

## **How is it to be Done?: Cosmopolitanism, Radical Reform, and Post-Capitalism**

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*“In its own class dictatorship, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, has no interest—on the contrary—in being called by its real name and understood in terms of its real historical power. To suppress the dictatorship of the proletariat is at the same time to suppress the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie...in words. Nothing could serve it better, in practice”*  
(Balibar 1977, 156).

*“There is no need to fear a pessimism that remains committed to emancipation. Pessimism is not cynicism. Pessimists may, as Salvage does, simply insist that comrades in that endeavor realise—and act upon the realisation of—just how hard this is going to be. Having a pessimistic analysis certainly doesn’t mean good things never happen”* (Warren 2015, 105).

*“Is it worse to hope or despair? To that question there can only be one answer: yes. It is worse to hope or to despair.... We must learn to hope with teeth”* (Miéville 2015a, 187-188).

### **Introduction**

Where does this leave us? Cosmopolitanism, born out of global capitalism, is normatively and logically inconsistent with capitalism. Global capitalism cannot be globally democratized. The capitalistic mentality<sup>1</sup> undermines the production of the consciousness that would allow for such a broad reformation to take place. Though the argument here takes place principally in the realm of theory, the continued

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<sup>1</sup> This concept is one that is developed over the previous chapters based on a combined reconstruction and reconciliation of the Critical Theories of Erich Fromm and Theodor Adorno (specifically with regard to their social-psychological critiques of capitalism). The concept refers to the particular way of thinking and the resultant behaviors that are typically present and normalized under capitalist systems. The concept suggests, much as Erich Fromm explicitly did—though here combined with Adorno’s work—that the social psychology predominant within a social system, in this case capitalism, speaks to the relationship between aspects of society that are typically considered within the Marxist tradition to be superstructural (e.g. culture, politics, etc.) and those considered part of the base (relations of production, means of production, etc.). Specific dimensions of the capitalistic mentality include (though this is not meant to be exhaustive or complete): alienation, possessiveness, hyper-competitiveness, consumerism, reified identitarian thinking, and the dominance of instrumental reason. More precisely, I show how the capitalistic mentality serves as an intermediary between base and superstructure, between the economic structures that shape a society and the cultural and political manifestations that result, which in the follow chapter is applied to various theories of cosmopolitanism (e.g., Charles Beitz, Thomas Pogge, David Held, Jürgen Habermas, Seyla Benhabib, Andrew Linklater, James Ingram, and Pheng Cheah).

expansion of neoliberal capitalism, the continued failures of Leftist movements, and the popularity of Right-wing neoliberal demagogues from Trump to Obama to David Cameron to Angela Merkel. No matter how popular these figures may be or how different they may be from one another, they all represent the strength of the capitalistic mentality to undermine genuine reform, because that reform will never be properly aimed at the true enemy of progress under late capitalism: capitalism itself.

The argument presented in this chapter looks to the tradition that has been largely eschewed by contemporary cosmopolitans, contemporary Marxism, for solutions. However, the argument here is not that we should replace cosmopolitanism with Marxism (or the reverse), but instead that by putting these traditions into conversation, we can see that they have much more in common than they do differences between them, especially once cosmopolitanism is realized to itself be contradicted by its relationship to capitalism, as we saw in the previous chapter. After touring the most relevant and recent developments in contemporary Marxism, highlighting their cosmopolitan dimensions, this chapter will show that both a properly radicalized cosmopolitanism represents a negative dialectical conception of reform and revolution embodied in Erich Fromm's conceptualization of radical reform—a reformism that goes to the roots of the roadblocks to true emancipatory progress without devolving into a contemporarily impossible theory of revolution; in our current situation that means pursuing policies and engaging in movements that name the enemy and seek to defeat it, with radically realistic approaches.

The psychology of capitalism, the capitalistic mentality ensures that revolution or insurrection could never defeat capitalism while capitalism is still thriving, but it also ensures that reformism will always be inadequate—leaving open the door to the possibility of radical reform, creatively imagined and realistically pursued can produce a world ahead of capitalism—a postcapitalism world that could be consistent with a cosmopolitan sense of justice. Cosmopolitanism needs to be able to answer the question:

what if capitalism cannot be reformed? (even if one is not convinced by the argument up to this point, what *if* it is true?). Left theory needs to be able to answer the question: what do we do if revolution is no longer possible? And they both need to be able to answer the question, what if revolution is also our only hope in a world on the verge of drastic ecological catastrophe? The answer this chapter suggests to all of these questions is—embodied in notions of class struggle (within and beyond class), the dictatorship of the proletariat (as democracy/social control), and radical reform—everything we possibly can and that still might not be enough.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter begins not just where the last one ended, but also where Gilbert Achcar (2013) ends his argument for the useful combination of cosmopolitanism and Marxism. Since at least 1992 and Chris Brown's early foundational text of contemporary international political theory, Marxism as a version of international socialism, has been interpreted as a cosmopolitan perspective. Marx argues that overtime through the historical development and geographic expansion of capitalism gives capital a "cosmopolitan character." (Marx 1978) What Marx never explicitly says is that as capital takes on a cosmopolitan character that the proletariat also takes on a cosmopolitan character. With that said, and as Timothy Brennan (2003) and Peter Gowan (2003) and David Harvey (2009) have argued, Marxism is an internationalist perspective. Brennan argues, as many of these other Left critics of cosmopolitanism have, that cosmopolitanism is merely the ideology of globalization. It is an ideology of globalization, but its normative components, finding their origins in Kant and having been most fully developed by Marx, before contemporary cosmopolitans have gone back to Diogenes and/or deemphasized the Marxian-cosmopolitan legacy.

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<sup>2</sup> There are very recent articulations of this kind of radically hopeful pessimism in the still very young pages of *Salvage*, the British journal of revolutionary arts and letters, which is currently on its third issue, as well as in the pages of Terry Eagleton's *Hope Without Optimism* (2015).

It is not just the Left critics of cosmopolitanism that offer a version of the two traditions that is divergent. As mentioned in the Introduction, Richard Beardsworth (2011) offers a discussion of cosmopolitanism, that though he is very clear throughout that he is talking about *liberal* cosmopolitanism, draws strict lines of distinction between cosmopolitanism and Marxism, before offering his own conception of cosmopolitan realism based on differential universalism and moral responsibility in leadership. None of the contemporary Marxist theories that will be addressed in this chapter are dealt with by Beardsworth. In fairness to him, his project was focusing on the most mainstream instantiations of these traditions within International Relations. These theories, with the exception of Laclau and Mouffe, have not had any significant impact on contemporary IR theory. What I want to do here is go back to Chris Brown's earlier (1992) work on cosmopolitanism that includes Marxism as a version of cosmopolitanism. He says:

[T]he proletariat is a universal class even though not all human beings are members of it. Unlike previous victors in the class war, the proletariat, when it conquers, will establish a society without classes and therefore without class oppression....The dictatorship of the proletariat will be a phase preceding the withering away of the state and therefore of the divisions between human beings....[T]he cosmopolitan *intentions* of Marxian socialism are clear. (45)

Achcar wants to call for a merger of these traditions. For him, cosmopolitanism is a future-oriented ideology, and so is Marxism (2013, 151-155). Both are indeed oriented towards existing material conditions, but both also have a vision for the future. One is impoverished by its relationship with capitalism (cosmopolitanism), and one is impoverished by pretenses of purity and a cruel combination of optimism about the immediate viability of the alternatives to capitalism and a perverse fatalism about all progressive avenues (ibid).

What this chapter will do is suggest that the realistic path forward for the global community is a radical reformulation of the cosmopolitan project that embraces the insights of the best that contemporary

Marxism has to offer including the work of Laclau and Mouffe, Hardt and Negri, J-K Gibson-Graham, Erik Olin Wright, Etienne Balibar, and the most recent developments under the much-disputed label of “accelerationism.” The goal will be to show that by emphasizing the transnational and indeed cosmopolitan character of capitalism, the capitalistic mentality, and the immense power of global capitalism against the forces of democracy, that a single approach or response is no longer feasible, if it ever was.

The final section of this chapter—through a renewed reading of Balibar’s earlier work especially, in combination with the most recent developments in Marxist theorizing, alongside Fromm’s argument for radical reform, the emancipatory thrust of Adorno’s negative dialectics, and contemporary cosmopolitanism—aims to produce what we might call a neo-Marxist cosmopolitanism or a neo-cosmopolitan Marxism for the twenty-first century, which names the enemy of progress (capitalism) while avoiding the dogmatic refusal to engage with contemporary theories of cosmopolitanism and the radical potential of engaging with existing transnational political institutions.

We can find inspiration in many sources for this frustration-inspired multiplicity of approaches approach, but the specific engagement with liberal-bourgeois theory, which nearly all of contemporary cosmopolitanism is an example of can be found in Marx himself. We should remember that Marxism emerged out of the failure of the once revolutionary demands of the liberal bourgeoisie against the feudal system. For Marx, Enlightenment liberalism ceased to live up to its radical potential and thus needed to be reformulated against itself in the new industrial context of the nineteenth century. Cosmopolitanism, while admittedly never a revolutionary theory nor ever representing a revolutionary class interest, is best understood as an outgrowth of the very same failed liberal tradition that Marx originally took to task. Cosmopolitanism is both made possible and impossible by its complicity with capitalism, just as was the case with nation-state-centric liberalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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A radical approach to progress must take cosmopolitanism to task for its complicity and on-going failures, while not abandoning its core message: the demand for a globally-just world beyond the confines of a morally-arbitrary nation-state system. This is can only be made possible, and maybe not even possible, by bringing cosmopolitanism, including both its normative vision and its actual political manifestations, into constructive conversation with the most recent developments in post-Marxism, broadly understood. Refusing to engage productively with cosmopolitanism surrenders the fertile potential of a twenty-first century dictatorship of the proletariat (understood as it was always meant, as the comprehensive democratization of all political and economic institutions) to the forces of pessimistic intra-Left dogmatism under the deeply alienating, distorting conditions of capitalism. Instead, the approach must be inspired by the combination of that critical pessimism with the radical hope that Marx himself embraced; we cannot completely replace the existing order of things, unless we first take hold of that order as it currently stands, to make it how it should have always been.

Refusing to engage productively with cosmopolitanism surrenders the fertile potential of a twenty-first century dictatorship of the proletariat (understood as it was always meant, as the comprehensive democratization of all political and economic institutions) to the forces of pessimistic intra-Left dogmatism and the optimistic attention given to discourses, identity, and non-hierarchy under the deeply alienating, distorting conditions of capitalism, instead of combining that critical pessimism with the radical hope that Marx himself embraced; we cannot completely replace the existing order of things, unless we first take hold of that order as it currently stands, to make it how it should have always been.

This is a project that articulates the likelihood of its own failure, but also one that seeks to minimize that likelihood by dialectically demystifying the psycho-social forces that undermine it at every turn. The people of the world are both ready and almost completely unprepared for what needs to come. The goal is

to prepare one another by working together within and against both the nation-state and the transnational State. Revolution is impossible now, but it is also our only hope. Radical progress demands radical solidarity, itself a mere momentary potential under capitalism. Radical realism in service of radical progress demands thusly that we must begin to sharpen not just our bayonets, but also our wits, together. This means not abandoning a single opportunity to make peoples' lives better now, all while building alternatives for a world ahead of our own, while also acknowledging that every step that is not aimed at defeating and replacing capitalism very well might be one step closer to the grave that capitalism seems to have tricked its gravediggers into building for themselves.

