilities of the present into the past by divesting the latter of its specific historicity. They reinforce the sense of the past as generic old-timey times distinguishable from the present by superficial inadequacies—outmoded fashion, technology, commodities and ideas—since overcome. In The Help Hilly’s obsession with her pet project marks segregation’s petty apartheid as irrational in part because of the expense rigorously enforcing it would require; the breadwinning husbands express their frustration with it as financially impractical. Hilly is a mean-spirited, narrow-minded person whose rigid and tone-deaf commitment to segregationist consistency not only reflects her limitations of character but also is economically unsound, a fact that further defines her, and the cartoon version of Jim Crow she represents, as irrational. **The deeper message** of these films, insofar as they deny the integrity of the past, **is that there is no thinkable alternative to the ideological order under which we live. This** message is reproduced throughout the mass entertainment industry; it **shapes the normative reality even of** the **fantasy worlds that masquerade as escapism. Even** among those who laud the supposedly **cathartic effects of** Django’s **insurgent violence** as reflecting a greater truth of abolition than passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, few commentators notice that he and Broomhilda attained their freedom through a market transaction.8 This **reflects an ideological hegemony in which students** all too commonly **wonder why planters would deny slaves or sharecroppers education because education would have made them more productive as workers.** And, tellingly, in a glowing rumination in the Daily Kos, Ryan Brooke inadvertently thrusts mass culture’s destruction of historicity into bold relief by declaiming on “the segregated society presented” in Django Unchained and babbling on—with the absurdly ill-informed and pontifical self-righteousness that the blogosphere enables—about our need to take “responsibility for preserving racial divides” if we are “to put segregation in the past and fully fulfill Dr. King’s dream.”9 It’s all an indistinguishable mush of bad stuff about racial injustice in the old-timey days. **Decoupled from** its moorings in **a historically specific political economy, slavery becomes at bottom a problem of race relations, and**, as historian Michael R. West argues forcefully, “race relations” **emerged as and** has remained a discourse that substitutes **etiquette for equality.**10 This is the context in which we should take account of what “inspiring the young” means as a justification for those films. In part, **the claim to inspire is a simple platitude, more filler than substance. It is**, as I’ve already noted, both an excuse for films that are cartoons made for an infantilized, generic market and an assertion of a claim to a particular niche within that market. More insidiously, though, the ease with which “inspiration of youth” rolls out in this context resonates with three related and disturbing themes: 1) underclass ideology’s narratives—now all Americans’ common sense—that link poverty and inequality most crucially to (racialized) cultural inadequacy and psychological damage; 2) the belief that racial inequality stems from prejudice, bad ideas and ignorance, and 3) the cognate of both: theneoliberal rendering of social justice as equality of opportunity, with an aspiration of creating **“**competitive **individual** minority agents who **might** stand a better fighting chance in the neoliberal **rat** race rather than a **positive alternative vision** of a society that eliminates the need to fight **constantly** against disruptive market whims in the first place.”11 This politics seeps through in the chatter about Django Unchained in particular. Erin Aubry Kaplan, in the Los Angeles Times article in which Tarantino asserts his appeal to youth, remarks that the “most disturbing detail [about slavery] is the emotional violence and degradation directed at blacks that effectively keeps them at the bottom of the social order, a place they still occupy today.” Writing on the Institute of the Black World blog, one Dr. Kwa David Whitaker, a 1960s-style cultural nationalist, declaims on Django’s testament to the sources of degradation and “unending servitude [that] has rendered [black Americans] almost incapable of making sound evaluations of our current situations or the kind of steps we must take to improve our condition.”12 **In its blindness to political economy,** thisnotion of black cultural **or psychological damage** as **either** a legacy of slavery **or of more indirect recent origin—e.g., urban migration, crack epidemic**, matriarchy, babies making babies—comports **well** with the reduction of slavery and Jim Crow to interpersonal dynamics and bad attitudes. It substitutes a “**politics of recognition**” anda patter of **racial uplift for politics and** underwrites **a conflation** **of** political action and therapy**.** With respect to the nexus of race and inequality, **this discourse supports victim-blaming programs of personal rehabilitation and self-esteem engineering**—inspiration—as easily as it does multiculturalist respect for difference, which, by the way, also feeds back to self-esteem engineering and inspiration as nodes within a larger political economy of race relations. Either way, this is a discourse that displaces **a politics** challenging social structures **that reproduce inequality** with concern for the feelings and characteristics of individuals and of categories of population statistics reified as singular groups that are equivalent to individuals. This discourse has made it possible (again, but more sanctimoniously this time) to characterize destruction of low-income housing as an uplift strategy for poor people; curtailment of access to public education as “choice”; being cut adrift from essential social wage protections as “empowerment”; and individual material success as socially important role modeling. **Neoliberalism’s triumph is affirmed** **with** unselfconscious clarity in the ostensibly **leftist defenses** of Django Unchained that center on the theme of slaves’ having liberated themselves. **Trotskyists, would-be anarchists, and** psychobabbling **identitarians have their respective sectarian garnishes**: Trotskyists see everywhere the bugbear of “bureaucratism” and mystify “self-activity;” **anarchists** similarly fetishize direct action and voluntarism and **oppose large-scale public institutions on principle, and identitarians romanticize essentialist notions of organic**, folkish **authenticity under constant threat from institutions.** However, **all are indistinguishable from the nominally libertarian right in their disdain for government and institutionally based political action, which their common reflex is to disparage as inauthentic or corrupt.**

Class is a key starting point—not to obscure intersecting inequalities, but to historicize them and address the engines of mass economic impoverishment. **Taylor ‘11**

Taylor 11 [Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, on the editorial board of the International Socialist Review and a doctoral student in African American Studies at Northwestern University; “Race, class and Marxism,” SocialistWorker.org, <http://socialistworker.org/2011/01/04/race-class-and-marxism>]

