The Creative Insurgence of Subjugated Practices:
Non-Capitalist Practices and the Interstices of Capitalist Modernity

"You are in Zapatista Territory. Here it's the People that give the Orders and the Government that obeys"

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(B.A., McGill University 2003)

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Photo: Gil Madrid

The People's Park – Berkeley California, 1969.

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to identify and problematise the Eurocentric proclivities that have characterised various approaches to anti-capitalist thought since the mid-nineteenth century. First, I consider the liberal democratic approaches of Eduard Bernstein and of Jürgen Habermas. Next, I consider the grand narrative approaches of Karl Marx and of Hardt and Negri as an alternative. I highlight the Eurocentric and imperialist tendencies of these approaches, while drawing out a series of considerations that must inform anti-capitalist theory if it is to remain committed to plurality and to anti-imperialist struggles. Finally, I explore the possibility of grounding anti-capitalist politics in the affirmation of the everyday, non-capitalist alternatives that already are being practised by subjects within the interstices of capitalism. I argue that by working to strengthen and proliferate these interstitial alternatives, anti-capitalist politics would not only prove far more accommodating to plurality than the previous approaches considered, but it would also hold far more transformative potential.

Keywords: Anti-capitalism, Anti-capitalist theory, Imperialism, Anti-imperialism, Marx, Foucault, Habermas, Hardt and Negri, Empire, Anarchism, Anarchist Theory, Anarcho-indigenism.
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INTRODUCTION

Capitalism and Imperialism Reconsidered

For a number of reasons, capitalism is not much on political theory’s agenda today [...] changes in capitalism itself are complemented by recent left intellectual tendencies that deflect from capitalism as a crucible of unfreedom and inequalitarianism. When the seeming perdurability of capitalism, the absence of compelling alternatives, its devotion to consumer pleasures, and its ostensibly improved conscience are combined with increased theoretical attention to other orders of injustice—those targeted by multiculturalist politics—capitalism slips into the background as an object of critique or political concern.1

— Wendy Brown

This essay is a reflection on various trends in what has now been over a century and a half of anti-capitalist struggles. More specifically, it is a meditation on the consistent failure of anti-capitalist theories to adequately problematise Eurocentrism and Western imperialism. Given that anti-capitalist thinkers and activists have remained at the forefront of critical thought in Western societies for many generations now, one might expect that their critical stance taken towards capitalism would have naturally carried over into a critique of imperialism. However, when any critique of imperialism has arisen in anti-capitalist theory, the depth of this critique has tended to remain limited and of secondary importance at best.

This is not to deny that anti-capitalists have theorised imperialism. Indeed, a great many have. Lenin famously argued that imperialism was the highest stage of capitalism, just as Hardt and Negri now believe that “Empire” is an even higher stage of capitalism. But to claim that imperialism is a “stage” of capitalism as such implies that once we have eradicated capitalism then imperialism will no longer be a serious concern. Capitalism is thus identified as the root problem and not imperialism. This essay refutes the idea that imperialism is merely a stage of capitalism. In fact, turning Lenin on his head, it might be argued that capitalism ought to be conceived of as a form of
imperialism, and not the reverse. By surveying various approaches that I take to exemplify some of the main currents of anti-capitalist thought over the past century and a half, I illustrate a number of ways in which anti-capitalist theorists have reproduced Eurocentric patterns of thought within their own thinking. By so doing, I demonstrate that the failure of anti-capitalist theory to adequately address its own Eurocentrism has rendered it prone to perpetuating imperial relations in new forms.

There are many important theorists within the anti-capitalist tradition and it is beyond the scope of this paper to comment on each of them. Instead the methodology that I employ is to offer a close reading of several important thinkers in this tradition who I take to exemplify key patterns that are demonstrably problematic. First I consider those approaches that, working broadly within a Kantian framework, ground their critique of capitalism on universal moral theories and advocate reformist political programs within liberal democratic institutions. As an exemplar of this approach, I first consider the writings of Eduard Bernstein, who was the first notable anti-capitalist theorist to break with Hegelian-Marxism by championing "evolutionary socialism" over revolutionary socialism, and by calling on his contemporaries to "return to Kant." I then consider the work of Jürgen Habermas, who I take to be the most influential contemporary thinker expounding this Kantian, liberal-democratic tradition today. I argue that one problem with the approaches of both Bernstein and Habermas is that they fail to problematise the manner in which liberal democratic institutions (whether they be representative bodies or the public sphere) exclude or marginalise certain voices while privileging others. They thereby risk perpetuating political inequalities by centering politics on these specific sites of struggle. Further, I demonstrate that because these thinkers believe that liberal
democratic institutions embody the universal condition of humanity, they assume these institutions to be equally applicable to all human societies and preferable to any other political order found elsewhere in the world. On these grounds, they proceed to defend the dissemination of liberal democratic institutions throughout the world by way of Western conquest, invasion, colonisation, and coercion.