### **Back to the Future: Towards a Dialectical-Cosmopolitan Reading of Contemporary Marxism**

In a world with a vast array of oppressions and subjectivities (sex, gender, orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, class, etc. etc.) does privileging class still make sense? Laclau and Mouffe say no. Hardt and Negri say, well yes, but no—we need a new analytical framework for the twenty-first century (their suggestion of course is Empire and Multitude resulting not in communism but common-ism (or Commonwealth). J-K Gibson-Graham say somewhat, but only in connection with gender and a discursive critique of capitalism and its basis in non-capitalism. The Accelerationists, especially Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, believe that the contradictions of capitalism needs to be accelerated in such a way that class relations become irrelevant to postcapitalist world where work is done voluntarily and is no longer tied to compelled labor (accomplished through automation). Erik Olin Wright suggests that class does still matter (as do many others including the late Elin Meiskins-Wood [2016]). Etienne Balibar's work represents a kind of dialectical re-interpretation of two central Marxian concepts (class/class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat), and though these dialectical interpretations are maintained in his recent work, the recent

work has shifted to more mainstream discussions of cosmopolitanism and liberalism (albeit from a very critical perspective).

What all of these theorists have in common besides speaking to the question of whether class is still relevant in the late twentieth, early twenty-first centuries, is that they also include, with varying degrees of specificity about how to move beyond capitalism towards democracy. We start again where we ended the last chapter: true progress demands that we move beyond capitalism towards a humane postcapitalism, the label for which I, as these thinkers do, give “socialism.” What also makes this selection of neo- and post-Marxist theories important for the argument of this chapter and the overall project, is that they all represent a rejection (to varying degrees and take varied directions) of the traditional understanding of the nation-state, in response to the speeding up of capitalist globalization over the past several decades—a central dimension of cosmopolitanism. All of these theories are somewhat cosmopolitan in that regard, but they all also offer a perspective that affirms some of what Fromm means by “radical reform” under the pressure of the pathological marketing social character and the having mode of existence, as well as Adorno’s critique of the erosion of subjectivity produced through the dominance of instrumental reified identitarian thinking under the conditions of capitalism (the latter of which are detailed in chapter two).

While none are perfect in their own right (though some are more comprehensive than others), they all offer an opening for the theoretical convergence of Marxism and cosmopolitanism, at least in a broad sense (they certainly do not completely overlap and what follows should certainly not be read to imply such). While largely avoiding the language of cosmopolitanism for the most part, all of these theorists, with perhaps the exception of Laclau and Mouffe, articulate a postcapitalist political theory that is transnational or at least not explicitly domestic. Furthermore, they all project the idea that genuine democracy at any level



is only possible by a radical break with the political and social conditions of capitalism and that this break demands transnational struggles, even if those struggles emerge at the local or national level.

Before delving into this complex literature, let's remind ourselves of the list of generalized characteristics of cosmopolitanism that I ended chapter one with:

1. *Our basic worth as human beings, extending to a demand for basic political, social, and economic rights or—at least the content goals of those rights—is not ethically restricted or shaped by regional, nation-state, or even more local boundaries. In other words, cosmopolitanism requires that all people be protected by a set of context-sensitive basic human rights.*
  - a. *The corollary to these rights is that there is an obligation to not violate them in addition to working towards their achievement, both structurally and in specific instances of known violations.*
2. *The determination of those basic human rights as well as any additional laws or policy at any level of governance should include all those people who are likely to be affected (or who are in practice affected) in a coercion free discourse*
  - a. *The corollary to these rights is that there is an obligation to aim to secure the socioeconomic conditions necessary for adequate participation by all those who should be included. This includes a duty to accept outsiders, even if only temporarily, if their current existential situation is in violation of the first or second principles (i.e., a right to hospitality).*
3. *Democratization and human rights include institutionalization but is also embodied in the everyday struggles by those who are worst off. Democratization is the core of cosmopolitan universalism and is an always incomplete process that is undermined by exploitative*

*socioeconomic systems and practices which cause undue harm (including structural racism, sexism, exploitative labor, and lack of socioeconomic opportunity).*

In 1985, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe published one of the—if not the—most significant contributions to contemporary post-Marxism in their co-authored book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned above, the principle contribution (for better or worse) of this text is the use of Gramsci's concept of hegemony to shift Marxism away from traditional concerns of class identity to put class identity alongside other identities like race, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, etc. Laclau and Mouffe make the claim that in the late twentieth-century it is no longer feasible to privilege class in regard to building a radically democratic movement aimed towards a radically democratic society, but instead particular “cultural factors” needed to be re-emphasized (Keucheyan [2010] 2013, 238-242).

Their argument for building a new hegemony (a dominant alliance of divergent groups with shared interests or at least a shared opponent) is based on the belief that the classical proletariat is in itself diverse, and that diversity would prevent solidarity unless other cultural dimensions were recognized, accounted for, and given pride of place. It is not only that the proletariat or working class is no longer privileged

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<sup>3</sup> Goran Therborn (2008) argues that the primary distinction between post-Marxism and neo-Marxism is not necessarily related to the use of poststructuralism, but instead has to do with how closely one follows from Marx. He goes as far as to say that first-generation Critical Theory is likely the first example of post-Marxism (165-166). While I think Therborn's point is fair, especially when one looks at the critique of class offered by Adorno ([1997] 2003, 93-110) and Fromm's refusal to engage in a substantially class-oriented approach throughout his career, the inclusion of the term Marxism expresses an engagement with the concepts of Marxism in a most positive way, while representing an important deviation. To keep thing simpler, I will be using the label post-Marxism exclusively for thinkers who bring post-structuralism into conversation with Marxism and neo-Marxism for thinkers who do not, but instead seek to update or reapply Marxist concepts in a new era. Though with regard to Etienne Balibar, given his complex and critical relationship to (post-)structuralism, I agree with Therborn that he is a unique figure in that he fits in both categories, unless of course one takes Peter Dews (1987) argument that Adorno prefigures many of the claims made by post-structuralists in his work on Marxism and negative dialectics more broadly, Adorno would also fit this dual position as well.

historical subject, but rather that the working class itself no longer exists as a coherent social identity. This is when Laclau and Mouffe borrow most explicitly from E. P. Thompson's (1963) conceptualization of class as experience of class (that is, there is no objectively existing class without class consciousness, though there are certain structural conditions like capitalism that could allow us to predict where antagonisms will develop in certain times and place, which is itself related to Lukács' original formulation that there are objectively existing classes and the development of class consciousness is an historical question, not an ontological one with regard to class) (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 157; Keucheyan 2013, 241).

What is most interesting about this contribution by Laclau and Mouffe is that it is still supposedly a socialist and Marxist approach, but it abandons any focus on the core antagonist of socialism and Marxism, capitalism. Capitalism, as the determining mode that is defined by class, can no longer take center stage because class no longer empirically takes center stage. This refusal to take capitalism on forcefully is exemplified best by Laclau and Mouffe's critique of Althusser's concept of overdetermination. For Althusser (1977; 2009), building off of Freud, society, like psychopathology, is overdetermined but in the last instance determined by the economy (for Freud it is childhood trauma that is determinative in the last instance). What this means is that society is diverse and complex. It is impossible to say that every event or most antagonisms are principally economic in nature, as was assumed by most Marxists and Marx himself in that the general trajectory of history could be analyzed and understood by giving a special emphasis to economic concerns. Laclau and Mouffe offer a complicated but in the end shallow critique of this theory, simply positing that something cannot be overdetermined and determined in the last instance (1985, 97-100). This move represents the least Marxist moment in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, besides its overall emphasis

on inequality as opposed to exploitation or alienation.<sup>4</sup> The result is a replacement of the socialist project with a radical democratic one, leaving capitalism obscure among a variety of other social antagonisms.

For Laclau and Mouffe, subjects are not constituted by material circumstances, but rather by their material-discursive relations, which they argue are not a kind of idealism in the Kantian-Hegelian sense (1985, 152-154). While we can see how discourses are not themselves noumenal or ideal in the philosophical sense, they lack a coherent materiality that distinguished them from the kind of relations that Marx and Marxists have historically focused on. This is important because it speaks to how hegemonies are developed. According to this theory, building hegemonies is primarily a discursive activity: control the dominant discourse, control reality. Understood in the language of the Marxist tradition, Laclau and Mouffe are calling for the democratization of the material-discursive relations of production (of power and identities).

While discourses are certainly important, as we will see again shortly with J-K Gibson-Graham, they cannot be given pride of place in a world that is materially conditioned principally by capitalism. And because antagonisms are fundamental to social reality, revolution becomes not only untenable, it becomes undesirable if the result is an attempt at an antagonism-free society (which is only further complicated by Mouffe's favoring of an agonistic society, because if an antagonism free society is not possible but an agonistic one is, why couldn't revolution produce agonistic socialism or agonistic communism or whatever label one prefers?) (Mouffe 2000). Regardless of that contradiction across Mouffe's oeuvre, Laclau and Mouffe are functionally institutionalists. They see change coming through the counter-hegemonic

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<sup>4</sup> Laclau and Mouffe even go far as to criticize Balibar, Althusser's student and collaborator on *Reading Capital*, for his attempts to argue that in addition to society being constituted by a variety of antagonism which cannot be reduced in every or even most instances to economic antagonism, and that the economic base might not be the driving force of history, that it still provides a kind of structuration which shapes these other antagonisms and the movement of history more broadly—more than other antagonisms consistently do. This slight shift was still not enough for Laclau and Mouffe, because according to them, Balibar still, along with his mentor Althusser, maintained the objective a priori importance of class and class struggle (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 100-101).

destabilization (or radical opening) of the economic and political power structures of society, which can only happen through discursive and both conventional and non-conventional political struggle, excluding anything that aims to eradicate difference—the ontological substance of human collective existence, according to this approach (1985, 188-193).<sup>5</sup>

In works of significantly originality that build on Laclau and Mouffe to some degree, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri offered post-Marxism its most radical (re)formulation from 2000 with the publication of the (in)famous *Empire*, hailed as the Communist Manifesto of the new century. The most fundamental contribution of the *Empire* trilogy is to offer a novel ruptural theory that replaces the “old” Marxian binary of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in a way that retains the radical potential of the oppressed without reproducing any kind of untenable classist reductionism, whether because the original binary was always wrought with reductionism, or simply because we no longer exist in the nineteenth century (Hardt and Negri seem to imply a mixture of the two, though the latter is fundamentally more important).

To summarize, for Hardt and Negri (2000; 2004) *Empire* replaces both the traditional Marxist concepts of the ruling class and imperialism with a deterritorialized notion of imperial sovereignty that is dually everywhere and yet in no specific place (though certainly having particular manifestations)(2000, 3-23). *Empire* also represents the dissolution of traditional state sovereignty as a result of the progress of global capitalism that demands free flow of goods and labor under novel conditions of cognitive laboring (knowledge based labor as opposed to manual skill based labor). The logic of the automated factory becomes the logic of the global system. From within the networks of *Empire*, emerges a new oppressed “class” of

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<sup>5</sup> Mouffe has gone on to clarify precisely what she meant by political struggle in later work, drawing on the work of Nazi political and legal theorist Carl Schmitt and his concept of the political as meaning conflict where there is a friend/enemy distinction (Mouffe 2000; 2011).

people, the Multitude. The Multitude replaces or rather includes a twentieth and twenty-first century proletariat (the “cognitariat”) as well as the various other oppressed subjectivities like femaleness, black/brownness, non-heteronormative sexual identities and orientations, etc. (Hardt and Negri 2000; 2004; Keucheyan 2013, 85-94).