Marxists believe that the potential for that kind of unity is dependant on battles and struggles against racism today. Without a commitment by revolutionary organizations in the here and now to the fight against racism, working-class unity will never be achieved and the revolutionary potential of the working class will never be realized. Yet despite all the evidence of this commitment to fighting racism over many decades, **Marxism has been maligned as, at best, "blind" to combating racism** **and**, at worst, **"incapable" of it. For example**, in an article published last summer, popular commentator and self-described "**anti-racist" Tim Wise summarized the critique of "left activists" that he later defines as Marxists.** He writes: [L]eft activists often marginalize people of color by operating from a framework of extreme class reductionism, which holds that the "real" issue is class, not race, that "the only color that matters is green," and that issues like racism are mere "identity politics," which should take a backseat to promoting class-based universalism and programs to help working people. This reductionism, by ignoring the way that even middle class and affluent people of color face racism and color-based discrimination (and by presuming that low-income folks of color and low-income whites are equally oppressed, despite a wealth of evidence to the contrary) reinforces white denial, privileges white perspectivism and dismisses the lived reality of people of color. Even more, as we'll see, it ignores perhaps the most important political lesson regarding the interplay of race and class: namely, that the biggest reason why there is so little working-class consciousness and unity in the Untied States (and thus, why class-based programs to uplift all in need are so much weaker here than in the rest of the industrialized world), is precisely because of racism and the way that white racism has been deliberately inculcated among white working folks. Only by confronting that directly (rather than sidestepping it as class reductionists seek to do) can we ever hope to build cross-racial, class based coalitions. In other words, for the policies favored by the class reductionist to work--be they social democrats or Marxists--or even to come into being, racism and white supremacy must be challenged directly. Here, **Wise accuses Marxism of: "extreme class reductionism," meaning that Marxists allegedly think that class is more important than race; reducing struggles against racism to "mere identity politics"; and requiring that struggles against racism should "take a back seat" to struggles over economic issues.** **Wise also accuses** so-called "left activists" **of** reinforcing **"white denial" and "dismiss[ing] the** lived **reality of people of color"--which, of course, presumes Left activists and Marxists to all be white**. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - **What do Marxists actually say? Marxists argue that** capitalism is a system that is based on **the** exploitation **of the many by the few.** **Because it is a system based on gross inequality,** it requires various tools to divide the majority--racism and all oppressions under capitalism serve this purpose. Moreover, oppression is used to justify and "explain" unequal relationships in society that enrich the minority that live off the majority's labor. **Thus,** racism developed **initially** to explain and justify the enslavement of Africans--because they were less than human and undeserving of liberty and freedom. Everyone accepts the idea that **the oppression of slaves was rooted in the class relations of exploitation under that system**. Fewer recognize that **under capitalism,** wage slavery is the pivot around which all other inequalities and oppressions turn. Capitalism used racism to justify plunder, conquest and slavery, but as Karl Marx pointed out, it also used racism to divide and rule--to pit one section of the working class against another and thereby blunt class consciousness. **To claim**, as Marxists do, **that racism is a product of capitalism is not to deny** or diminish **its importance** or impact in American society. **It is simply to explain its origins and the reasons for its perpetuation**. Many on the left today talk about class as if it is one of many oppressions, often describing it as "classism." What people are really referring to as "classism" is elitism or snobbery, and not the fundamental organization of society under capitalism. Moreover, **it is popular today to talk about various oppressions, including class, as intersecting.** While it is true that oppressions can reinforce and compound each other, they are born out of the material relations shaped by capitalism **and the economic exploitation that is at the heart of capitalist society**. In other words, it is the material and economic structure of society that gave rise to a range of ideas and ideologies to justify, explain and help perpetuate that order. In the United States, racism is the most important of those ideologies. Despite the widespread beliefs to the contrary of his critics, Karl **Marx** himself **was well aware of the centrality of race under capitalism**. While Marx did not write extensively on the question of slavery and its racial impact in societies specifically, he **did write** **about** the way in which European capitalism emerged because of its pilfering, rape and destruction, famously writing: The **discovery of gold and silver in America,** the extirpation, enslavement and **entombment** in mines **of the aboriginal population,** the beginning of the conquest and **looting of the East Indies**, the **turning** of **Africa into a warren for** the **commercial hunting** of Black skins, **signalized the** rosy dawn of the **era of capitalist production**. He also recognized the extent to which slavery was central to the world economy. He wrote: Direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that has given the colonies their value; it is the colonies that have created world trade, and it is world trade that is the pre-condition of large-scale industry. Thus slavery is an economic category of the greatest importance. Without slavery North America, the most progressive of countries, would be transformed into a patriarchal country. Wipe out North America from the map of the world, and you will have anarchy--the complete decay of modern commerce and civilization. Cause slavery to disappear and you will have wiped America off the map of nations. Thus slavery, because it is an economic category, has always existed among the institutions of the peoples. Modern nations have been able only to disguise slavery in their own countries, but they have imposed it without disguise upon the New World. Thus, there is a fundamental understanding of the centrality of slave labor in the national and international economy. But what about race? Despite the dearth of Marx's own writing on race in particular, one might look at Marx's correspondence and deliberations on the American Civil War to draw conclusions as to whether Marx was as dogmatically focused on purely economic issues as his critics make him out be. One must raise the question: If Marx was reductionist, how is his unabashed support and involvement in abolitionist struggles in England explained? **If Marx was truly an economic reductionist, he might have surmised that slavery and capitalism were incompatible, and simply waited for slavery to whither away**. W.E.B. Du Bois in his Marxist tome Black Reconstruction, quotes at length a letter penned by Marx as the head of the International Workingmen's Association, written to Abraham Lincoln in 1864 in the midst of the Civil War: The contest for the territories which opened the epoch, was it not to decide whether the virgin soil of immense tracts should be wedded to the labor of the immigrant or be prostituted by the tramp of the slaver driver? When an oligarchy of 300,000 slave holders dared to inscribe for the first time in the annals of the world "Slavery" on the banner of armed revolt, when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great Democratic Republic had first sprung up, whence the first declaration of the rights of man was issued...when on the very spots counter-revolution...maintained "slavery to be a beneficial institution"...and cynically proclaimed property in man 'the cornerstone of the new edifice'...then the working classes of Europe understood at once...that the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy war of property against labor... They consider it an earnest sign of the epoch to come that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded son of the working class, to lead his country through the matchless struggles for the rescue of the enchained race and the Reconstruction of a social order. **Not only was Marx personally opposed to slavery and actively organized against it, but he theorized that slavery and the resultant race discrimination** that flowed from it **were not just problems for the slaves** themselves, but for white workers who were constantly under the threat of losing work to slave labor. This did not mean white workers were necessarily sympathetic to the cause of the slaves--most of them were not. But Marx was not addressing the issue of consciousness, but objective factors when he wrote in Capital, "In the United States of America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed as long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the Black it is branded." Moreover, Marx understood the dynamics of racism in a modern sense as well--as a means by which workers who had common, objective interests with each other could also become mortal enemies because of subjective, but nevertheless real, racist and nationalist ideas. Looking at the tensions between Irish and English workers, with a nod toward the American situation between Black and white workers, Marx wrote: Every industrial and commercial center in England possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the USA. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and stupid tool of the English rule in Ireland. This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it. Out of this quote, one can see a Marxist theory of how racism operated in contemporary society, after slavery was ended. Marx was highlighting three things: first, that capitalism promotes economic competition between workers; second, that the ruling class uses racist ideology to divide workers against each other; and finally, that **when one group of workers suffer oppression, it negatively impacts the entire class**.freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species" (84).