In Chapter Two, I move on to examine anti-capitalist politics as it has developed in its more Hegelian-inspired variety, tracing this lineage through the work of Karl Marx and in its most contemporary expression found in the work of Hardt and Negri. These Hegelian-inspired approaches have largely avoided the problems associated with the Kantian theorists mentioned above. For instance, Marx evaded the Kantian temptation to ground politics in universal principles of justice or morality. Instead, however, Marx’s dialectical method fell back on universal categories of world-historical development, which, it is claimed, all societies inevitably progress through on their path towards socialism – humanity’s highest historical formation. Not only do these categories of development permit dialecticians to claim that certain social forms – namely those of Western civilization – are “higher” or more historically advanced than others, but they also lend a certain justification to the imperial expansion of capitalism itself since it is claimed that only by passing through the capitalist stage of history can a socialist society ever be achieved. While Hardt and Negri are aware of the problems with the Hegelian framework, their “materialist teleology” approach carries on in much the same vein as Marx, and consequently leads them into many of the very same problems.

Further, in contrast to the reformist approach of Bernstein and Habermas, the Hegelian-Marxist approach proves much more attentive to the limitations of working for
radical social change within liberal democratic institutions. However, in the place of the reformist strategy, a revolutionary brand of politics is advocated that seeks to resolve all of humanity’s great antagonisms in a single transformative moment. Central to this approach is a desire to usher in a grand finale to history at which point all of humanity’s divisions and distinctions will be transcended at long last. Consequently, Hegelian-Marxist accounts rely on the privileged status of one subject position which is thought to embody the properly revolutionary mode of subjectivity that will eventually subsume all others and unite humanity in a post-capitalist future. Rather than embracing a multiplicity of forms of anti-capitalist struggle and a plurality of anti-capitalist perspectives then, the dialectical approach denies plurality by seeking to overcome these divisions by bringing about the higher unity of a single revolutionary subject – whether that be the proletariat, the “multitude,” or some other universal subject.

This paper should not be read as a complete rejection of the entire traditions of social-democratic reformism and Marxism on the basis of the above mentioned critiques. Certainly, these traditions have much of great value to offer anti-capitalist politics today. The primary objective here is to draw some specific lessons from past approaches that seem problematic, and to then begin to think of ways in which anti-capitalists might continue to engage in critical resistance as informed by these lessons. If it is possible to reproduce imperialism in a post-capitalist future, as I intend to demonstrate by reflecting on these aforementioned approaches, then the crucial challenge for contemporary anti-capitalist theory must be to critique and combat capitalism in a manner that is more attune to the Eurocentric tendencies that have characterised its own critical tradition, and also more attune to the past 500 years of resistance to imperialism. We must begin to ask
how anti-capitalist politics can be framed in such a way that maintains a front and central commitment to anti-imperial struggles. In response to this question, I tease out five lessons that can be learned through careful reflection on these previous Eurocentric tendencies.

First, I argue that the creation of inclusions and exclusions are a part and parcel of all political formations. Rather than attempting to devise political institutions that are thought to be universally inclusive, it makes far more sense to retain an actively critical orientation towards all those modes of inclusion and exclusion that do exist within the form of struggle that one adopts. I suggest that decentralised forms of political contestation that embrace a wide plurality of tactics and sites of struggle permit a greater number of voices to be heard than those which attempt to locate all political action in a singular and overarching set of political institutions.

Second, anti-capitalist politics must refrain from grounding critique in claims to universal principles of justice or morality. To do so is to risk imposing solutions on others and to thereby remain prone to imperialist proclivities. Anti-capitalist theory must consider ways in which capitalism can continue to be critiqued without prescribing solutions. We must pose questions and “problematisations” without dictating the answers prior to engagement in the struggle itself.

Third, anti-capitalist politics must renounce the idea that the historical development of all of the world’s peoples proceeds along a single or predictable trajectory. An anti-capitalist politics that is committed to anti-imperialism must permit each human community to follow its own historical pathway and to thereby develop
uniquely rather than simply assuming that all peoples must develop in the same historical manner as European civilization.

Fourth, anti-capitalist politics must dispose of the belief that there can ever be an end to the history of human antagonism, or an end to the political. The objective of anti-capitalist politics should not be to unite everyone under the rubric of a single category of a revolutionary subject position, thereby eradicating all differences. By shedding anti-capitalist politics of this objective, the emergence of a new approach to politics which accommodates and embraces radical plurality within the anti-capitalist movement is made possible.