Because Empire does the work of upending the traditional notion of state sovereignty, the Multitude need not seize the institutions of the state, which Hardt and Negri (2000) more or less view as being vestiges of pre-Empire capitalism that do continue to service and are indeed constitutive collectively of Empire, the Multitude will form cooperative resistance movements that undermine both the last vestiges of the nation-state and Empire through the formation of Commonwealth (commonwealth being Hardt and Negri’s catch-all term for postcapitalism)(Hardt and Negri 2011). The solidaristic social movements of the Multitude replace class struggle while also taking into account the social antagonism theory of Laclau and Mouffe. The Multitude is constituted through these antagonisms and the demands of Empire. The Multitude through their own deterritorialized subjectivity and the creative sharing that the increasing knowledge labor that characterizes this postmodern, cognitive capitalism, the Multitude must aim for a resurrection of the ideas of “the common.” The common is distinguished from the private and the public. The private is the ownership of wealth and the means of production by private individuals and corporations. The public is government or representative government ownership of wealth and the means of production. The common is control by the Multitude, by (those Hardt and Negri don’t like this term) the actual people (Hardt and Negri 2012, 101-108).

The political mechanisms for getting to this point are somewhat of a controversy in the work of Hardt and Negri. Most sources, like Mouffe (2013) and Harvey (2013), suggest that Hardt and Negri reject all institutional mechanisms for progress. While there are clear critiques and indeed outright rejection for

existing state institutions and parliamentary politics, there are also more pragmatic statements that speak to the possibility that if this kind of power were attained by the Multitude, the entire state system and conventional representative politics could be, not reappropriated like the traditional idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but completely reformulated and rearticulated so that representation becomes something like a radically democratic communism (Hardt and Negri 2012). We will see later with Balibar, this argument is not actually that different from the Marxian notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat (at least how Balibar read this concept in Marx).

What is missing from Hardt and Negri's approach<sup>6</sup> is precisely how it is that the Multitude get beyond the biopolitical structuring of Empire and global capitalism more specifically. The Multitude is created through Empire for the advantage of Empire, but beyond asserting that the characteristics of the Multitude would produce the mechanism of overthrowing Empire, which are honestly very similar to Marx's initial theorization of how the proletariat would eventually come to resist and overthrow capital, there is no explanation given or appreciation for just how crucial the logic of capitalism (or in this case Empire) is in conditioning this new global proletariat. Put in their words, how does the legitimating ideological and biopolitical power of Empire simply end up ineffectual in maintaining the acquiescence of the Multitude? The Multitude simply have an "aha!" moment where they realize the commodification of

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<sup>6</sup> There have been many other critiques of the theory of Empire and Multitude, many detailed in *Debating Empire* (2003) that are left unaddressed here. It is however worth noting that I do not accept Hardt and Negri's full thesis that Empire involves the complete loss of national-state sovereignty. I see no reason why the various mostly classical Marxist critiques offered in that collected volume--which basically argue that the state still has a major role in the perpetuation of capitalism as well as there being internal conflicts within Empire, something Hardt and Negri initially reject--could not be made compatible with the broader significance of Hardt and Negri's contribution. Why can it not be that there is this thing (Empire) emerging alongside nation-states, which retain some progressively degrading and threatened sovereignty, and that there is new metasubjectivity emerging within this developing Empire that represents a new potentially revolutionary historical subject? Put more simply, perhaps Hardt and Negri got a bit too far ahead of history--that we are not quite at the point yet that they thought we were, but the critics are perhaps a bit shortsighted to see that not that much has changed.

creativity and the common sources of knowledge that form the basis of their social labor could be better utilized without the demands of “Empirical” profit-making?

In my language, does the capitalistic mentality, that psycho-social pressure that produces the initial conditions of conformity to capitalism, simply disappear? For Hardt and Negri, it seems as though the Multitude always-already did not “buy into” the logic of capital, or that they were ignorant to the power of collective action and cooperation before Empire. As I have theorized though, this is precisely how capitalism (and indeed Empire) reproduces itself—through the naturalization of capitalistic norms and mores. People see cooperation as instrumental or contingent based on one’s self-interest. They do not see cooperation and community as basic and formative psychological needs.

The biopolitical dominance of Empire appears to be merely functional; the Multitude works within Empire because that is how they make their living. For Foucault, biopower (and his earlier concept of discipline) were meant as a critique and replacement of Althusser’s more comprehensive understanding of ideology. Hardt and Negri build on Foucault’s critique, but they also seem to take it as a given that with biopolitics, there is nothing that can be coherently called ideology. Even if the concept of ideology is incoherent or unsustainable empirically, I showed in chapter two that even if ideology is not the proper term, there are absolutely deeply powerful psychological conditions that emerge alongside capitalism. If biopolitical production is the production of certain subordinate subjectivities, how it is that the production of these subjectivities upends their initial source? Again, this is very similar to Marx’s initial theory of the proletariat as the gravediggers for capitalism that capitalism itself creates. However, chapter two represents as much a critique of the classical understanding of ideology as it does of cosmopolitan progressivism. Ideology is all around us and through the capitalistic mentality can actually be seen to contribute to biopolitical production, but the path beyond that subjectification is unclear. Again, my approach is very



sympathetic the Hardt and Negri, but there is still a great deal of manual labor that forms the basis of the global economy.<sup>7</sup>

Only by looking negative dialectically at the concept of biopolitical production or the capitalistic mentality itself can we visualize the radical opening that *might* be there. As with the capitalistic mentality's empirical manifestation, it is not meant to include everyone or every single behavior. Biopolitical production does not, nor should it, be meant to imply that everything that every happens within Empire is a moment of structured biopolitical production. Where Hardt and Negri seems to collectivize the agency of the Multitude, it will take micro-resistances that build into macro-resistances, and it must begin with the recognition of the specific elements of our humanity that have been biopolitically produced in the service of Empire. We need to recognize the elements of the capitalistic mentality and attempt to counteract them in our behavior and in our interactions with others, normatively. Empire is immeasurably strong and indeed produces the Multitude, but what is it about the Multitude that would necessarily compel them to develop Commonwealth (or communism)?

While Hardt and Negri offer an explicitly globalized analysis of the contemporary condition and path toward emancipation through their notion of the common and commonwealth, J-K Gibson-Graham offers a much more localized counter-position (and though they certainly do not use the language of Empire and Multitude, what they offer could be seen as a microcosm of the radical potential of the Multitude to develop Commonwealth). In many ways the feminist post-structural post-Marxist account offered by

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<sup>7</sup> We can see the acknowledgement of the limitation of the consciousness arising in the Multitude in their most recent book *Declaration*. This book is meant, again, as much of *Empire*, *Multitude*, and *Commonwealth* (though this last one least so), to be descriptive. As they point out, *Declaration* is not meant to be a manifesto, though I suspect the reason they needed to point that out was because it certainly reads like one. Here we see a tour de force of theory and political commentary that is unmatched, if not only for its economy of language and clarity.

Gibson-Graham is much more based in specific local manifestations of non-capitalist or anti-capitalist practices. The argument they present in their two main works *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It)* and *Postcapitalist Politics* are aimed at disrupting the monolithic discursive hegemony of the capitalist mode of production, which following many of the theses presented thus far, presents capitalism as an inherently incomplete system that is in fact constituted by non-capitalism. J-K Gibson-Graham take a more embodied and place-based approach to subverting the hegemonic discourse of capitalism by explaining and promoting non-capitalisms that undergird capitalisms.

I will begin now with the major work of J-K Gibson-Graham in 1996 *The End of Capitalism (as We Knew it): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*, and their groundbreaking work of Feminist-poststructural Marxism. In it they “[problematize] ‘capitalism’ as an economic and social descriptor. Scrutinizing what might be seen as throwaway uses of the term - passing references, for example, to the capitalist system or to global capitalism - as well as systematic and deliberate attempts to represent capitalism as a central and organizing feature of modern social experience, the book selectively traces the discursive origins of a widespread understanding: that capitalism is the hegemonic, or even the only, present form of economy and that it will continue to be so in the proximate future” (1996, 2-3).

In other words, if we continually perpetuate the idea, the discursive imaginary of capitalism as a comprehensively and absolutely dominating hegemonic totality; why would alternatives ever be attempted? It would be absolutely irrational for the average person to attempt to subvert an oppressive totality such as the imaginary that has been constructed around global capitalism. Gibson-Graham’s work is a strong attempt to deconstruct the ideational chemistry of what we perceive as “global capitalism,” and even at first blush the imaginative hegemonic architecture is shown for what it is and isn’t: It is not a coherent, universal, monolithic totality. Capitalism is not one thing; the only totality of capitalism is perhaps the discourse

around it. The discourse creates and embodies a mythic reality. In actuality there are multiple capitalisms and even within those multiple capitalisms are non-capitalist economic activities. Gibson-Graham even go as far to show that the conventional, and primary version of capitalism (as we have typically understood it) would not be possible without the non-capitalist economic activity. The ideational architecture of the totality of Capitalism becomes exposed as a mythic “beast”; Capitalism is actually a combination and interrelationship of capitalisms and non-capitalisms (Gibson-Graham 1996; 2006).

The discourse of the hegemonic beast is imploded in Gibson-Graham’s exposition. They take aim at the discourse of capitalism, because like any mythic beast or bully, it is empowered by reputation, an almost universally artificial reputation. Destroy the reputation, decapitate the beast. At least, this is the motivating idea. Perhaps it is too young, perhaps it needs more time and more development. The hope remains, something Gibson-Graham deserve a lot of recognition for reinvigorating into the pessimism of Foucault’s post-structuralism.

The originality of Gibson-Graham’s work has to be the combination of a deep understanding of Marx without being beholden to vulgar, narrow, or rigid interpretations of him, with the poststructural theories of Derrida, Foucault, Mouffe, and Laclau, interspersed throughout with a more geographically-sensitive Third-wave feminism. To me they read as post-structural humanist (in a very broad and contingent sense) Marxists. An absolutely enlightened combination, invigorated by the spirit of praxis and activism, that through their work they have shown is absolutely necessary for the development and achievement of a post-capitalist politics.

For Gibson-Graham, class needs to be explicitly de-essentialized, and viewed as “a potential effect of politics, rather than merely its origin” (2001, 19). For them, the important definitional aspects of post-structural Marxist political economy are “the way[s] that surplus labor is produced, distributed,

appropriated...and also the different ways in which they are socially imbedded, constituted in each specific instance by an infinity of different ‘conditions of existence’” (9). Their notion of class and socioeconomics more broadly is heavily indebted to Althusser’s concept of overdetermination, the key aspect of which is that social structures and behaviors and patterns are the result of an indeterminate number of stimuli and attempting to distinguish which was the primary causal mechanism is a fool’s project (though in the last instance the economy is determinative). Social causation is completely different from physical scientific causation. Class is a social concept that is no more the cause than the effect of history (4-5).

Mentioned above Gibson-Graham are extremely concerned that the discourses of monolithic, hegemonic Capitalism lead to an imaginative closure (that is a closure of the imagination, not a closure that is imagined; the closure is ontic) that disallows non-capitalist modes of exchange and labor to be hidden and delegitimized. As feminist scholars, they see fit to begin with the labor that occurs within the household, unremunerated labor that is primarily although not exclusively performed by women.