Their fixation on anti-blackness suppresses class inquiry. **Hill ‘09**

Dave Hill, teaches at Middlesex University and is Visiting Professor of Critical Education Policy and Equality Studies at the University of Limerick, Ireland. Culturalist and Materialist Explanations of Class and "Race", Cultural Logic 2009 [**http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Hill.pdf**](http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Hill.pdf)

One of two major tenets of CRT that Cole (2008a, b, 2009; see also Cole and Maisuria (2007, 2009)) critically examine is **CRT’s “idea that the concept of white supremacy better expresses oppression** in contemporary societies based on ‘race’ **than does the concept of racism**.” Cole and Maisuria (and Cole) argue that Critical Race Theory “homogenises **all** white people together in positions of class power and privilege**,** which, of course, is factually incorrect**, both with respect to social class inequality in general, and, as will be shown in later in this paper, with reference to xenoracialization.”** Cole and Maisuria (2007) continue, “**it is certainly not white people as a whole who are in this hegemonic position**, nor white people as a whole who benefit from current education policy, or any other legislation. Indeed **the white working class, as part of the working class in general, consistently fares badly in the education system**.” Cole (2008a) notes that, **in focusing on issues of color and being divorced from matters related to capitalist requirements with respect to the labour market,** CRT is ill-equipped to analyse the discourse of xenoracism and processes of xenoracialization. **McGary** (1999:91) **points out** that “**Black people have been used in ways that white people have not.” Young’s** (2001) **comment** (with which I and Cole and Maisuria would concur) **is that McGary’s “observation may be true, but it does not mean that whites have not also been ‘used**.’” Young continues, “yes, whites **may be** ‘used’ **differently, but they are still ‘used’ because that is the logic of exploitative regimes** – people are ‘used,’ that is to say, their labor is commodified and exchanged for profit.” Young continues, in his critique of McGary, that such a view disconnects black alienation from other social relations; **hence,** it **ultimately** reifies race, and**,** in doing so**,** suppresses materialist inquiries into the class logic of race. That is to say, the meaning of race is **not** to be found within **its own internal dynamics but rather in dialectical relation to and as an ideological justification of** the exploitative wage-labor economy. Critical Race Theory, and other similar theories of “race” salience, such as (Molefi Kete Asante, and of Paul Gilroy (2001), critiqued in Young, 2006) are understandable, as Leonardo (2004) notes, in the USA, as a salient subjective lens and understanding/analysis of felt (and indeed, of course, actual and widespread) oppression. As Leonardo (2004), Young (2006), Cole and Maisuria (2007), and Cole (2008b) note, Critical Race Theory**, just as earlier theories such as that of Fanon and Negritude, do draw into the limelight**, do expose and represent **black experience,** humilation, oppression, racism. **But they** collude, just as much as race equivalence theorists such as Michael W. Apple, in **super-elevating subjective consciousness of** one aspect of identity and thereby exclude the (“raced” and gendered) classessential nature of **capitalism and the** labour-capital relation. **As such it seeks social democratic reformism,** the winning of equal rights and opportunities **– within a capitalist** (albeit reformed) **economy** and society. **As Young** (2006) **puts it, unlike many** commentators who engage race matters**, I do not isolate these social sites and view race as a local problem, which would lead to reformist measures** along the lines of either legal reform or a cultural-ideological battle to win the hearts and minds of people **and thus keep the existing socioeconomic arrangements intact** . . . **the eradication of race oppression also requires a totalizing political project: the transformation of existing capitalism – a system which produces difference** (the racial/gender division of labor) **and accompanying ideological narratives that justify the resulting social inequality.** Hence, my project articulates a transformative theory of race – a theory that reclaims revolutionary class politics in the interests of contributing toward a post-racist society. Critical **Race Theory seems analytically flawed**, **to be based on the category error of assigning “race” as the primary form of oppression in capitalist society, and to be substantially situationally specific to the USA**, **with its horrific experience and legacy of slavery**. **It also seems to me to be a form of left radical United States imperialist hegemonizing,** that is, **of USA-based academics projecting on to other countries those experiences and analyses and policy perspectives that derive most specifically from the USA experience of slavery and its contemporary effects**. I am very much aware of the existence and horrors of racism in, for example, Britain and Europe in general.18 Notwithstanding those horrors, the Critical Race Theory analysis would appear to have less significance and applicability in, for example, Western and Eastern Europe, or, for example, India, Pakistan, and Nepal, than in the USA.