In the pivotal Chapter Three of this essay I introduce a fifth and final lesson to be learned by anti-capitalists, which then allows me to develop a new approach that takes the struggle against imperialism seriously and which is rooted much more firmly in the Nietzschean tradition of political philosophy rather than that of Kant or Hegel. Most of modern Western political theory has tended to conceptualise power in such a way that situates it in a centralised location from where it is able to dominate subjects from on high through the direct imposition of physical force and coercion, or the threat thereof. On this model, subjects retain very little freedom with which they might contest the structures of power to which they are subjugated. I suggest that this “domination/subjugation” model of power has provided the theoretical basis for the imperialist inclinations of anti-capitalist thought in both its Kantian and Hegelian varieties. I then introduce an alternative conception of power inspired by Michel Foucault’s model of the “practical system,” which conceives of power not as something that is executed monolithically, but as something that can be executed only in interactive
relations between agonistic partners situated in a specific locality. In power relations, hegemons and subalterns stand in a "gaming" relation toward one another. Hegemons attempt to structure the limits of the subaltern in such a way that constitutes the subaltern as a certain type of subject, while the subaltern attempts to use his/her limited freedom to transform the relation altogether. Power is not imposed directly upon the subject on this account, but rather it is the negotiated outcome of this agonistic relation between hegemon and subaltern, and thus operates through the subaltern's very own freedom.

In Chapter Four I argue that this reconceptualisation of power allows us to think of resistance in a whole new way that embraces far greater plurality within the struggle and avoids the aforementioned tendencies found within previous anti-capitalist theories. First, I argue that if capitalist relations succeed to govern individuals by "subjectifying" them in certain ways – or, in other words, by inducing them to see their limits of conduct in a given manner – then we do not need a high-powered normative theory in order to critique capitalist relations because the critique of capitalism can take the form of a critique of ourselves and of the modes of subjectivity that we adopt in our everyday practices as certain types of capitalist subjects. We can expose the taken for granted limits of our capitalist modes of thinking and come to see that they could be constituted otherwise. By "problematising" capitalism in this way, a plurality of different critiques of capitalism is permitted to emerge. We can each throw our own patterns of thought and action into question and consider how it is that capitalism is limiting us. The answer will be different for each subject, or each collectivity, in each locality.

The plurality of critiques of capitalism leads, in turn, to a plurality of diverse forms of resistance. Once the limits of our thought and action have been revealed, the
crucial ethico-political task of resistance is to experiment with ways of transgressing these limits – to refuse the modes of subjectification through which we are governed within capitalist relations. Refusing our capitalist subjectivities as such is, at one and the same time, to constitute ourselves anew and to experiment with new relational forms. In fact, I demonstrate that non-capitalist alternatives can already be found in practice within capitalist society and, as Foucault’s reconceptualisation of power would suggest, that capitalism actually depends on the very existence of these alternatives. Such practices can be said to exist within the “interstices” of capitalism given that they embody a genuinely non-capitalist spirit while still remaining embedded within the broader context of capitalist society – in other words, these practices lie neither entirely “within” capitalism nor entirely “outside” of capitalism.

I argue that the experimentations with new relational forms can begin from these existent interstitial practices. Unlike contending approaches to anti-capitalist politics then, the approach developed here seeks to take the actually existing practices and alternatives of the world’s diverse peoples seriously and as the starting point for resistance. Indeed, there are many ways that we can act non-capitalistically today, and there are also many people who are already doing so. Still, simply remaining within the interstices of capitalist relations without transforming these relations does not suffice. I argue that it is only by working to broaden, strengthen, and proliferate these alternatives that we can potentially transform capitalist relations and forge the basis of a new, non-capitalist, and radically pluralistic society.

Proliferating the diverse, non-capitalist alternatives that already exist in practice within the interstices of capitalism offers a genuinely non-imperial approach to anti-
capitalist resistance. The political theories of Bernstein, Habermas, Marx, and Hardt and Negri each remain imperial in so far as they seek to replace the existing forms of relations to which people are subjected with certain other ontological conditions and relational forms that are fixed, stabilised, sedentary, and predetermined by their own theories. They thus seek to replace the imperial relations of the present with their own preferred form of relations that, thus, prove equally imperial. In other words, each of these theorists privilege certain predetermined modes of being over emergent modes of becoming. To ground anti-capitalist politics in the creative practices and experiments of capitalism’s interstices is not to champion a predetermined mode of existence over all others. Rather it is to champion those emergent forms of existence that come into being only through the active participation of those who are actually subject to a particular set of ontological relations as they continually engage in their everyday, fluid, open and democratic relations with others under conditions of shared authority. It thereby constitutes a non-imperial approach to political resistance.