Part of Gibson-Graham’s original contribution is their argument for diverse economies. Diverse economies are economic systems that include capitalist, non-capitalist, and alternative capitalist activities. This is more of a reemphasis than an alternative system, because this is what Gibson-Graham argue that we already see in existence right now. However, the nodal or focal point of the global economies is still broadly capitalist. Capitalism is the avenue through which conventional and material power and resources inevitably flow, at least increasingly so over the past hundred or so years. Gibson-Graham in their scholarship and their non-academic lives have engaged in projects attempting to offer a new nodal point for global economics, the community economy.

The foundational premise of the community economy is interdependence, not profit maximization nor competition (the two foundational principles of the capitalist nodal point)(Gibson-Graham 2006, 79-

81). For Gibson-Graham, the hegemonic capitalist discourse perpetuates the ideology that we are discrete individuals that are born individuals and exist individually, but this is not actually the reality. Drawing from Jean-Luc Nancy, they argue that we are individuals, but socially and communally imbedded and constructed.<sup>8</sup> We are social beings who come into the world not alone but with and among others. We are distinct but interconnected. There is no I without the us. Capitalist discourses focus on the I; community economic discourse emphasizes the role of the us within the I and the I within the us (81-83).

“Queering globalization” is not enough though (Gibson-Graham 1996, Ch. 6). It is important and has manifold strategic value in regard to resisting and exceeding globalization, but focusing strictly on the discourse of capitalism and its phallocentrism and the like, does not do enough to speak to the actual realities of globalization. Resist the discourse, but the emphasis on discourse does not go far enough. Building alternatives is also not an adequate supplement, especially if those solutions remain local in nature. The emphasis on discourse should be taken a step further to include an emphasis on the pathological normalization of the capitalistic mentality that travels with capitalism via globalization. Gibson-Graham’s focus is on both creating new conditions that are non-capitalistic by building on existing non-capitalistic practices (at least the ones that are worth-maintaining like cooperatives and household labor; the goal being to disentangle these practices from the actually-existing normalized capitalistic practices that form the core of the economy). It takes new people, new subjects, with new mentalities to build and maintain these new conditions, and this is the moment of the positive dialectical progression (though in a non-teleological sense). These new subjects are created through these existing cooperative activities and can be expanded and reproduced through the expansion and reproduction of these projects.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See earlier mention of Balibar’s concept of transindividuality for a similar argument.

<sup>9</sup> The two main examples given by Gibson-Graham include Mondragon in Spain and E2M in the Pioneer Valley in Western Massachusetts.

Despite the localized character of their analysis, Gibson-Graham do offer a version of Marxism that is complementary to cosmopolitanism, despite it not seeming so at first glance. First of all, there is absolutely no privileging of the nation-state or any other political form. It is anarchic in that sense. Furthermore, the emphases on the principles and practices of cooperation and community-building have no necessary geographic limitations, and can be interpreted to demand transnational cooperation. What is also special about Gibson-Graham's contribution is that they are Marxists that embody both a broadly utopian vision and a hard-headed realism, which rejects the binary of reform and revolution in favor of, to use Fromm's term which will be discussed in greater detail in the final section, radical reform—a reform that helps build the conditions in the here and now for when the revolutionary moment comes. Though they don't privilege any particular political form (besides democracy, which is more of a regulative ideal than a political form for Gibson-Graham), they don't eschew engagement with representative political institutions that can further the goals of a radically pluralistic postcapitalist political economy.

The strongest critics of Laclau and Mouffe, Hardt and Negri, and Gibson-Graham can be broadly contained under the controversial label “accelerationism.” While many have, and rightfully so, included Hardt and Negri under this broad label given that they explicitly build on the proto-accelerationism of Deleuze and Guattari<sup>10</sup>, I want to focus on the work of Nick Land, Benjamin Noys, Steve Shaviro, and most especially that of Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, who have only very recently (the most recent publication coming in early 2016) published work on the most positive version of the tradition. Accelerationism was first used as a pejorative label (and still is by Noys) to describe the work of avant-garde post-Marxist turn

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<sup>10</sup> Hardt and Negri's early accelerationism (though this label certainly post-dates their work on the Empire trilogy), is more of a descriptive teleological vision, whereas Srnicek and Williams' accelerationism is both descriptive and highly normative; they are laying out a positive utopian vision for the future based on existing technological developments and probable trends.

neo-reactionary aesthetic theorist Nick Land's deployment of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic, schizophrenic, nomadic post-structuralism. Land's basic argument (presented accurately by Noys) is "a mode which deliberately suggests the exacerbation and acceleration of capitalist forms as the means to break the horizon of capital" (Noys 2013, 36). Put even more simply, we need to speed up capitalism so we can get to the next stage faster. Land however took this in a very dark neoliberal direction (developing a theory he calls the "dark enlightenment" which is an accelerationist social Darwinism of sorts, where the contradictions of capitalism destroy swaths of the earth and likely millions if not billions of people and thus bring about a new world order beyond the realm of capitalism).<sup>11</sup> This is precisely why Noys sees accelerationism as simply the reproduction and maintenance of neoliberal capitalism. Noys views the path to utopia through gross dystopian expansion of the deterritorialization and deregulation of capitalism as extremely dangerous and at best status-quo oriented. I read Noys' critique of Land as saying that there is no reason to think that the perpetuation and expansion of the logic of capitalism would produce anything but more capitalism, and perhaps global catastrophe, yes, but then why would that take us beyond capitalism and not a resurgent, hyper-barbaric capitalism. Why not to a time before capitalism, depending on the degree of the catastrophe?

This is where Srnicek and Williams come in. Their "Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics" and most recent book building off that Manifesto, *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work* takes Noys' critique seriously and turns accelerationism into a properly Marxist direction. Srnicek and Williams take Land's initial starting point, which everyone seems to agree is actually with Marx and Engels. Marxian theory takes the technological efficiency, post-scarcity, and supposed development of

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<sup>11</sup> For the full text of Land's perverse vision see <http://www.thedarkenlightenment.com/the-dark-enlightenment-by-nick-land/>

worker solidarity as the preconditions for both the end of capitalism and the development of socialism. Srnicek and Williams offer less of a critique of capitalism that is often characteristic of Marxist theory, but instead offer an excellent critique of the (failures of the) contemporary Left (including Hardt and Negri and J-K Gibson Graham), which they broadly label folk politics—a kind of ostensibly radical politics that articulates a localized vision that ends up fetishizing the local at the expense of looking at the bigger cosmopolitan project (cosmopolitan here is my word, not theirs, but that is “precisely” what they are talking about). The central policy proposal of this instantiation of accelerationism is the universal basic income (UBI), which provides a living wage to every person regardless of employment, wealth, age, or other status category. The function of the UBI is the disentangle work from wages and income, which as was detailed in chapter two, is the defining characteristic of the capitalist mode of production. This policy, while often supported by conservatives because it allows people to have complete control over the stipend, it also allows for the eradication of other welfare state programs like unemployment, food stamps, and welfare itself. The UBI, in order to be a truly radical and indeed revolutionary policy, it must be combined with a whole host of other programs including well-funded, free elementary, secondary, and higher education and universal single-payer health care (117-127).

Beyond the critique of folk politics, the authors of *Inventing the Future* address precisely that topic through their post-work utopia (note, this probably should not be confused with the post-workerism often associated with Hardt and Negri). Put simply, the argument is that capitalism produced great advancements in technology that increasingly make workers’ labor time more efficient and thus less valuable to the business owners. This process of automation is driven by the very demands of capitalism for efficiency, but what it also produces is a situation where work can become irrelevant and unnecessary, opening the possibility of what Marx called the realm of freedom, beyond the realm of necessity. “In many circles



resistance has come to be glorified, obscuring the conservative nature of such a stance behind a veil of rhetoric. Resistance is seen to be all that is possible, while constructive projects are nothing but a dream. While it can be important in some circumstances, in the task of building a new world, resistance is futile” (47). The mechanism for this transition, in regard to strategy is a humble all-of-the-above strategy, even giving an important place to the folk political strategies they criticize. Building affective bonds through local direct action, protests, strikes, occupations, and cooperatives is important, but these bonds are only the first step in exercising genuine democratic political power (that is, without also hyper-fetishizing anti-hierarchical horizontal direct democracy, something they also criticize strongly) (7-12; 26-29).

Accelerationism in this mode articulates a countervailing universalism to the universalizing and totalizing processes of global capitalism. As George Ritzer has argued most forcefully, capitalism is very adaptable to local particularities and cultures. Capitalists can always find things to commodify in a way that is in line with local practices.<sup>12</sup> Srnicek and Williams agree strongly with this observation. And contra to Gibson-Graham’s argument that localized non-capitalist practices can form the basis of a potentially successful postcapitalist project, accelerationism aims to posit a critical universalism that is truly liberatory, in a way that seeks to undermine capitalism’s practices of commodifying local practices and traditions without becoming destructive to those local practices that are not themselves oppressive. Accelerationism refuses to fetishize the indigenous or local at the expense of emancipation (e.g., there is really no need or rational justification to maintain female genital mutilation after all—the prime example of an oppressive localized practice). So, in addition to the classical Marxist goal of an internationalist strategy that moves beyond the nation-state system, accelerationism is also universalistic in a way that is consistent with the

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<sup>12</sup> See the McDonald’s menu example in the previous chapter.

cosmopolitan project (75-83). Accelerationism in sum calls for “[a] counter-hegemonic project [that] will therefore seek to overturn an existing set of alliances, common sense, and rule by consent in order to install a new hegemony. Such a project will seek to build the social conditions from which a new post-work world can emerge and will require an expansive approach that goes beyond the temporary and local measures of folk politics” (133).

Shaviro (2015) adds to Srnicek and Williams’ conception of accelerationism an aesthetic dimension. For Shaviro, and this is something that underlies Srnicek and Williams’ contribution, that there needs to be an imagination, a vision of the future, and this imagined vision for the future aims through capitalism to get out of capitalism represented and maintained in art. “Accelerationism is a speculative movement that seeks to extrapolate the entire globalized neoliberal capitalist order. This means that it is necessarily an aesthetic movement as well as a political one. The hope driving accelerationism is that, in fully expressing the potentialities of capitalism, we will be able to exhaust it and thereby open up access to something beyond it” (2015, 3). Without doing violence to Shaviro’s understanding of accelerationism, acceleration demands a new kind of thinking—thinking through capitalism—beyond capitalism and the current iterations of conventional representative politics embodied in the nation-state (7). Accelerationism work within capitalism to move beyond capitalism, and the aesthetic dimension of that project is also an aesthetic and indeed psychological endeavor.

It is precisely this kind of imagination that is restricted by the capitalistic mentality. Shaviro, Srnicek and Williams all fail to see how capitalism restricts and limits the kind of thinking that is most likely to achieve the goals of a postcapitalist accelerationism, whether economically oriented or aesthetic or

political.<sup>13</sup> The capitalistic mentality conditions a lack of non-instrumental reasoning, the exact kind of creativity that Adorno broaches in his *Aesthetic Theory* and Fromm details in *To Have or To Be?*. Beyond the capitalistic mentality, though certainly co-constitutive of it in the postmodern era, is Crary's concept of "24/7." If accelerationism is meant to cut with the grain of capitalism to split the wood in half as it were, the accelerationist technologies that produce that split also produce a kind of technologically desensitized hyper-individual, that is conditioned by capitalism endlessly, even into one's sleep, when it is allowed (Crary 2014).<sup>14</sup>

The path towards the goal of postcapitalism, achieved through cosmopolitan class struggle must be aimed at a new twenty-first century dictatorship of the proletariat. While there is no way to get to where we need to be with regard to the psycho-social manifestation of a new mode of production, expanding our aesthetic imagination and vision is certainly an important first step. In order to achieve this, and one of the very first functional goals of Critical Theory, the existing conjuncture must be demystification: help more and more people see precisely the limitations and productive alienation that the current mode of production (re)produces.