### Link: Discourse First

A focus on discourse is an abandonment of real change – we must use a materialist focus to solve oppression. **Cloud ‘01**

(Dana L. Cloud, Associate Professor, Communication Studies UT Austin, “The Affirmative Masquerade,” American Communication Journal, Volume 4, Issue 3, Spring 01, <http://www.acjournal.org/holdings/vol4/iss3/special/cloud.htm>)

At the very least, however, it is clear that **poststructuralist discourse theories have left behind some of historical materialism’s most valuable conceptual tools for** any **theoretical and critical practice that aims at informing practical, oppositional political activity on behalf of** historically exploited and **oppressed groups**. As Nancy Hartsock (1983, 1999) and many others have argued (see Ebert 1996; Stabile, 1997; Triece, 2000; Wood, 1999), **we need to retain concepts such as standpoint epistemology** (wherein truth standards are not absolute or universal but arise from the scholar’s alignment with the perspectives of particular classes and groups) **and fundamental, class-based interests** (as opposed to understanding class as just another discursively-produced identity). **We need extra-discursive reality checks on ideological mystification and economic contextualization of discursive phenomena**. Most importantly, **critical scholars bear the obligation to explain the origins and causes of exploitation and oppression in order** better **to inform the fight against them**.  In poststructuralist discourse theory, **the "retreat from class"** (Wood, 1999) **expresses an unwarranted pessimism about what can be accomplished in late capitalism with regard to** understanding and **transforming** system and **structure at the level of the economy and the state. It substitutes** meager **cultural freedoms for macro-level social transformation** even **as millions of people around the world feel the global reach of capitalism more deeply than ever before**. At the core of the issue is a debate across the humanities and social sciences with regard to whether we live in a "new economy," an allegedly postmodern, information-driven historical moment in which, it is argued, organized mass movements are no longer effective in making material demands of system and structure (Melucci, 1996). In suggesting that global capitalism has so innovated its strategies that there is no alternative to its discipline, arguments proclaiming "a new economy" risk inaccuracy, pessimism, and conservatism (see Cloud, in press). While a thoroughgoing summary is beyond the scope of this essay, there is a great deal of evidence against claims that capitalism has entered a new phase of extraordinary innovation, reach, and scope (see Hirst and Thompson, 1999).  Furthermore, both class polarization (see Mishel, Bernstein, and Schmitt, 2001) and the ideological and management strategies that contain class antagonism (see Cloud, 1998; Parker and Slaughter, 1994) still resemble their pre-postmodern counterparts. A recent report of the Economic Policy Institute concludes that in the 1990s, inequality between rich and poor in the U.S. (as well as around the world) continued to grow, in a context of rising worker productivity, a longer work week for most ordinary Americans, and continued high poverty rates.  Even as the real wage of the median CEO rose nearly 63 percent from 1989, to 1999, more than one in four U.S. workers lives at or below the poverty level. Among these workers, women are disproportionately represented, as are Black and Latino workers. (Notably, unionized workers earn nearly thirty percent more, on average, than non-unionized workers.) Meanwhile, Disney workers sewing t-shirts and other merchandise in Haiti earn 28 cents an hour. Disney CEO Michael Eisner made nearly six hundred million dollars in 1999--451,000 times the wage of the workers under his employ (Roesch, 1999). According to United Nations and World Bank sources, several trans-national corporations have assets larger than several countries combined. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Russian Federation have seen sharp economic decline, while assets of the world’s top three billionaires exceed the GNP of all of the least-developed countries and their combined population of 600 million people (Shawki and D’Amato, 2000, pp. 7-8).  **In this context of a real** (and clearly bipolar) **class divide in** late **capitalist society, the postmodern party is a masquerade ball, in which theories claiming to offer ways toward emancipation** and progressive critical practice in fact **encourage scholars** and/as activists **to abandon** any **commitment to crafting oppositional political blocs** with instrumental and perhaps revolutionary potential. Instead, on their arguments, we must recognize agency as an illusion of humanism and settle for playing with our identities in a mood of irony, excess, and profound skepticism. Marx and Engels’ critique of the Young Hegelians applies equally well to the postmodern discursive turn: "They are only fighting against ‘phrases.’ They forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world" (1976/1932, p. 41).  Of course, the study of "phrases" is important to the project of materialist critique in the field of rhetoric. The point, though, is to explain the connections between phrases on the one hand and economic interests and systems of oppression and exploitation on the other. Marxist ideology critique, understands that classes, motivated by class interest, produce rhetorics wittingly and unwittingly, successfully and unsuccessfully.  Those rhetorics are strategically adapted to context and audience. Yet **Marxist theory is not naïve in** its **understanding** of intention or individual **agency.** Challenging individualist humanism, **Marxist** ideology **critics regard people as "products of circumstances**" (and changed people as products of changed circumstances; Marx, 1972b/1888, p. 144).  Within this understanding, **Marxist** ideology **critics can describe and evaluate cultural discourses** such as that of racism or sexism **as strategic and complex expressions of both their moment in history and of their class basis.** Further, this mode of critique seeks to explain both why and how social reality is fundamentally, systematically oppressive and exploitative, exploring not only the surface of discourses but also their often-complex and multi-vocal motivations and consequences. As Burke (1969/1950) notes, **Marxism is both a method of rhetorical criticism and a rhetorical formation** itself (pp. 109-110). There is no pretense of neutrality or assumption of transcendent position for the critic.  Teresa Ebert (1996) summarizes the purpose of materialist ideology critique:      Materialist critique is a mode of knowing that inquires into what is not said, into the silences and the suppressed or missing, in order to uncover the concealed operations of power and the socio-economic relations connecting the myriad details and representations of our lives. It shows that apparently disconnected zones of culture are in fact materially linked through the highly differentiated, mediated, and dispersed operation of a systematic logic of exploitation. In sum, **materialist critique disrupts ‘what is’ to explain how social differences--**specifically gender, race, sexuality, and class--**have been systematically produced and continue to operate within regimes of exploitation, so that we can change them. It is the means for producing transformative knowledges.** (p. 7)

Language focus abdicates and denies the responsibility for constructive social change. **McNally ’06**

McNally ’6  (David, Teaches Pol. Sci. – York U., in “In Defense of History: Marxism and the Postmodern Agenda”, Ed. Ellen Wood and John Foster, p. 26-27)