In recent decades – as noted by Wendy Brown in the opening quotation above – new developments in both the theory and practice of critical politics have brought ever more numerous forms of oppression to our attention and have widened the scope of resistance movements. As other important struggles have received increased prominence – such as those often labelled “identity politics” – and as interest in poststructural critique has taken root in the discipline of political theory, anti-capitalist politics has tended to move away from the center stage of critical resistance movements. Nevertheless, capitalism continues to ravage the world and has proven to be at least as oppressive now as it has ever previously been. But, the distinctions between “material” and “post-
material” politics, or between “recognition” and “redistribution,” do not have to be cast in terms that are in as clear-cut opposition to one another as often portrayed. Rather than abandoning anti-capitalist politics in favour of these other forms of political struggle, the task for anti-capitalists is to consider the problems that have hindered their struggle in the past, and to re-evaluate their approach as informed by both the recent insights and developments in political theory and the experience of political struggles of the past thirty-five years. Situated in this light, the task at hand should be understood as one that is much less ambitious than it is exploratory. Hopefully this essay will serve as a useful first step in such a direction.
CHAPTER ONE

Lessons from Liberal Democratic Reformers: Bernstein and Habermas

I frankly admit that I have extraordinarily little feeling for, or interest in, what is usually termed 'the final goal of socialism.' This goal, whatever it may be, is nothing to me, the movement is everything.¹

– Eduard Bernstein

The Evolutionary Socialism of Eduard Bernstein

Written above are the scandalous words of Eduard Bernstein that shocked European socialists in the closing years of the 19th century. Bernstein, well-known as the respected confidant and disciple of Friederich Engels, first published this controversial statement in 1898 in the pages of Neue Zeit, a journal of the German Social-Democratic Workers’ Party edited by his close friend, Karl Kautsky. In so doing, the revisionist tradition of Marxism was born.

Attempting to clarify his position in this same short article, Bernstein can be seen moving further and further astray from the Hegelian-Marxist orthodoxy of his age. Pointing to recent trends in the concentration of German industries, he suggested that perhaps capitalism was not racing towards the general economic crisis that Marx and Engels had predicted. Indeed, capitalism had significantly changed since previous times. Bernstein argued that with the introduction of the modern credit system, the diversification of production, an enormous growth in general wealth, and a vastly expanded communications infrastructure, capitalism seemed to have successfully mitigated its own demise, and had demonstrated an unforeseen degree of flexibility and longevity by so doing.² Capable of innovating its own stabilising mechanisms, capitalism had proven to be far more of an astute and dynamic system than was previously believed. The true spirit of scientific socialism, as passed down from Marx and Engels, requires
one to consider the facts as they appear in the real world rather than dogmatically insisting that capitalism will follow a predetermined trajectory, he reasoned. Theories of capitalist development must thus take these changes in capitalism and its consequent stabilisation seriously rather than merely presuming that total economic collapse is immanent and eternally awaiting the coming revolution on the basis of this presumption.

This position, which appeared to deny the contention that there actually was any contradiction inherent to the capitalist mode of production in the first place, would have been enough to strike at the heart of Marxian dialectics on its own right. Yet Bernstein’s revision did not stop here. Even if the sudden implosion of capitalism was possible, social democrats still should not aspire to see such a collapse, he maintained. Bernstein argued that capitalism had already reached a stage at which it had become so diverse and so diffuse that any sudden collapse could lead to nothing but a “colossal defeat” for social democracy. At the time of the French Revolution it may have been possible to replace feudalism with capitalist property rights in one fell swoop without aggravating more than that very tiny segment of the population which benefited from the feudal regime. But capitalism, by the end of the 19th century, had complexified to such an extent that “radical infringements of bourgeois property rights would affect an indefinitely wider range of interested parties,” and would thus entail much wider resistance. Moreover, Bernstein echoed remarks that he had put forward in an earlier article, which noted that capitalist industries had expanded and diversified to the point at which it was virtually inconceivable for socialists to think that they could seize power and expect the socialist state to be immediately capable of managing every factory and enterprise throughout Prussia. “Such an administrative machine cannot be created overnight, especially in
troubled times,” he reasoned. Given these conditions, the possibility of solidifying a socialist revolution was rendered unlikely in Bernstein’s mind, even in the event of capitalism’s cataclysmic collapse. Such explains Bernstein’s above stated interest in the “movement” of socialism, over and above his interest in its “final goal.”

But, with what possibilities would such a “movement” be left, if not the goal of overthrowing capitalism and the achievement of a socialist society? Bernstein’s answer was the gradual and persistent movement and advancement of socialist forms of organisation within capitalist society. Every step forward in the expansion of democratic institutions signified an advance in the “piecemeal realisation of socialism,” he argued. Bernstein imagined that if democratic institutions were steadily expanded into all realms of social and economic life, then the proletarian majority would gradually uplift itself as a consequence and capitalism would naturally evolve into socialism without having to engage in the messy and chaotic undertaking that a revolution entailed. Hence, “What Social Democracy should be doing, and doing for a long time to come,” he concluded, “is to organise the working class politically, train it for democracy, and fight for any and all reforms in the state which are designed to raise the working class and make the state more democratic.” He believed that formal democratic institutions could act as a powerful arbiter between the interests of capital and labour, and that by so doing they held the potential to eventually overcome the grave injustices of the capitalist order.