While I have mostly covered the development of this broad post-Marxist tradition chronologically (though many of these thinkers' produced their theories and continue to expand and alter them over the course of an entire career), I want to end with the thinker who offers the most explicitly cosmopolitan or cosmopolitical approach to Marxism, Etienne Balibar. This overlap between cosmopolitics and Marxism is

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<sup>13</sup> This is all the more surprising given the 20<sup>th</sup> century origins of accelerationism in the psychoanalytic post-Marxist theories of Lyotard, Deleuze, and Guattari. For these more contemporary thinkers, where psychology is mentioned, it is never given any significant emphasis.

<sup>14</sup> Relevant to this topic is "Fifteen Million Merits" from the excellent British TV series *Black Mirror*, which speculates about the permeation of advertising and entertainment as distraction—where sleep is barely any escape at all (Episode 2, Series 1; 2011). *Futurama* also covered this quite well in the episode "A Fishful of Dollars" where companies literally advertise in peoples' dreams (Episode 6, Season 1; 1999).

at the heart of Balibar's reading of Marx and is the main reason why James Ingram (2013) uses Balibar's theory to supplement his own conception of radical cosmopolitics, detailed in chapter one. What is important to be reminded of is that for Ingram, as we saw with Laclau and Mouffe, and we will see somewhat with Balibar, social antagonism is the ontological basis of human collective existence; no single category of antagonism, like class, can or should be privileged over any other. Well, Ingram misses an important element of Balibar's oeuvre in his many references to him, namely the critique of capitalism and the critique of capitalism as the central tenet of any radical theory of democratization.<sup>15</sup> What makes Balibar's contribution so crucial to my project is that he is the one thinker who has actively and consistently theorized at the intersection of existing political institution (national, regional, and global) from a post-Marxist perspective, without being dismissive or, on the other hand, legitimizing these existing institutions (Robbins 2013).

What is implicit in all of these post-Marxist theories is the idea that class is still important, though it is complicated by a variety of other important and occasionally more important social antagonisms (e.g., racism, sexism, etc.). What is also clear is that the old reading of Marxism as a kind of predetermined binary class theory with rigid definitions is outdated, though not completely. As Erik Olin Wright has said "class matters." Also relevant here is Olin Wright's theory of contradictory class positions, which emphasizes the importance of building solidaristic relations through social movements and organization that may even transcend class boundaries.

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<sup>15</sup> This is both surprising and unsurprising. In his *Radical Cosmopolitics*, which is indebted to the work of Balibar (and Balibar actually has a blurb on the back cover of the hard cover edition), actually only cites one of Balibar's texts (*Masses, Classes, and Ideas*), and while it covers a large amount of Balibar's approach including what I will be discussing in this subsection, the emphasis on capitalism that was the focus of Balibar's for his entire career, until very recently where his focus has shifted to more explicitly political questions. Interestingly enough, Balibar's *Equaliberty*, which is translated by Ingram still makes note of the importance of capitalism and class struggle (Balibar 2014).

Broadly speaking, Olin Wright argues for an open-minded approach to achieving alternatives to capitalism to be judged according to his “socialist compass” (Olin Wright 2010, 128-129). The socialist compass represents “taking ‘the social’ in socialism seriously” and experimenting with old and new strategies for bringing social ownership of the means and products of production to fruition. For Olin Wright, class as conventionally understood is analytically shallow and generally not useful for the contemporary late capitalist economic system. A more open and diverse notion of class that takes into account where the surplus value in monetary terms is being utilized, where it is accumulating, who it is empowering, and what it is being used for. Classes are less homogenized than they were in Marx’s time and thus in Marx’s theory; Olin Wright understands that as classes have diversified, they have not become any less central to capitalism and our understanding of its logics and dynamics (Ch. 3). While offering a more nuanced understanding of class, Olin Wright, when he uses the term class, still deploys the concept in a conventional Marxist way, however class and class struggle, have both been poisoned by the popular historical memory of the supposedly failed Marxist communist projects of the twentieth century and by the fact that our world looks very different than it did in the nineteenth century.

Erik Olin Wright’s work meanders between optimism and pessimism, but through the book he emphasizes possibility. The central argument of *Envisioning Real Utopias* is an amalgamation of a lot of work done by other scholars and presented in an easy to grasp way (he certainly utilizes his analytical education and experience to great effect; he even uses graphs and formal models throughout!). The main strength of the book besides its readability, is that it transforms much of the political economic nuances offered by many post-Marxists and more specifically post-structuralists who called for less deterministic, less-essentialized, less universalizing language. It is quite difficult to explain how he does this, but Olin Wright found a way to incorporate those destabilizing theses into his overarching rationalist-analytical

argument. However the only hope he offers is in the form of open-mindedness on the Left and the hope that as people become aware of the successes of non-/post-capitalist activities, people will become increasingly emboldened to open up more spaces and takes chances with alternative socioeconomic practices.

Olin Wright goes on to explain the three strategies for achieving social control over economic powers. Each has its own merits and drawbacks, but his main goal is to put these left post-/anti-capitalist strategies, typically employed by divergent ideological factions, into a mutually beneficial conversation with one another. The transformational models are: 1. Ruptural 2. Interstitial and 3. Symbiotic. Ruptural transformations attempt to achieve broad social empowerment through revolutionary activities that “attack the state” in various ways. Interstitial (metamorphoses) transformations, typically attempted by anarchists, involve ever-expanding “social movements” and organizations that “build alternatives to the state.” The prime example of this discussed by both Olin Wright and Gibson-Graham (2006, Ch. 5) is the Mondragon collective based in the Basque region of Spain. The third transformational model, symbiotic metamorphoses, is broadly associated with social democrats or democratic socialists and utilizes unions and labor organizations as well as broader social movements to engage with the state through legal procedures. This third strategy involves direct collaboration with the bourgeoisie and other governmental institutions in legitimate forums. It is more or less reformist (see chart in Olin Wright 2010, 304). As I stated, Olin Wright points out the benefits and pitfalls of each, but what is most important is that each model can be deployed strategically depending on the context and socio-political climate at a particular point in time so that the means to achieving the ends are as successful as they can possibly be.

As Olin Wright correctly points out, we have to constantly meander between and grapple with two truisms: Where there is a will there is a way (and the converse, where there is no will, there is no way) and

secondly, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. As he says, just because there is a will does not mean there is a way (Olin Wright 2010, 6). The problem is, the capitalistic mentality and the broader ideological, material, and discursive conditions of capitalism make it (literally, according to Fromm) insanely difficult to adequately think about how to develop good intentions and how to make sure we aren't paving the way to hell as we aim to understand the seemingly insurmountable, but necessary path ahead.

Etienne Balibar's neo-/post-Marxism, as mentioned above, is the idea place to end this tour of contemporary Marxism that is aimed at highlighting its anti-/post-capitalist cosmopolitan dimensions, because that is precisely what he does in his own work (something that James Ingram seems to have lost sight of in his use of Balibar in his conception of "radical cosmopolitics").<sup>16</sup> Though the explicitly Marxist and post-capitalist dimensions of Balibar's work have taken a less central role over the past decade or so, there are still strong references to that tradition as well as substantive elements of it within Balibar's project.

Taken as a whole, Balibar's project is a Marxist one. A Marxism without a hyper-focus on class, but without dismissing or ignoring the structural power of class. He rearticulates the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat as mass democratization, as it was initially meant by Marx (which was reiterated by Karl Kautsky [1976]). It refuses to legitimize existing political institutions, but it also refuses to dismiss them. Balibar, in a lot of ways echoing what Adorno wrote in his essay *Reflections on Class Theory*, views capitalism as fundamentally structuring, but not exclusively, and that classes while they certainly retain relevance, do not have the visibility or coherence that perhaps they once did (Adorno [1997] 2003; Wallerstein and Balibar 1991, 156-157). For Adorno, "The immeasurable pressure of domination has so fragmented the

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<sup>16</sup> Ingram is not completely off base by not discussing capitalism in any serious detail, nor is he wrong to not use the concepts of class struggle or even the dictatorship of the proletariat which I will get to shortly, because as other scholars have noted, Balibar is hyper-critical of the reductionist deployments of this concepts. For Balibar, these concepts may not be useful because of their problematic histories and their association with reductionism. Bruce Robbins (2013) shares Ingram's interpretation (see <https://nplusonemag.com/issue-16/reviews/balibarism/>).

masses that it has even dissipated the negative unity of being oppressed that forged them into a class in the nineteenth century. In exchange, they find they have been directly absorbed into the unity of the system that is oppressing them. Class rule is set to survive the anonymous objective form of the class” (2003, 97).

Two quotes express Balibar’s perspective on class struggle and shares affinities with Adorno’s perspective quite clearly: “[W]hat history shows is that social relations are not established *between* hermetically closed classes, but that they are formed *across* classes—including the working class—or alternatively that *class struggle takes place within classes themselves*” (Wallerstein and Balibar 1991, 171). As we saw with Olin Wright, the language of class is maintained, while the reductionism is eliminated and the complexity of late capitalism is embraced—without eliminating the focus on capitalism itself. Second:

There is *no fixed separation, even in terms of tendency, between social classes*....Let us accept once and for all that classes are not social super-individualities, neither as objects nor as subjects; in other words, they are not castes. Both structurally and historically, classes overlap and become meshed together, at least in part. In the same way that there are necessarily bourgeoisified proletarian, there are proletarianized bourgeois. This overlap never occurs without there being material divisions. In other words, ‘class identities’, which are relatively homogenous, are not the result of predestination but of conjuncture. (179)

What makes Balibar’s work so crucial, and why it is worth repeating why Ingram’s de-Marxification of Balibar is so problematic, is that Balibar never forgets the primary importance of capitalism, even if he complicates it and criticizes certain popular versions of it. Capitalism is never ignored in Balibar’s work, and what I will present in the final section here, that Balibar’s early work on the dictatorship of the proletariat is more important than ever. Both the concepts of class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat, accurately understood, can serve to remind cosmopolitanism that capitalism is the primary antagonist of global justice and genuine emancipatory progress.



His argument, carried through his work, which takes a variety of forms can be best felt in his most recent collection of essays entitled *Equaliberty* (2014). Equaliberty, as a concept, is at the core of Balibar's revolutionary constitutionalism. This concept refers to the dialectical relationship between equality and liberty. They are viewed here as two sides of the same coin. This is just one of the many examples of Balibar himself, though with no reference to Adorno, deploying concepts negative-dialectically. It is the struggle for equaliberty that motivates class struggle, which for Balibar is also understood negative-dialectically. There is a comprehensive rejection of any kind of teleology or universal subjectivity that will liberate humanity. Capitalism is still viewed as a primary structuring force (building off of the concept that he and his mentor Louis Althusser developed in their collaborative work *Reading Capital*) but the development of history and the structure of society is still overdetermined, but in the last instance capitalism (or whatever the economic system or mode of production is, is determinative).

Class struggle in the late Balibar (2014) is embodied in the idea of citizenship. Citizenship, in a vein similar to what Benhabib argues with regard to the right to have rights and democratic iterations, provides the opportunity for radical reconstruction of politics and political institutions (Balibar 2014, 8-10). Once constitutions are established, there is always a regression the Balibar calls "de-democratization," and the function of social movements (which again seems to be Balibar's more recent way of capturing the idea of class struggle) is to re-democratize constitutions, and this often takes the form of a revolution or insurrectionary movements (2014, 35-51). For Balibar this concept of citizenship as potentially revolutionary is historically always aimed at attaining the proper identity of equality and liberty (i.e., equaliberty).