There is a political theory here too. **Oppression is said to be rooted ultimately in the way in which we and others are defined linguistically**, the way in which we are positioned by words in relation to other words, or by codes which are said to be "structured like a language." **Our very being, our identities and "subjectivities**," **are constituted through language**. As one trendy literary theorist puts it in David Lodge's novel Nice Work, it is not merely that you are what you speak; no, according to the new idealism, "you are what speaks you." Language is thus the final "prison-house." Our confinement there is beyond resistance; it is impossible to escape from that which makes us what we are. **This new idealism corresponds to a profound collapse of political horizons.** **It is the pseudoradicalism of a period of retreat for the left**, **a verbal radicalism of the word without deed,** or, rather, of the word as deed. **In response to actual structures and practices of oppression and exploitation, it offers the rhetorical gesture, the ironic turn of phrase**. It comes as little surprise, then, when one of the chief philosophers of the new idealism, Jacques Derrida, tells us that he "would hesitate to use such terms as `liberation.' " I **Imprisoned within language, we may play with words; but we can never hope to liberate ourselves** from immutable structures of oppression rooted in language itself. **The new idealism and the politics it entails are not simply harmless curiosities; they are an abdication of political responsibility, especially at a time of ferocious capitalist restructuring, of widening gaps between rich and poor, of ruling class offensives against social programs. They are also an obstacle to the rebuilding of mass movements of protest and resistance**. It is not the purpose of this article, however, to conduct another critique of linguistic idealism whether it goes by the name of poststructuralism, postmodernism, or post-Marxism. Instead, I want to shift to a different terrain of debate by showing that Marxism can do more than attack the idealist nature of these intellectual currents. I want to demonstrate that **Marxism has the resources for an account of language and its position within the constellation of human practice that is richer and more profound than these idealist views**, and that this **account can understand language as**, among other things, **one site of social interaction** **which is decisively shaped by** relations of work and conflict, i.e., as shaped by **class struggle**.

Their argument amounts to discursive determinism. The politics of language should begin with its material roots. **McNally ‘06**

McNally ’6  (David, Teaches Pol. Sci. – York U., in “In Defense of History: Marxism and the Postmodern Agenda”, Ed. Ellen Wood and John Foster, p. 26-27)

Among the most important of these efforts is the pioneering work of V.N. Voloshinov, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (1929). Voloshinov's work was developed during a period of vigorous debate about literature, art, language, and culture in the aftermath of the October Revolution of 1917. That debate was shut down as Stalin consolidated his dictatorship. Voloshinov himself disappeared during the purges of the 1930s. In recent years, however, the writings of Voloshinov and Mikhail Bakhtin, the intellectual figure who most influenced his work, have enjoyed something of a renaissance.3 **Three initial propositions are fundamental to Voloshinov's views on language. First, all signs**—from words to traffic signals—**are material, they are embodied in some physical form or other**. **Second, signs are social in nature;** they exist on the boundaries between individuals and **have no meaning outside of communicative interaction**. **Third, because signs are social, any comprehensive approach to language must focus on speech**, on that medium through which most` linguistic interaction occurs. Outside of speech, language is lifeless, it is a collection of means of communicating without the act of communication itself, a form without substance. The life of language, its very dynamism, thus resides in speech, in verbal interaction among people. But social interaction is not simply discursive. Speech is not a realm with an "independent existence"; it is one aspect of a multifaceted nexus of social relations. It follows that **signs are immersed in the relations that prevail among human beings**. In particular, relations of hierarchy among individuals have a tremendous influence on language and speech. "The forms of signs," Voloshinov writes, "are conditioned above all by the social organization of the participants involved" (p. 21). Speech is thus conditioned by hierarchy and domination—and by resistance to these. Different groups attempt to accent words in ways that express their experience of social interaction and their social aspirations. This applies especially, but by no means exclusively, to people in distinct class relationships. As a result, "sign becomes an arena of the class struggle" (p. 23). It should be emphasized that **this argument differs substantially from poststructuralist accounts** that may in some respects look similar. Michel **Foucault, for example, is noted for his view of language as a terrain of power and domination** embodied in particular social institutions such as hospitals, asylums and prisons; and, especially in some of his later writings, Foucault appears to allow for the possibility of resistance to practices of domination. Foucault's emphasis on power was an attempt to counter the political emptiness of theories that reduce social relations to their linguistic forms. In a vigorous riposte to Derrida, he charged deconstruction with locating everything in texts "so as not to put discursive practices back into the field of transformations in which they are carried out." 4 This position has considerable strengths. Yet, **while disavowing enclosure within texts, Foucault himself fails to break out of discourse as a field closed in upon itself**. Indeed, his whole concept of "power-knowledge" tends towards the position that power relations are constructed in and through practices of "knowing" humans. And these practices—of classifying, measuring, and surveying people—originate in the realm of discourse, where people are assigned to different categories of thought and description. It follows that "the development of humanity is a series of interpretations." **Thus, for all his insights into social institutions and their practices of domination, Foucault reverts to his own version of discursive determinism;** he is led by the logic of his position to conclude that inevitably "one remains within the dimension of discourse."5

### Link: Subjective Ethics

Centrally organized politics is essential. Decentered unity makes effective left politics impossible. **Farahmandpur ‘04**

Farahmandpur ‘4  (Ramin, Associate Prof. Ed. Leadership and Policy – Grad School Ed. – Portland State U., Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies, “ESSAY REVIEW: A Marxist Critique of Michael Apple’s Neo-Marxist Approach to Educational Reform [1]”, 2:1, March, [**http://www.jceps.com/index.php?pageID=article&articleID=24**](http://www.jceps.com/index.php?pageID=article&articleID=24))