Unsurprisingly, Bernstein’s newly formulated position provoked outrage within European socialist circles, eliciting vigorous attacks of his “revisionist” position. Karl Kautsky and Rosa Luxembourg were perhaps the best known of the many socialists who stepped forward to distance themselves from Bernstein’s position with lengthy rejoinders
that circulated throughout the socialist journals of Germany. But, perhaps no critic was as harsh as Alexander Parvus, who claimed that Bernstein suffered from “mental confusion,” and who responded with seventeen articles repudiating Bernstein’s position over the course of two months. Still, Bernstein stubbornly refused to retract his statements, and continued to publicly defend them before eventually publishing a comprehensive treatment of his ideas the following year in what is now regarded as his trademark contribution to Marxist thought—*Evolutionary Socialism*.

In case anyone had failed to pick up on the Kantian undertones of his earlier work, Bernstein placed his cards on the table in *Evolutionary Socialism* by directly calling upon social democrats to turn “Back to Kant.” Any dialectical inclinations that may have been remained in Bernstein’s thought up until this point were seemingly thrust aside. But, these Kantian sympathies must not have come as a huge surprise to those socialists who had been carefully reading Bernstein’s writings over the previous two years. In one article, Bernstein had critiqued the “anti-ethical tendency” of Marxism, and called for the further entrenchment of standards of morality and justice within socialist thought. For sometime now he had also explicitly denied that any contradiction inherent to capitalism would necessarily lead to its demise (as noted above) and had argued that Social Democracy was not about “the realisation of a social plan but the implementation of a social principle.” He had contended that “[w]e can in fact [...] formulate the goal of the socialist movement only as a principle,” and that consequently, socialists can only work for gradual progress towards this principle. Yet, in *Evolutionary Socialism* Bernstein takes this line of argument much further than he had ever previously dared by revealing that the social principles of which he spoke were, in fact, none other than the
principles of liberalism. No longer were the principles of liberalism to be understood as
ideologically particular to the class interests of the bourgeoisie. In *Evolutionary
Socialism*, Bernstein elevates these principles to the status of universal imperatives,
claiming that they embody the interests of socialists at least as well as – if not better than
– those of the bourgeois elite itself. Bernstein declares:

Finally, it is to be recommended that some moderation should be kept in the declaration of war
against ‘liberalism.’ It is true that the great liberal movement of modern times arose for the
advantage of the capitalist bourgeoisie first of all, and the parties which assumed the names of
liberals were, or became in due course, simple guardians of capitalism [...] But with respect to
liberalism as a great historical movement, socialism is its legitimate heir, not only in chronological
sequence, but also in its spiritual qualities, as is shown moreover in every question of principle in
which social democracy has had to take up an attitude.

[...] The aim of all socialist measures, even of those which appear outwardly as coercive
measures, is the development and the securing of a free personality. Their more exact examination
always shows that the coercion included will raise the sum total of liberty in society, and will give
more freedom over a more extended area than it takes away. The legal day of a maximum number
of hours’ work, for example, is actually a fixing of a minimum of freedom, a prohibition to sell
freedom longer than for a certain number of hours daily, and, in principle, therefore, stands on the
same ground as the prohibition agreed to by all liberals against selling oneself into personal
slavery.\(^{11}\)

Thus, with *Evolutionary Socialism*, Bernstein’s conversion is complete. Renouncing the
standard dialectical critique of capitalism, which emphasises the internal contradictions
of the system leading to its revolutionary overhaul and transformation, Bernstein opted
instead to critique capitalism for its failure to abide by a set of principles holding
universal validity. Capitalism will not collapse he insisted, but nor does it need to. Once
the principles of liberalism – which gave rise to capitalism in the first place – have spread
to all realms of human life and to every corner of the world, *then* socialism will be
achieved; for what else could socialism be if not the ultimate triumph of liberalism and
democracy?\(^{12}\) “When one examines more closely the organisations that socialism wants
and how it wants them,” Bernstein remarks, “he will find that what distinguishes them
above all from the feudalistic organisations [...] is just their liberalism, their democratic
constitution, their accessibility.”¹³ Social democrats must, therefore, make use of the
democratic (i.e. ‘socialist’) institutions already laying at their disposal, such as the
universal franchise and parliamentary governments, while pushing for the expansion of
these institutional forms throughout the globe: “The liberal organisations of modern
society are distinguished from [feudal organisations] exactly because they are flexible,
and capable of change and development. They do not need to be destroyed, but only to be
further developed.”¹⁴