In Balibar's earliest solo work, he conceptualized this goal as the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is meant to mean, as it did for Marx and Kautsky, and even Hal Draper, nothing other than the

comprehensive and complete democratization of all aspects of society, especially the economy (Balibar 1977, 18-19, 111-113). This is where I want to take the final section here. I want to take Balibar's earlier work, alongside that of the other neo-/post-Marxisms detailed above, and look at the ideas of class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat as embodying a cosmopolitan democratization that refuses to ignore the fundamental antagonist to democracy that is capitalism, including its destabilizing psycho-social dimension (the capitalistic mentality).

Recall in chapter two on the capitalistic mentality there is no necessary distinction in the impact or consequence of the capitalistic mentality in regard to one's class position (contradictorily understood or not). Balibar gives pride of place to political struggle while maintaining the implicit perspective that the workers are the fundamental subjects of ideology, and even if we expand this vision beyond economic class, the oppressed are the one's subject to ideology. This is why they don't revolt. While the theory developed in chapter two based on Adorno and Fromm suggests that this is true, what is also true is that the bourgeoisie are always-already subject to ideology as well. They were children once after all, and maybe they weren't even born into the bourgeoisie; maybe they pulled themselves up by the bootstraps and somehow made it into the bourgeoisie. Why did they want to? Besides the perks I mean? Ideological conditioning, what Althusser calls interpellation, which produces the capitalistic mentality is the answer. What do we do now that we know that both the proletariat (or any oppressed people) are equally subject to the ideological conditions that keep the boot on their necks as the people who oppress them? Ideological conditioning, the psycho-social permeation of human life, of the life-world by the pathological and reified demands of the capitalistic mentality means that it is just as likely that the oppressed will revolt as it is that the oppressors will cease to oppress them (literally both are roughly equally likely under conditions of hegemony at least where the oppressed are given some pittance for complying).

All of these post-Marxist theories have something important to teach us when combined with the work of Adorno and Fromm and the reconstructed concept of the capitalistic mentality. The lesson is that revolution is exceedingly unlikely under the depraved but not too visibly depraved conditions of late capitalism. People still believe in capitalism, whether they understand it or not. In other words, people have more to lose but their chains, like their unlimited data plan on their iPhone. The revolution will be televised, or it is just the show *Revolution* (which in an ironic but fitting twist of fate was cancelled for low ratings—turns out even the show *Revolution* wasn't popular enough to succeed).

All sarcasm aside, the capitalistic mentality, in a manner quite similar to its effect on cosmopolitanism and democracy more generally, undermines the ability to build a counter-hegemony, to see the ideological dimensions of our own lives, to work together creatively against Empire, to build local non-profit collectives within a broader capitalist system, and to reappropriate the most recent developments in technology for non-capitalistic or post-capitalistic usage.

What all of these theories, whether they embrace class or not or embrace class dialectically and openly, they all assume that the social fabric is produced by capitalism and therefore the structures of our societies are infected by capitalism, but what they all fail to take into account is that people are themselves infected by capitalism. People are made helpless to a large degree, unable to locate their malaise in the “hyperobject” that produces it is (Morton 2013). Capitalism has become beyond comprehension, and it has deluded even the most sophisticated and original Marxist thinkers from seeing that capitalistic people are not ready for postcapitalism. In fairness, they never explicitly say anything to the effect that all we need to do is get past capitalism and everything will be fine. They all grant some role for the subject being produced by capitalism, but they all fail to take that opening to its negative dialectical conclusion: *we are not ready for capitalism to be over*. This is why cosmopolitanism combined with class struggle is absolutely crucial.

Cosmopolitanism, as a reformist approach, gives people the time to struggle together and build against the capitalistic mentality without having to be terrified of immediate drastic systemic changes—no matter how normatively necessary those changes are, because such drastic changes induce a fear that impedes the necessary change.

Accelerationism reminds us that our unlimited data plans and the other recent developments in nanotechnology, cybernetics, and automation have opened up the near-possibility of a world without work, but first that that unlimited data plan can be used to organize collective resistance, to build movements. If as Ingram (2013) suggests, a radically democratic cosmopolitanism must be a cosmopolitanism from below that works within and against existing national and transnational political institutions, it also must be a cosmopolitanism that uses the tools of capitalism against capitalism. This takes Hardt and Negri's notion of the multitude and re-territorializes it somewhat, in a way close to what J-K Gibson-Graham suggest.<sup>17</sup> Left movements must start local. They will always have local manifestations, and while advanced social media technologies can bring people together from far distances, solidarity is best built in the workplace, around the neighborhood, at the local Farmer's market, or even the mall.<sup>18</sup> What Balibar, Srnicek and Williams, Hardt and Negri, and Laclau and Mouffe argue is the political and social protest movements, the actual acts of struggling together are still the best tried-and-true methods of building a solidarity that can be an effective tool against oppression in service of emancipation. Only Balibar gives emphasis to working with political institutions though. Hopefully not before one more round of Candy Crush...

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<sup>17</sup> In Declaration, Hardt and Negri move from their initial position in Empire, arguing that face-to-face political engagement is much preferred to mediated interactions through social media in regard to building successful movements.

<sup>18</sup> Technological developments that spring from capitalism cut both ways though. Even the solidarity and human connections that could be built through the collective activity of shopping is undermined by the advent of Internet shopping (Crary 2014).

## **Radical Realism and Radical Reform: The Contours of Reconciling Cosmopolitanism and Marxism**

If the point of all of this is to achieve global justice and this demands moving beyond capitalism, as I have theorized in the previous chapters, and we want to get there as fast as is humanly, humanely, and thus as realistically as possible, a class struggle without class within a class system accelerating through cosmopolitan structures, towards a twenty-first century dictatorship of the proletariat is the solution offered here. This project is one of radical reformism; we reform our socioeconomic system to move beyond the current neoliberal capitalist system through a radical democratization of our existing political systems aimed at a comprehensive democratization of all aspects of society. If this is not global it will not be successful, and this means building on the existing alterglobalization networks (e.g., transnational socialist parties and the World Social Forum, but also perhaps more secretive and criminal organizations like Anonymous and Wikileaks), but it also means reappropriating (read, democratizing) the capitalist globalization networks. That is, the Left must truly use the masters' tools against the master. If global democratization is the fundamental goal of normative cosmopolitanism, and since that goal is exceedingly unlikely to be accomplished through revolution or mere reforms within capitalism, radical reform represents the best guiding principle for a truly radical cosmopolitanism.

What does radical reform mean more broadly though? According to Fromm<sup>19</sup>, radical reform refers to a dialectical reading of the typical Marxist binary of reform and revolution (or what Fromm terms “radicalism”) (Fromm 1955, 17). Radical reform means instituting crucial social, political, and economic changes that aim to move society closer to the moment of transition and—through the organizations and

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<sup>19</sup> As far as I have been able to find, in the English language, the first person to use the concept of radical reform and to provide a coherent definition of the concept is Erich Fromm. After 1955 when Fromm first used it, Ralph Miliband used the phrase quite often to speak of the kinds of reforms that Marx lists in the *Communist Manifesto*, though I am not sure if Miliband was aware of Fromm's previous usage. The use of the terms seem consistent though (Miliband 1977; 2015).

movements necessary to achieve the radical reforms—prepares them for the transition itself and for society after the transition. In the context of this project, radical reforms are reforms that prepare people, and the social system more broadly, for the transition to postcapitalism and indeed move them closer to it. The goal of reform is not reform, but instead, revolution—albeit a revolution that takes place over a generation.

For Fromm (and this is putting his argument somewhat into the negative dialectical language of Adorno but is entirely consistent with Fromm’s actual language on the subject, which I will return to shortly), this is both dialectically inconsistent and a false dichotomy. First, reform is not *actually* reform if it functions as a temporary Band-Aid for the ills of society and the crises of capitalism. Revolution is also not revolutionary or cannot be revolutionary if it does not take place somewhat gradually. That is, if people are deeply conditioned by capitalist, abrupt insurrectionary takeovers of the State and economy will fail because the people are not psycho-socially prepared to participate in a post-revolutionary society; they are prepared to participate in capitalism (or whatever the pre-existing society was at a given point in time). Revolution takes time because it takes time and experience to build the revolutionary mentality necessary to live in the post-revolutionary world, and probably in the revolution itself. Anger spawned by injustice and depredation are enough to motivate people to revolt, but they are not enough for them to successfully revolt.

Fromm tells us:

There is reform and reform; reform can be *radical*, that is, going to the roots, or it can be superficial, trying to patch up symptoms without touching the causes. Reform which is not radical, in this sense, never accomplishes its ends and eventually ends up in the opposite direction. So-called “radicalism” on the other hand, which believes that we can solve problems by force, when observation, patience, and continuous activity is required, is as unrealistic and fictitious as reform....The true criterion of reform is not its tempo but its realism, its true “radicalism”; it is the question of whether it goes to the roots and attempts to change causes—

or whether it remains on the surface and attempts to deal only with symptoms. (1955, 273)

Contrary to what Laclau and Mouffe, Hardt and Negri, and Gibson Graham argue, I want to privilege capitalism (because it privileges itself so to speak). Contrary to the standpoint epistemology of Marx and Lukács, but like the neo- and post-Marxists, I do not see the proletariat as a universal subject. I do not see the proletariat as holding a privileged epistemological perspective from which to see the oppression inherent in capitalism. Maybe that could have been true before, and maybe it might still be true in the developing world where capitalism looks and functions closer to how it did in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States and Europe, but the subject of capitalism more broadly must be seen as the universal subject (that is, the subject embodying the capitalistic mentality, because if not them, who else?). Solidarity must be built across conventional class lines, but building on the principles of class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat—simply meaning, democratization against capitalism.

The capitalistic mentality that gives all people a radical potential because it equally, though unevenly, conditions all those who live under and within capitalism. Contrary to Laclau and Mouffe's, Hardt and Negri's, and J-K Gibson-Graham's empty subject and discursive anti-humanism, it is because, under conditions of relative abundance, one's position in the class system does not determine or significantly condition one's ability to live an contented life. There are billions of unhappy people, but the degree of unhappiness and happiness is not correlated with one's position in the relations of production. Those who own are not necessarily happier than those who work. They have more things. Shiner gizmos. More bigger, shinier things.<sup>20</sup> Resistance emerges from dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction is mediated by norms and social expectations, as Fromm (1991) argues, and it is mediated by ideological conditions as Adorno

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<sup>20</sup> See "Can Money Buy Happiness?" (<http://www.wsj.com/articles/can-money-buy-happiness-heres-what-science-has-to-say-1415569538>)

(1976) details (e.g., if we identify success with more things, the more things we have the more successful we will feel). However, this is precisely where the importance of Fromm's normative humanistic psychoanalytic perspective is crucial (Fromm 1955). Human beings have broadly defined psychological needs and preferences. We need to be able to express ourselves. We need to feel connected to people (both to our society and strangers to some degree, but other to our friends, family, and beloved(s)). We need to feel like we can improve both as an individual and as a member of society. These demands can be filled in variety of ways. Some social systems meet some of these demands better than others. Capitalism promises to meet them all and fails in most respects, though not all.<sup>21</sup>

It is from the potential dissatisfaction, the distance between the capitalistic mentality and the broader psychological needs of human beings, from which resistances to capitalism could be born. There is a big catch though, and some important fine print we should take note of. People need to recognize that distance, associate it accurately with capitalism, feel like they can actually effectively work towards changing it, know and believe that there is a viable alternative, trust that other people will work with them towards that goal, and finally everyone must avoid the excessive use of shallow, fleeting, therapeutic measures that capitalism offers us so inexpensively. So, not much standing in the way of that...