I find Apple’s notion of the ‘decentered unity’ highly problematic for a number of reasons. To begin with, **what holds the ‘decentered unity’ together**? In other words, what is the ideological bond that unites these diverse groups of differing social, political, and economic interests? Apple is quick to acknowledge this dilemma. He admits that there are “real differences” among the wide spectrum of social and political groups that include, for example, political, epistemological, and educational differences. If this is the case, then the follow-up question is: What are the ideological or political forces that conjoins these diverse groups? Responding to these criticisms, **Apple writes that the ‘decentered unity’ is “united in [its] opposition to the forces involved in the new conservative hegemonic alliance**” (p. 96). However, Apple’s reply does not sufficiently justify such a loosely knitted coalition.  For example, Apple derives the identity of the new social movements from their immediate experiences with oppression. **Yet,** in his polemic against E. P. Thompson, Perry Anderson (1980) reminds us that **experiences alone do not guarantee agency. In other words, there is no assurance that experiences arising from a particular form of oppression will generate progressive forms of social action, or motivate a class, for example, to organize itself and rise up against social injustices**. Anderson (1980) raises a number of other fundamental questions that are no less important. These include: How can we distinguish between a valid and invalid experience? And are religious experiences valid? [22]  In addition, **Apple’s neo-Marxist approach to educational reform can be classified as part of the ‘new pluralists’** movement on the Left that endorses ‘complexity theory’ and pluralistic notions of equality, freedom, and democracy (Meiksins Wood, 1995, 1998). Apple’s willing acceptance of the myriad forms of social oppression leads him to demote the centrality of the concept of class and class contradictions under capitalist social relations of production. [23] Content with his poststructuralist interpretation of the social relations of production, Apple unapologetically endorses an “unstructured and fragmented plurality of identities and differences” (Meiksins Wood, 1995).  Apple further notes that the New Right’s success is largely due to its ability to build a ‘decentered unity.’ Consequently, he recommends that the Left and progressive forces should learn from the victories of the New Right in their effort to build a progressive ‘decentered unity.’ On this point, Apple notes: “The right has been much more successful …than the left, in part because it has been able to craft—through hard and lengthy economic, political, and cultural efforts—a tense but still successful alliance that has shifted the major debates over education and economic and social policy onto its on terrain.”(p. 195). However, one of the underlying weaknesses in Apple’s strategy is that he juxtaposes the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic alliances among the forces of the Right and the Left. In Apple’s view, the Right and the Left are involved in a battle to persuade the masses to join their social and political cause. Hence, Apple leaves us with a political project that reduces social struggles to ideological battles between the Right and the Left that are largely fought in the terrain of discourse and language.  **Both Lenin (1918) and Trotsky (1917) recognized that hegemony was intimately linked to concrete “material processes” as well as to class relations and class antagonisms** (Joseph, 2002). Lenin (1918), for instance, stressed that proletariat hegemony can only be established by annexing political power or by securing state power. **For Lenin, the dictatorship of the proletariat was not merely a maneuver used to gain political power for its own sake**. Rather, **Lenin saw the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transitional period in which the working class develops class alliances with the peasants and the petit-bourgeoisie, and laboriously engages in a campaign to ‘win over the masses’ from the side of the bourgeoisie** (Joseph, in press).  **The key feature of democratic centralism is the vanguard party,** which makes a concerted effort to develop a dialectical relationship with the working class. [24] The purpose of the vanguard party, which is composed of the most advanced sectors of the working class, is to establish and strengthen the social hegemony of the working class by means of ‘democratic accountability’ (Joseph, 2002). [25] **The vanguard party provides the political direction of the working-class struggles**. [26] Finally, the success of working-class revolutionary movement does not merely depend on its political strength, but also on the existence of a crisis in bourgeois hegemony.  Regrettably, by failing to address any of the above issues, Apple’s (2001) approach is relegated to a form of ‘utopian idealism.’ As I stated earlier, Apple’s endorsement of counter-hegemonic alliances, which are primarily derived from the identities of the marginalized and disenfranchised groups in society, are forged on the basis of ideological interests rather than objective historical circumstances of the working class. As a result: “Instead of community and solidarity we get a plurality based on fractured identity and fragmented discourse” (Joseph, p. 93, 1998).  However, unlike democratic pluralism, the vanguard party does not constitute the sum of all the experiences of the marginalized and disenfranchised social groups. Instead, the vanguard party makes a concerted effort to “collectivize experience on a higher and [deeper] plane” (Joseph, 2002). **Neither individual nor collective experiences are sufficient for guiding proletarian struggles because experience alone cannot account for understanding how people relate to one another under capitalist social relations of production**. Along with individual and collective experiences, we **must examine the roots of social and historical circumstances from which experiences arise**.  Too often, as is the case with Apple’s (2001) neo-Marxist approach to educational reform, democratic centralism is dismissed an outdated totalitarianism and bureaucratic form of social organization that is largely attributed to the old-style, one-party rule of the former Soviet Union and its eastern European satellites. Contrary to Apple’s objection to democratic centralism, Lenin (1918) clearly understood the complexity and the structured nature of the social world. He recognized that social organizations are multi-faceted and heterogeneous and that the concept of class itself is not “uniform” or “homogenous.” This is why he stressed the importance of the political leadership and the organizational experience of the vanguard party. **Unlike democratic pluralism, wherein progressive forces are loosely tied to one another under an ideological umbrella, democratic centralism underscores the importance of establishing political power by developing class alliances**. Lenin’s (1918) initial concern, of course, was not to abolish classes outright, but to establish proletarian hegemony first by gaining control over the state power. It is worth quoting Joseph (2002) at length:  **Democratic centralism is today regarded as an outdated product of Russian political conditions, while in a postmodern vein**, **former Marxists oppose democratic centralism claiming that because today’s world is supposedly more complex a**nd heterogeneous, political organization must be founded on some sort of democratic pluralism. But **it could be countered that it is precisely because reality is complexly structured and diverse that organizational discipline is necessary if any meaningful social change is to occur**. **To argue for a loose pluralism as an alternative to centralization is to play the game on capitalism’s terms**. **In fact the ideology of postmodernism could be said to be less of a coherent hegemonic ideology of the ruling class, more a deliberate attempt to de-hegemonise any potential opposition. As effective leadership and direction are removed, any attempt at a hegemonic project descends into incoherence.** The pluralism of postmodernism soon passes over into fragmentation and the reinforcing of alienated identities. Lenin’s theory, by contrast, attempts to connect a theory of organization to a hegemonic project. His writings on democratic centralism should not therefore be viewed as mere organizational concerns, they are political matters relating to the organization of the political vanguard and through them the wider social forces. Hence democratic centralism refers to the organization of the party as a vanguard party. Recognizing the stratified nature of social groups and classes, the Leninist theory of organization seeks to relate first to the political vanguard and the most advanced workers and through them to the broader masses. (p.50)

### Link: Identity Politics

Fixation on particular identities prevents coalition building needed to fight capitalism. **Dean ‘05**

Dean, Teaches Political Theory @ Hobart and William Smith Colleges, 2005 [Jodi, Žižek’s Politics, p.115-9]