The Deliberative Democracy of Jürgen Habermas
The intellectual trajectory of Jürgen Habermas mirrors that of Bernstein quite closely in a
number of respects. Like Bernstein, Habermas received much of his early intellectual
formation from the leading Marxist philosophers of his age – in this case, the critical
theorists of Frankfurt’s Institute for Social Research. Further, although Habermas has
remained at least somewhat critical of capitalism’s excesses throughout his career, he has
gradually migrated away from his Hegelian-Marxist roots, seeking instead to ground his
critique of late-capitalism in universally valid principles of social conduct. Like Kant
then, Habermas believes that it is possible to discover moral principles that are both
universally valid and consistent with the demands of reason. Unlike Kant, however, he
denies that a solitary individual can determine the validity or invalidity of a norm on
one’s own in a solitary mental exercise. “It is not sufficient […] for one person to test
whether he can will the adoption of a contested norm or whether every other person in an
identical position could will the adoption of such a norm”, he contends.¹⁵ If a norm is
valid then it must be justifiable on rational grounds, in which case other rational
individuals should be able to mutually recognise the validity of this norm. The validity or
invalidity of any normative claim can, therefore, only be tested and confirmed
intersubjectively through an open and rational deliberation with others. In contrast to Kant then, Habermas’s objective is not to prescribe specific principles of morality, but rather to identify specific procedures of deliberation which would permit citizens to reach a rational agreement on these principles themselves. Since the early 1960s, Habermas has produced an impressive quantity of theoretical writings that are both rigorous and demanding. The breadth of literature discussing and developing his theories is perhaps even more remarkable. Such being the case, I shall present here only a very cursory overview of those aspects of his writing that might help to inform anti-capitalist movements today.

Habermas’ effort to carry on the Frankfurt School’s critique of late-capitalist society is most apparent in his early writing. His first major work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, argues that the emergence of late capitalist societies has occurred in parallel with a corresponding decline in rational, public debate between citizens. In contrast with late-capitalism, early bourgeois society is characterised as an era marked by the proliferation of vigorous debate and discussion surrounding wide-ranging questions of politics and morality that were relevant to the time. Such discussions took place in a variety of public settings ranging from salons and coffee houses to the newspapers and journals of the day, which, altogether, constituted what Habermas labels “the public sphere.”16 These discussions and deliberations played a vital role in the fomentation of rational public opinion that served to keep the authority of the absolutist state in check.17 As the logic of capitalism gradually disseminated throughout society however, the critical debates occurring in the public sphere became increasingly peripheral to political decision making. One-dimensional forms of consumer culture
gradually displaced critical citizenship, while public opinion morphed into what Habermas calls “manufactured publicity.” Large concentrations of wealth and influence have restricted access to public discussion to a privileged few and have resulted in the dissemination of monological forms of public information such as advertising and mass media. Meanwhile, concern for the public good has largely been replaced with individuals’ private concerns for expediency and utility. Consequently, the public sphere has effectively been transformed and marginalised in late-capitalist society, while the little of it that still remains is now largely uncritical, restricted in scope, and broadly ineffectual.\textsuperscript{18}

Habermas’s subsequent works provide greater theoretical detail as to why this demise of the public sphere has occurred. In his second volume of \textit{The Theory of Communicative Action}, Habermas introduces a key distinction between two social spheres existing in late-capitalist societies, which he labels \textit{system} and \textit{lifeworld} respectively. The “lifeworld” refers to a prerreflective context of “taken-for-granted background assumptions and naively mastered skills” that inform and structure social interaction by allowing actors to make sense of one another’s actions.\textsuperscript{19} Because actors in the lifeworld broadly share these normative horizons as such, they also tend to comprehend and agree with the reasons for each other’s conduct. In most instances then, the established norms of action-coordination are adhered to without issue or debate because most social actors generally accept these background norms. However, in the case that an actor does not agree with the norms of conduct governing an interaction, he or she can freely call these norms into question and demand their rational justification. When this occurs, a discursive process of deliberation must be resorted to in order to
restore mutual agreement regarding the validity or invalidity of the norm in question. Participants in this deliberation must evaluate the norm and either uphold it on rational grounds, or reject the norm by exposing its contingency and irrationality. I will discuss this process of deliberation in greater detail below, but for now it suffices to remark that when a consensus on social norms is achieved and succeeds to co-ordinate social relations, it can be said that the resulting interaction has been mediated by “Communicative Action.”

Communicative Action is always based on mutual understanding and consent – either tacit or explicit – regarding the purpose and reasons behind people’s actions as well as the norms that inform these actions. However, this is not the only possible mechanism of action-coordination available to a society. Social interaction can also be coordinated by exerting influence that steers or coerces individuals towards certain patterns of behaviour without seeking a mutual agreement as to the underlying reasons for doing so. Habermas refers to this method of action-coordination as “Strategic Action.”