“Embrace your pain and discontentment, even though there are temporary solutions that will help somewhat and permanent solutions are realistically unlikely to come about anytime soon” doesn't make for a great recruiting slogan.

E. P. Thompson's (1963) conception of class as experience is both affirmed and rejected here. The subjects of capitalism, in total, could form a class due to their shared experience with the structures of

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<sup>21</sup> See my review of Martijn Konings *The Emotional Logic of Capitalism* (2015) for a succinct analysis of how this plays out in the context of a radical reformist movement beyond capitalism (Sculos 2016, available online: <http://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviewofbooks/reviews/2016/2170>).



capitalism that (re)produce the capitalistic mentality in a way that is not visible in the conventional Marxist understanding of class based on one's relation to the means of production. However, and this is not what Thompson, nor any other theorist I am aware of has argued. A radicalized cosmopolitanism recognizes that the subjects of capitalism could only constitute a class, objectively, once they organize themselves against the capitalistic mentality.<sup>22</sup> It is not one's specific class position that matters with regard to the formation of collective resistance to capitalism, but instead it is the subject's (as an alienated subject-object) existence within the class-system of capitalism that allows for all the subjects of capitalism to possess a radical potential (albeit an extremely tenuous one--and the degree of tenuousness is indeed connected to the specificity of the class position among other ascriptive categorizations).

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<sup>22</sup> Why would the bourgeoisie participate in a movement against capitalism, when capitalism so clearly benefits them? This is precisely why Marx argued that violence would likely be necessary; the bourgeoisie would likely never give up their dominant class privilege without a fight (while acknowledging at a certain point there may be a small number of bourgeois defectors—a likely paean to his longtime friend, collaborator, and gravy train, Friedrich Engels). This is also why Lukács (1971) argued that the bourgeoisie could never attain true, class consciousness, because they lacked the knowledge of the true exploitative nature of capitalism, and because their historical position as exploiters (in competition with one another) undermined the solidaristic relations necessary for class consciousness. Even if they could get around this epistemological block, such a knowledge would demand a kind of self-renunciation that Lukács believed was untenable. However, what is it were possible for the bourgeoisie to experience the deleterious effects of the capitalistic mentality and recognize its basis in the capitalist mode of production? Would that self-renunciation, however traumatic, not function as a kind of radical therapy? Assuming the conditions of post-scarcity hold and the bourgeoisie could be convinced that their ability to sustain themselves would not be threatened (though their extraneous luxuries certainly would be—but that would be addressed by what follows...), a more humane and sustainable existence for everyone could be attained by moving beyond capitalism. This would likely involve a strong critique of the bourgeois notion of (material) self-interest that demystified the psycho-social harms that capitalism visited on all those who live within it, even those who ostensibly benefit in material ways. Climate change might offer one avenue to facilitate this process. Climate change has the potential to affect everyone on Earth, though certainly the poor are much more vulnerable as we have witnessed already in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the drastically unequal consequences of natural disasters. This is just a potential though. There is always the risk that history will develop closer to what is depicted in *Snowpiercer* (2013) and *Elysium* (2013) where the wealthy use their privilege to “escape” the effects of ecological destruction, at least temporarily, out of the reach of the lower classes and their vengeance. This does not mean that Lukács was wrong and the bourgeoisie can definitely attain a solidaristic class consciousness in connection with the proletariat, but rather that he *might* be wrong now.

Put less technically, why do the bourgeoisie behave how they do? Because they embody the capitalistic mentality as much, if not more than the proletariat. I argue that it is certainly not by choice or anything that we should want to equate with agency. The proletariat, though it certainly experiences greater deprivations and estranged labor, is subject to the same capitalistic mentality, just perhaps to a different degree (as detailed in chapter two). These contingent truths must be taken into account when considering how to move beyond capitalism.<sup>23</sup>

If Marx, Karl Kautsky (1974), and Balibar are correct that, dialectically understood, the “dictatorship of the proletariat” means the comprehensive democratization of the modern State, we must also take into account what William Robinson (2004; 2014) has called the transnational State as well, both by opposition to the transnational State as such and by attempting to reappropriate its institutional manifestations. We must both embrace and resist China Miéville’s (2005) claim that the rule of law can only serve the interests of the oppressors and never fully the interests of the oppressed. This is what radical reform must mean in the twenty-first century.

While this chapter offers a positive (in a dual sense) approach, it will also convey the negative possibility that its program will be carried out. The forces of global capitalism and its ideological conditions are not to be trifled with or underestimated. Radical reform, in the context of the integration of cosmopolitanism and Marxism, must be a theory and practice of hopeful pessimism; that is, a hope without

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<sup>23</sup> The bourgeoisie are akin to Bane from *Dark Knight Rises*. Sure, they’re the bad guys, but it isn’t their fault. They have been conditioned by various traumas (both real and imagined) and are being manipulated by a distant, thoughtless cabal hiding in plain sight. Capitalism, like the League of Shadows, lacks agency in all substantial respects; it is imprisoned by its own logic, and thus it is precisely the logic that must be countered if the system itself is to be countered. Though it is certainly not meant to be a comprehensive metaphor/analogy for the whole movie or the Batman/DC universe, my point is to suggest that contrary to the standard Marxist understanding of the bourgeoisie and class in general, as well as the poststructural reversals, all people under capitalism are victims of and subject to capitalist ideology and the pathological pressures of the capitalistic mentality (albeit with differentiated consequences).

optimism.<sup>24</sup> A hope that refuses to lie to itself or others just how far we must go and just how difficult the path will be. The utopian element of cosmopolitanism is not just in its dream of a globally-structured political system beyond the current dominance of the nation-state that is politically, socially, and economically just, but also, and arguably more so in its unfounded belief that this vision is compatible with global capitalism (Beardsworth 2011).

One of the great benefits of cosmopolitanism is that it lacks a class-based analysis in its historical development. The normative cosmopolitan tradition I've been engaged with in this project is decidedly non-Marxist. Thus it is not hamstrung by a legacy that gives so much pride of place to class. This is also connected to its core weakness, its complicity with capitalism. By refusing any corrupt view of the state with regard to capitalism, cosmopolitanism is able to see the manifold benefits of working within existing state structures (Beardsworth 2011).

As has been discussed in the introduction and chapter one, cosmopolitanism and Marxism are often treated as distinct intellectual traditions. Academically speaking, this is absolutely accurate. Normatively speaking, there are much greater similarities than differences between the core goals of these traditions. What is it about cosmopolitanism that Marxists should appreciate (similar goals, that capitalism is actually inconsistent with the goals of cosmopolitanism, and the language of human rights, which as Ingram [2013] notes, has a legitimacy that Marxism and horizontalist, workerist, and anarchist inspired radical movements have failed to cultivate or maintain among the general population). Cosmopolitan institutions exist. It is time to take them over. New "Dictatorship" of the Proletariat or the rule of the oppressed...alongside the oppressors, without their current social, political, and economic power.

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<sup>24</sup> On the relationship between hope, optimism, and pessimism with regard to Marxism and radical change, see Miéville (2015a; 2015b), Warren (2015) (all three in the first two issues of *Salvage*) and Eagleton (2015).

What Marxism misses still—besides the importance of political emancipation as a part of human emancipation—is the destructive nature of the capitalistic mentality for its own project, and thus the importance of the revolutionary movement representing new values, virtues, and norms. Capitalistic people cannot produce genuinely democratic, humane socialism or whatever term one prefers for an emancipated or emancipatory post-capitalist society. However, capitalistic people are the only ones who *can* produce a humane postcapitalism. If the hegemony of (neoliberal and consumer) capitalism is to be defeated, there needs to be more than socialist strategy. The global Left needs a socialist strategy that eschews the dominance of strategic thinking and self-interested politicking. There needs to be more than accelerating the contradictions of capitalism; there is always the strong possibility that if acceleration is not coupled with alteration, that the accelerated contradictions will reproduce the very mentality that it hopes to destabilize. There needs to be more than a discursive battle against the patriarchal-capitalistic monolith. There needs to be more than a glorification of the radical potential of the subjectivities of the Multitude against Empire. There needs to be more than largely academic philosophizing against the ideological nuances of late capitalism. These are all part of the answer. All of these approaches have something to contribute. They have all been ground-breaking in crucial ways in their time, and still today. What has been ignored or under-theorized from a praxeological point of view is the dominance of the capitalistic mentality and the affective power and influence this has on democratic political imaginations. Alienation, competitiveness, possessiveness, and reified identitarian thinking which are co-constitutive with contemporary capitalism inhibit precisely the radical vision and praxis needed to get us beyond capitalism.

While the necessity that a radical cosmopolitan realism be democratic and as egalitarian and participatory as possible is without question, there will likely always be a need for leaders, for organizers, for point-people, for the motivators. We all have different skills sets, and a movement cannot succeed based

on the assumption that everyone's skills and potential contributions are identical. Power must always rest with the movement, and not with the leader. This is where Lenin's vanguard failed. This is also not completely dissimilar from the proposal that Beardsworth makes with regard to his cosmopolitan realism, the need for moral-political leadership and responsibility. While much more republican than democratic in its theoretical inspiration, Beardsworth's recommendation for cosmopolitan political leadership must be taken seriously, even for a radicalized version of cosmopolitanism, despite the fact that for Beardsworth this leadership is held by the most powerful nation-states, not necessarily individual leaders—though individual leaders in those countries certainly retain a major role in cosmopolitan leadership (2011, 232-237; 2015).

Leadership and responsibility are crucial. We need bottom-up activists, and we need leaders. We need leaders with vision, charisma, and who are accountable to and part of the people they are leading. The distance between these necessary leaders and the class struggle they must be a part of cannot be far. We have seen, far too often throughout history, leaders of ostensibly revolutionary movements betray the movements and peoples they have led. While this is an historical truth, it is certainly not inevitable moving forward (nor was it inevitable in the past). Leaders should be guides, organizers, and inspirers, not sources of authority in and of themselves. Democracy is still the foundational and primary principle. Political democracy. Cultural democracy. Economic democracy. Contra, Hardt and Negri, leadership or some kind of radical democratic representation are not antithetical. As Žižek has opined in critique of direct democracy, most people don't want to have to deal with the day-to-day management and organization of society on a daily basis (nor should they)(Žižek 2013).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The full lecture where this comment is made can be accessed here:  
<http://backdoorbroadcasting.net/2013/02/slavoj-zizek-a-reply-to-my-critics/>

Even with immense technological innovation, with the Internet, smartphones, and social media, that kind of direct daily participation would likely take up a lot of time for a lot of people. There is also no proof that representation or political leadership are inherently flawed. It is the lack of genuine participation (which should be distinguished from an anti-representational, radical direct democratic politics)(Mouffe 2013; Chomsky 2013). The issue is power. Where is the power? It must be with the people. Now even if power were located in the people, participation still matters a great deal. Some things, some topics, some issues should never and could never be adequately represented. Workplace democracy is a key example.<sup>26</sup>

Democracy and the capitalistic mentality are not compatible. This is the principal role of an inspiration and responsible understanding of radical leadership. It is a notion of leadership that recognizes its own potential inversions and regressions and threat it poses to the achievement of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat. Class struggle without and throughout classes demands organized leadership until the capitalistic mentality is thoroughly eradicated and replaced. It is not enough for the transitional mentality to take hold. That is merely the motivation for struggle. That is the only likely possibility within capitalism. Global justice and the postcapitalism it requires must include a political, social, and economic strategy that also functions at the psychological level as well. It must work and build towards a post-capitalistic mentality, a mentality that can only be achieved as the result of and through organized class struggle—a class struggle that transcends class within a class system. It can only be achieved through a

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<sup>26</sup> We can look to Rousseau's (1978) distinction between sovereignty and government from *On the Social Contract* here. Rousseau was a sovereign democrat, but not a governmental democrat. He did not believe that the people should be in charge, as a collectivity, of running a society. Government for Rousseau meant bureaucratic management. Social, political, economic power and authority ultimately rested with the people (with their general will or collective common good). This is what makes Rousseau both a republican and a democrat. Governments should be run by those best suited to the particular roles that need to be fulfilled. However, power, authority, and legitimacy can only ever be held by the people (from which the government functionaries are drawn, by the way). In regard to contemporary theory, workplace democracy has been most forcefully articulated by Richard Wolff (2012) in *Democracy at Work* and by Michael Albert (2003) in *Parecon*.

genuinely radical, realistic, cosmopolitanism that stands opposed to capitalism and all its oppressive bedfellows.