Unlike most critical thinkers identified with the Left, Žižek rejects the current emphasis on multicultural tolerance. He has three primary reasons for rejecting multiculturalism as it is currently understood in cultural studies and democratic theory. **First**, agreeing with Wendy Brown, he argues that **multiculturalism today rests on an acceptance of global capitalism. Insofar as Capital's deterritorializations create the conditions for the proliferation of multiple, fluid, political subjectivities, new social movements and identity politics rely on a political terrain established by global capitalism.** As I explained with regard to the notion of class struggle in Chapter Two, **multiculturalism ultimately accepts and depends on the depoliticization of the economy: "the way the economy functions (the need to cut social welfare, etc.) is accepted as a simple insight into the objective state of things.**"^" We might think here of feminist struggles over the right to an abortion, political work toward marriage benefits for same-sex couples, and energies spent on behalf of movies and television networks that target black audiences. In efforts such as these, **political energy focuses on culture and leaves the economy as a kind of unquestioned, taken-for granted basis of the way things are.** This is not to say that identity politics are trivial. On the contrary, Žižek fully acknowledges the way these new forms of political subjectivization "thoroughly reshaped our entire political and cultural landscape." The problem is that **capitalism has adapted to these new political forms, incorporating previously transgressive urges and turning culture itself into its central component**. To be sure, Žižek ‘s argument would be stronger were he to think of new social movements as vanishing or displaced mediators. **Identity politics opened up new spaces and opportunities for capitalist intensification. As new social movements transformed the lifeworld into something to be questioned and changed, they disrupted fixed identities and created opportunities for experimentation. The market entered to provide these opportunities**. Consider gay media. Joshua Gamson observes that while gay portal sites initially promised to offer safe and friendly spaces for gay community building, they now function primarily "to deliver a market share to corporations." In this gay media, "community needs are conflated with consumption desires, and community equated with market."41 **Social victories paved the way for market incursions into and the commodification of ever more aspects of experience. Once cultural politics morphed into capitalist culture, identity politics lost its radical edge**. With predictable frequency, the Republican Right in the United States regularly accuses the 110 Left of playing the race card whenever there is opposition to a non- Anglo political appointee. A **second** argument Žižek employs against multiculturalism concerns the way **multicultural tolerance is part of the same matrix as racist violence. On the one hand, multicultural respect for the other is a way of asserting the superiority of the multiculturalists. The multiculturalist adopts an emptied-out, disembodied perspective toward an embodied, ethnic other. The ethnic other makes the universal position of the multiculturalist possible. Not only does this attitude disavow the particularity of the multiculturalist's own position, but it also repeats the key gesture of global corporate capitalism: the big corporations will eat up, colonize, exploit, and commodity anything. They are not biased. They are empty machines following the logic of Capital. On the other hand, tolerance toward the other "passes imperceptibly into a destructive hatred of all ('fundamentalist') Others who do not fit into our idea of tolerance-in short, against all actual Others."4i The idea is that the liberal democrat, or multiculturalist, is against hatred and harassment. Tolerance is tolerance for another who also does not hate or harass, that is, tolerance for an other who is not really so other at all.46 It thus works in tandem with a right not to be harassed, not to be victimized, inconvenienced by, or exposed to the particular enjoyment of another.47 To this extent, the multicultural position blurs into a kind of racism such that respect is premised on agreement and identity**. The Other with deep fundamental beliefs, who is invested in a set of unquestionable convictions, whose enjoyment is utterly incomprehensible to me, is not the other of multiculturalism. For Žižek, then, today's tolerant liberal multiculturalism is "an experience of the Other deprived of its Otherness (the idealized Other who dances fascinating dances and has an ecologically sound holistic approach to reality, while practices like wife-beating remain out of sight . . .)."48 Just as in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism, so today's reflexive multicultural tolerance has as its opposite, and thus remains caught in the matrix of, a hard kernel of fundamentalism, of irrational, excessive, enjoyment. The concrete realization of rational inclusion and tolerance coincides with contingent, irrational, violence. Finally, Žižek's **third** argument against multiculturalism is that **it precludes politicization.** Žižek uses the **example** of the animated film series about dinosaurs, The Land Before Time,produced by Steven Spielberg The clearest articulation of the hegemonic liberal multiculturalist ideology," **The Land Before Time iterates the basic message that everyone is different and all should learn to live with these differences-big and small, strong and weak, carnivore and herbivore. In the films, the dinosaurs sing songs about how one should not worry about being eaten because underneath those big teeth are real fears and anxieties that everyone shares. Of course, this image of cooperative dinosaurs is profoundly false.** As Žižek asks, what does it really mean to say that it takes all kinds? "Does that mean nice and brutal, poor and rich, victims and torturer^?"^^ **The vision of a plurality of horizontal differences precludes the notion of a vertical antagonism that cuts through the social body. Some are more powerful. Some do want to kill-and denying this in an acceptance of differences prevents the politicization of this inequality. To say that in our difference we are really all alike, underneath it all, disavows the underlying social antagonism. It prevents us from acknowledging and confronting the way that class struggle cuts through and conditions the multiplicity of differences.** We can approach the same point from another direction. **Identity politics today emphasizes the specificity of each identity and experience. Particular differences are supposed to be acknowledged and respected. As Žižek points out, the notion of social justice that corresponds to this view depends on asserting the rights of and redressing the wrongs inflicted upon victims. Institutionally, then, identity politics "requires an intricate police apparatus (for identifying the group in question, for punishing offenders against its rights . . . for providing the preferential treatment which should compensate for the wrong this group has suffered."'" Rather than opening up a terrain of political struggle, functioning as human rights that designate the very space of politicization, identity politics works through a whole series of depoliticizing moves to locate, separate, and redress wrong^."^ Systemic problems are reformulated as personal issues. No particular wrong or harm can then stand in for the "universal wrong."'" Multiculturalism is thus a dimension of postpolitics insofar as it prevents the universalization of particular demands.**

## More Impx

### Framework: Epistemology

#### Recognizing that the epistemology of capitalism manipulates our understanding of policy is a pre-condition to evaluating the resolution. Marsh 95,

Marsh 95- Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University, PhD from Northwestern University (James, Critique Action and Liberation, p 331-2)