Habermas claims that as modernity advances, the increasing complexification and rationalization of lifeworld social systems poses practical difficulties for communicative action to operate as the central organising logic of the entire society. One dimension of this problem is that, as an increasing number of social norms suddenly become subject to critical reflection, the lifeworld risks becoming bogged down with an enormous quantity of demands for justification and deliberation. “[E]ver greater demands are made upon this basic medium of everyday language [and] it gets overloaded,” Habermas observes. Consequently, it becomes “impossible at any given time to solve argumentatively all those questions that can be asked about contingent aspects of reality,” as Eriksen and
Weigard remark.\textsuperscript{23} Moreover, even when deliberation does occur, the growing diversity of cultural values in modern societies makes the process of consensus building far more cumbersome and challenging than it might otherwise be.

In response to this dilemma, certain domains of the social world, which Habermas refers to collectively as “the system,” become “uncoupled” from the lifeworld so as to ensure that they continue to operate effectively without becoming bogged-down. Important decisions as to how society operates are increasingly deferred to the ‘invisible hand of the marketplace,’ or to small groups of ‘experts’ and managers, where a universal consensus on these decisions is sidestepped. The “steering media” of money and power are permitted to coordinate our actions without any further justification as to their normative validity.\textsuperscript{24} According to the logic of the capitalist economy for instance, any individual could, hypothetically, cut down an entire old-growth forest and transform it into toilet paper without seeking a rational consensus approving this action as long as they have paid for the right to do so, and so long as such an act does not violate the law. When the steering media of money and power validate actions as such, no further normative justification need be provided. Communicative rationality, which seeks to provide justification for the norms of action and behaviour that guide social interaction, is thus rendered obsolete by the system and is replaced with instrumental forms of rationality that take such justifications for granted.\textsuperscript{25} Thus, whereas the normative basis for action in the lifeworld is constantly open to modification as it is debated and called into question, the system consists of those fixed and stable structures in which the goals and purposes of action are predetermined and “congeal into second nature.”\textsuperscript{26}
The demise of the public sphere in late-capitalist society is thus tied to what Habermas calls the “colonisation of the lifeworld”, or in other words, the incursion of instrumental rationality into ever larger spheres of life that might otherwise be governed by communicative rationality. For instance, in *Toward a Rational Society*, Habermas argues that the development and use of new technologies is primarily guided by the pursuit of profit rather than the fulfilment of human interests in late-capitalist society.\(^{27}\)

The example of the “Terminator Gene” technology of the Monsanto Company provides an excellent case in point. This technology, which eliminates the reproductive capacity of genetically modified seeds, serves no apparent interest to humanity as a whole and actually works contrary to the interests of our species given that it prohibits the seeds that are produced one year from being used the following year. Nevertheless, measured by the instrumental reason of capitalism, the use and development of this technology can actually be deemed logical since it forces farmers to purchase new batches of seed from the Monsanto Company year after year. This contemporary example helps to demonstrate how decisions regarding the use and development of technologies subordinate the needs and interests of human societies to those of a capitalist and administrative minority. However, if the instrumental logic of the system were balanced by the communicative rationality of the lifeworld, then the normative justifications of such decisions could hypothetically be called into question, and reasonable justification or accountability could be demanded.

Numerous other disruptions in social life also arise from this colonization of the lifeworld. The erosion of shared meanings and shared understandings of social life leads to certain modern pathologies that Habermas identifies, including psychological
disorders, and feelings of alienation, nihilism, and anomie.\textsuperscript{28} Nevertheless, despite recognising the inherent problems associated with the emergence of instrumental reason as a coordinating principle of social life, Habermas still does not call for the eradication of the system altogether. This is because he believes that the differentiation of modern society that led to the uncoupling of system from lifeworld in the first place has also permitted important advances to take place, such as increased individual autonomy, the proliferation of technological development, and an immense growth in material wealth.\textsuperscript{29} We need not overlook the value of such developments and hastily renounce them by abandoning the project of modernity altogether, Habermas argues. Secular rationality may have permitted the differentiation of modern societies with all of its shortcomings, however, the complete benefits of this project have not yet been achieved because this rationality has yet to fully penetrated certain key areas of social life. Habermas thus hopes to complete the “unfinished project” of modernity by subjecting its advances to the dictates of rational decision-making and to justifiable normative principles.\textsuperscript{30} This can only be ensured by re-establishing a harmonious balance between system and lifeworld in late-capitalist societies so as to guard against systemic distortions of communicative reason.