Perhaps there will be a time when representation or leaders are not needed or do not offer positive benefits for democracy itself. This is a laudable goal and should never be dismissed. Srnicek and Williams are right to suggest at the very least that organizational leadership is important. Perhaps this is exactly where the Left needs to do some work: thinking about precisely what leadership on the Left means? Does it mean engaging with mainstream party politics aiming to shift the discussion leftward like we've seen with Jeremy Corbyn in the United Kingdom, Bernie Sanders in the United States, Podemos and Pablo Iglesias in Spain, or even the attempts made by Alex Tsipras in Greece? Acknowledging that there is a great deal of policy and strategic diversity in this group, they are all election-oriented and are thus closer in line with the old Eurocommunist programs than they are with a truly radical or revolutionary Marxist movement. My argument here has been that radical reform demands a dialectically integration of reformism and insurrectionism (to use Ralph Miliband's language).

These politicians, while certainly unorthodox, are still politicians, and yes they could serve as moral leaders for a new New Left, it might very well be that the recently exonerated Subcomandante Marcos of the Mexican Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico in the mid-1990s offers a better example, at least before he was forced into hiding. He was a figure without a name—at least not a real name—but it didn't matter. There was leadership. He represented the movement. He was the voice of the movement, but he wasn't in charge of the movement. This is precisely why he covered his face and kept his legal identity a secret. It wasn't to evade responsibility (though prosecution maybe), but rather to avoid the assumption that he held

some sort of greater power than the rest of the participants in the movement (ROAR Collective 2016).<sup>27</sup> Though their identities are known, the three women leading the #BlackLivesMatter movement in the US embody this kind of organizing leadership. They are leaders, but the movement doesn't live or die with them. The movement is a peoples' movement (Taylor 2016). They are people the media can interview, but they aren't functionally in charge in the way that phrase is normally meant. They couldn't be.

Truly democratic movements, true class struggle aimed at a dictatorship of the proletariat that exceeds class and means nothing more than comprehensive democratization, would never and should never accept that conventional brand of leadership—but complete non-hierarchy is not functional today. Just look at the events of May 1968 in France or the Occupy Movement or even the Arab Spring.

Whether it is Subcomandante Marcos or Jeremy Corbyn or Bernie Sanders, while the nature of the leadership of a radical reform movement is certainly an important question, what matters is what that leadership does. It must take a stand, alongside their supporters, alongside the people. Our leaders must embrace radical changes that progressively prepare us, within and against the existing system, to move beyond the existing system, beyond global capitalism. We need to be better to do better. We need to do better so that the people who come after us can be better and do even better than we could. We need leaders who are us and who are better than us. We need leaders who push us to engage and move the center of mainstream domestic and transnational politics. We need leaders who motivate people to work and organize outside of the legally-restricted mechanisms of constitutional or parliamentary power. The establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat for the twenty-first century, which means nothing more than the pervasive democratization of all dimensions of society, demands a conventional political

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<sup>27</sup> Available online at: <https://roarmag.org/2016/02/25/subcommandante-marcos-no-longer-a-wanted-man/>



dimension, a fugitive political or populist dimension, and it must always leave open the possibility and indeed potential necessity for extra-legal political activities.<sup>28</sup>

The merger of cosmopolitanism and Marxism centers on three important concepts: a reconceptualized understanding of class struggle, a similarly reconceptualized understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat (in this sense, it is a return to an original meaning that was already dialectical), and radical reform (which combines the first two with the progressive spread of non-identitarian thinking, the productive character orientation/being mode of existence in order to successfully move beyond capitalism). Cosmopolitanism, aimed beyond capitalism, offers the time, existing institutional mechanisms, and legitimacy to achieve radical reform. The dictatorship of the proletariat offers the immediate goal for radical reform, which highlighting the crucial enemy: capitalism. This achievement is the first step towards emancipation that we can reasonably imagine at this point in time (and for many readers, even this might be seen as a stretch). Class struggle is the mechanism to achieve the solidarity and experience needed to practice a truly radical reform.

## **Conclusion**

If we want to get closer to the normative horizon of what might actually be agreed to in an honest non-capitalistic original position we need a post-capitalistic mentality (Rawls, Beitz, and Pogge). If we want to avoid the colonization of the life-world, we need to refuse the capitalization of the real world (Habermas). If we want to live up to the universal discursive recognition and reciprocity of the post-conventional moral reasoning demanded by discourse ethics (Habermas), of the universal and concrete other (Benhabib), we

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<sup>28</sup> The situations where this would seem most obviously reasonable is when a government and/or its laws are written in such a way or made to function in such a way that they produce injustice and oppression. No people should be expected to tolerate that and accept only the legally prescribed avenues of resistance and change provided by their oppressors.

need to be able to see and embrace the humanity of the universal and concrete other. If we want to remove harm, we must understand the foundational-systemic sourcing of harm from the structures of capitalism, both materially and psycho-socially (Linklater). If we want to avoid the excessive inhumanity and the anti-democratic false universalities of modernity and postmodernity, we must embrace a radical cosmopolitanization from below and a sustained critique of the differentially and diverse manifestation of global capitalism (Cheah and Ingram). We must embrace global struggles—class structured, intersectional struggles—for liberation. They are not on the verge of success, but we can certainly say, if the pathway towards any potential global liberation movement is ever going to be visible, there is certainly hope for the Left that that visibility and even foundational construction, is getting nearer. That project will likely engage on cosmopolitan or cosmopolitical lines.

Again, the likelihood of all or any of this is not the important question. This broader proposal must be radical and realistic if it is necessary to address the global injustices sustained by capitalism and its transnational state institutions that support and reproduce it. Perhaps pessimism is both the solution and the problem. Pessimism makes hope difficult, but it also expresses the necessity of hope more clearly and profoundly than (blind) optimism ever could.

With due respect to the World Social Forum and the courageous people who have built and organized and resisted in support of its futuristic alterglobalist vision, it is not enough to say that *another world is possible*. Another world, a world ahead, a world ahead of capitalism, with its technological progress and grotesque triumphalism while billions suffer, is more necessary than it is possible (Meszaros 2015, 160-161). To live up to Marx's timeless dictum "to each according to his need, from each according to his ability," we must not focus on the possibility of a world ahead, but rather on the *necessity* of a world ahead. Necessity is after all the mother of invention.

However, just because something is necessary, does not make it possible. Possibility, and the imagination it inspires, is crucial as well. Another world is possible, yes. This is an important message for the global Left, a vital message that needs to be ceaselessly articulated. However, another iPhone is possible as well, another version of Candy Crush, another version of *Fast and the Furious*, another version of the F-15 or B-2, another version of the assembly line, of the bread line—are all possible. We need another world. If necessity is the mother of invention, possibility is certainly its father and right now, possibility isn't paying its child support because necessity hasn't taken it to court yet.

We can't say for sure where the future is going. It is unknowable. While it may be foregone, we cannot not know, so why assume it is? That is not the pessimism a combined radical Marxist cosmopolitanism offers. A radical hope, to use Jonathan Lear's (2008) terminology, combined with a radical realism and a radical reformism is a hope without optimism (Eagleton 2015). It is a hope with teeth (Miéville 2015a, 188).

Now, it is up to people working within and against existing cosmopolitan regimes, already with dirty hands, to make things better while continuously opening new doors for progress. This kind of radical progressivism takes into account the impossibility of insurrectionary change in a world pervaded by the capitalistic mentality, the insufficiency of its own progressivism, and the additional necessity of working beyond, below, and above existing pathways for change—building towards a new mentality for a world ahead of the barbarism of hyper individualism, possessiveness, competitiveness, and the identitarian reification of the like, in order to mitigate the continual possibility that things will not turn out well. To

paraphrase was Horkheimer wrote to Adorno in 1956, I do not believe that things will turn out well, but the possibility—and indeed necessity—that they might is of utmost importance.<sup>29</sup>

Why abandon the emancipatory potential of cosmopolitanism, when just like Marxism, it has failed because it has never truly seen the light of day in its best, most honest form? We are beyond a time where half-measures are more practical than failed whole-measures. We need solidaristic movements that draw on the most likely solutions that can still be considered solutions in a world that seems to have eviscerated all solutions. This is what class struggle means today.

For Fromm the transition to a truly sane society, a humanized, emancipated society demanded four conditions, and none of them are guaranteed—in fact, quite the opposite:

1. We are suffering and are aware that we are.
2. We recognize the origin of our ill-being.
3. We recognize that there is a way of overcoming our ill-being.
4. We accept that in order to overcome our ill-being we must follow certain norms for living and change our present practice of life. (Fromm 1976, 168)

A postcapitalistic cosmopolitan mentality must be forcefully conceptualized. It must be shown to continue to exist, however latently or sporadically in the here-and-now. It must be cultivated and spread. It must be struggled for. It is a practically-oriented aspiration, and a crucially important one. To abandon the possibility of this alternative is to surrender to the idea that this harmful, alienating, exploitative socioeconomic system, and the politics it breeds, is truly the best we as humans can do. This surrender is the last nail that the capitalistic mentality supplies for the funeral of progress and justice. This nail is the final nail in the coffin of everything that cosmopolitanism does and should stand for. It is a nail that has

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<sup>29</sup> The actual line is “I do not believe that things will turn out well, but the idea that they might is of decisive importance” (2011, 45).

been lingering, waiting for its moment of ignominious glory. We—as cosmopolitan theorists—may have forgotten it was there waiting, but it seems that those holding the hammer never did.

The theoretical resolution of the contradictions of cosmopolitanism are incomplete so long as the practitioners and representatives of cosmopolitanism, both as an academic theoretical tradition primarily in international relations, the agents of transnational IGOS, NGOS, and social movements who agonize within the current human rights regime fail to self-reflect on their social positions, practices, and mentalities in regard to capitalism. The power of the inclusion of the capitalistic mentality into all forms of cosmopolitan thought is self-destructive. Through critical, dialectical self-reflection cosmopolitans must take the first step to think, act, and be differently. A productive engagement with contemporary Marxism, highlighting the radical potential of the important practical and normative similarities is the crucial first step.

The path forward is certainly not an easy one, nor is it one that is likely to succeed in the current moment, but it is the only viable path forward—a path that engages with many avenues and detours, all aimed towards postcapitalism. The Conclusion of this project explores precisely the above-mentioned conditions in the context of the preceding reconstruction of a neo-cosmopolitan Marxism.

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