Is it reasonable, therefore, even to talk about the possibility of a socialism that transcends this capitalistic system? Here at the very beginning of our discussion it is crucial to be clear about what "reason" is. If being reasonable means operating according to a scientistic, positivistic idea of reason such that any talk of transcending the current situation is irrational, then, of course, democratic socialism is not a rational possibility. However, such a conception of reason is highly questionable. Reason, as I have argued elsewhere and in this book, is dialectical and phenomenological, uniting within itself fact and possibility, "is" and "ought," subject and object. Reason is constitutive, not simply acquisitive or instrumental, and as such constitutes goals and values and reflectively chooses itself as an end in itself in a community of ends. Reason is relational, communal, processive, on the move from lower viewpoints to higher viewpoints and in this sense related creatively to a world developing through a process of emergent probability. According to the conception of reason, one attempting to fix human possibility by saying "this far and no further" is inhibiting human development and is profoundly irrational. Moreover, through a dialectical phenomenological critique made earlier in this book we have discovered late capitalism and state socialism to be profoundly irrational systemically and morally. They are irrational systemically insofar as both systems are susceptible to various kinds of crises, economic, rational, legitimating, or motivational, and both systems systematically repress democratic participation. Both systems exercise a domination, economic or political, that inhibits the free, rational unfolding of human potentiality in all of its fullness. In both systems is a tendency to ignore or repress the subjectivity of human beings and turn them into objects; in both systems is domination of nature and a resulting ecology problem. In such a context, it would be profoundly irrational not to try to think of alternatives to the status quo. In the face of systemic domination, fidelity to the life of reason calls on reason to become revolutionary in its approach to the world. A merely bourgeois or Stalinist rationality is an incomplete, truncated rationality. Moreover, if our model of a dynamic, progressive, developing world system on the move is correct, then such qualitative shifts from one epoch to another should have occurred in the past. One can imagine the Novaks or Kissingers or Friedmans of this world arguing in past centuries that political monarchy is the best human beings can do or that racism is inevitable or that a feudal relationship of lord to serf is the ultimate and best fate of human beings. Yet history has moved on, and there is no reason to think that such movement has stopped with capitalism or state socialism. The irrational, oppressive character of these structures indicates that we should move on; the progressive character of human beings in the world indicates that we can move on. Recent events in eastern Europe only confirm such a judgment.

#### Academic structures have been vertically integrated into the machine of capital. Abstract theorizing directly fuels capitalist accumulation by attempting to explain away the clear and present nature of exploitation. Lander 02,

(Edgardo, Prof. of Sociology and Latin American studies at the Venezuelan Central University in Caracas, “Eurocentrism, Modern Knowledges, and the “Natural” Order of Global Capital, Nepantla: Views from South”, 3.2, muse) BSH

The naturalization of these processes of free circulation of investment and trade, as criteria that dictate the terms under which all societies on the planet necessarily must be organized, is explicitly supported by the expertise of those who speak in the name of specialized knowledges, in this case of economic science (a knowledge in the singular): It is widely recognized by economists and trade experts that the WTO system contributes to development. (WTO 1999b, 7) The economic case for an open trading system based upon multilaterally agreed rules is simple enough and rests largely on commercial common sense. But it is also supported by evidence: the experience of world trade and economic growth since the Second World War. (8) Economists agree that the greatest gains go to the country that slashes its own trade barriers. Readiness to open up to foreign suppliers of consumer goods and of inputs to production improves choices as well as competition in price and services offered. Protection that gives special favours to one sector or another of the economy distorts the way a country uses its productive resources. Removal or reduction of distortions allows resources to be used more efficiently. (WTO 1999a, 5) Another manifestation of the “naturalization”/depoliticization of the issues at stake in international economic relations is the tendency to turn disagreements into technical issues that can be resolved in an “objective” and “impartial” manner by the relevant specialists. The Multilateral Agreement on Investment establishes that regulations (including environmental or health-related regulations) that can be considered polemical from the point of view of their scientific justification may be submitted to a body of scientific experts for consideration (OECD 1998, 66). Similar practices are established in WTO agreements. A separate agreement on food safety and animal and plant health standards (sanitary and phytosanitary measures) sets out the basic rules. It allows countries to set their own standards. (WTO 1999b, 19) Member countries are encouraged to use international standards, guidelines and recommendations where they exist. However, members may use measures which result in higher standards if there is scientific justification. (ibid.) What in these texts appears to be the simple application of objective scientific criteria in reality relates to extremely complex and controversial matters. This is the type of situation that arises when, whether on the basis of scientific evidence (on which consensus may or may not exist) or based on specific preferences on the part of the population, standards are established that regulate, limit, or block the use of a certain product or technological process. This can be seen in the heated debate surrounding foods derived from genetically modified plants and animals. One well-known case illustrating the application of WTO standards is the U.S. lawsuit involving the European Union’s ban on the sale—in E.U. territory—of beef treated with growth hormones. The WTO ruled in favor of the United States, categorizing this ban as an unfair, protectionist practice that went against free trade, forcing the European Union to either allow the importation of these products or face severe sanctions, in spite of the opposition of a great majority of the continent’s population. The opinion of a few experts, chosen by the WTO authorities dealing with conflict resolution, thus overruled the democratically expressed wishes of the people of the European Union. In this case it was determined that the fear of consuming beef treated with growth hormones lacked scientific basis; inside the new world order defined by the WTO, this preference was not one for which people could legitimately opt. The majority of the ethical and political confrontations having to do with techno-scientific matters do not have a univocal scientific solution, and differences of opinion and interpretation can continue indefinitely (Nelkin 1977, 1984). Generally, the issues at stake cannot be resolved solely on the basis of experts’ opinions. People are being denied the sovereign right to found their decisions on ethical choices or on particular cultural contexts. This is an example of the growing authoritarianism of the global capitalist order, exposing the population to the potentially harmful effects of certain techno-scientific processes against its expressed will, merely because “specialists” consider that their opposition is based on nothing more than prejudice. These are not issues that depend on the existence or absence of consensus in the scientific community. In any case, as Hans Jonas (1984, 118) argues, human capacity to wield power over nature is always greater than the predictability of this power’s long-range effects, which, in case of doubt, calls for an ethics of responsibility.7 This ethical choice is denied when it is assumed that, to make this type of decision it suffices to take into account the opinions of experts and the rights of investors (Lander 1994). Beyond the internal controversies within Western, techno-scientific communities lies the fact that in the thousands of conflicts occurring in the world today between the interests of transnational capital and those of rural or indigenous people concerning the use of the environment, there is generally also a conflict in the parties’ views of the cosmos, an antagonism between different knowledge systems and different ways of conceiving the relationships between culture and nature. Nevertheless—and this is a perfect expression of the continual functioning of colonial mechanisms—in the new global capital order only one form of knowledge is recognized: Western scientific knowledge. From this discourse of knowledge the criteria and procedures are established by which all controversies are decided.