Habermas thus proceeds to clarify the conditions under which valid principles capable of steering the development of late-capitalist modernity in a more rational and democratic direction can be identified. This is the programme that he refers to as “discourse ethics.” Discourse ethics builds on the observations that Habermas makes in \textit{The Theory of Communicative Action}, which argues that to make a linguistic act of communication is necessarily to contend that one’s statement is valid on a number of
grounds. For instance, in making any utterance a speaker implicitly contends that this statement is propositionally true or accurate, that it is right or normatively justified, and that he or she truthfully believes the statement being made. Habermas maintains that to posit a claim while denying its validity on any of these three grounds is to contradict oneself outright because these claims are built into the inherent *telos* of language, which is to reach mutual understanding.\textsuperscript{31} Behind every speech act thus lies the implicit claim that, if challenged to do so, the speaker could successfully demonstrate the validity of his or her statement on any of these accounts by presenting good reasons and sound arguments to his or her interlocutors.\textsuperscript{32}

Much the same applies to statements of moral principles. By positing any normative statement, a speaker necessarily implies that this statement could be rationally defended with valid arguments. In the case that an individual prompts a speaker to do so, the relevant parties must then engage as interlocutors by providing argumentative reasons either in defence or in critique of the norm in question. Habermas contends that it is the ensuing deliberative exchange that determines whether the validity of the moral principle stands or falls. Thus, he argues, the categorical imperative needs to be reformulated. Rather than being that which each can will without contradiction to be a general law, the categorical imperative should be "what all can will in agreement to be a universal norm."\textsuperscript{33} The purpose of discourse ethics is to outline the procedural rules and idealised conditions under which such moral discourse could take place fairly and openly so as to ensure that only the "unforced force of the better argument prevails." Discourse ethics is thus a universal *procedural* theory of morality, which holds that a norm can be deemed
valid only when it has been consensually agreed upon in a process of rational deliberation that adheres to the rules and procedures set out by the theory itself.\textsuperscript{34}

In order to determine what these procedures should be, Habermas draws on the work of Karl-Otto Apel by employing “transcendental-pragmatic” observations of argumentation. The strategy here is to identify the unavoidable presuppositions to which anyone engaged in argumentative discourse must necessarily subscribe, and to then derive the procedures of valid normative discourse from these pragmatic presuppositions. For instance, to engage in a deliberative exchange is to attempt to demonstrate the validity of one’s position by presenting arguments with which, one believes, others will concur. In order to engage in deliberation then, one must have already subscribed to the presupposition that a valid argument is one with which any other person could rationally agree when presented with good reasons for doing so. On these grounds, Habermas is able to defend the following “universalization principle,” which states that:

(U): Every valid norm must satisfy the condition that the consequences and side effects its general observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of the interests of each and be freely accepted by all affected (and be preferred to those of the known alternative possibilities for regulation).\textsuperscript{35}

According to Habermas, this principle cannot effectively be disputed because to argue against it requires one to implicitly evoke the principle itself. Indeed, he claims that “every argumentation, regardless of the context in which it occurs, rests on pragmatic presuppositions from whose propositional content the principle of universalism (U) can be derived.”\textsuperscript{36} In other words, any attempt to argumentatively refute Habermas’s (U) principle unavoidably relies on this very same principle itself, and thus leaves the refuter ensnared in a “performative contradiction” since the propositional content of his/her
refutation immediately contradicts the logical presuppositions upon which the refutation is premised.

In a similar manner, Habermas deduces other rules of normative validity that all argumentative discourse must logically and intuitively presuppose. For instance, he claims that, in order for a deliberative process to successfully deem a norm valid, all subjects must be permitted to participate in the process, all subjects must be allowed to question or introduce any assertion, and no form of coercion may prevent any speaker from exercising these above mentioned rights. Since these rules are thought to reflect inescapable presuppositions inherent to all argumentative discourse, it is claimed that to dispute them is, once again, to find one’s self having committed a performative contradiction. For example, it is not logically consistent to argue that one can convince another of a good argument by foisting one’s views upon them coercively. To argue that coercion is compatible with rational argumentation is to contradict the very notion of rational argumentation itself. Therefore, those engaged in rational argumentation must have already accepted the absence of coercion as a necessary precondition of legitimate deliberation at the moment that they began to engage in the deliberation process. “Participants in argumentation cannot avoid the presupposition that [...] the structure of their communication rules out all external or internal coercion other than the force of the better argument and thereby neutralizes all motives other than that of the cooperative search for truth,” Habermas argues. In this manner, Habermas justifies the procedural rules that are said to be capable of determining the validity or invalidity of moral principles, and which are already implicitly adopted and intuitively known by anyone engaging in rational deliberation in any case.
The first comprehensive effort to draw out the political and legal ramifications of Habermas’s discourse ethics can be found in *Between Facts and Norms*, published in 1992. In this volume, Habermas returns full circle, back to many of the same questions that he first considered three decades earlier in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. At this point however, informed by his theories of communicative action and discourse ethics, Habermas was now analytically equipped to offer much more of a theoretically sophisticated response to these questions.

Following the logic of the (U) principle explained above, it is clear that individual rights and liberties could only ever be deemed valid if they could be agreed upon and legitimised in a free and open discursive exchange between all affected individuals. Such being the case, one might expect Habermas to adopt a typical civic-republican political position by emphasising the demands of popular sovereignty over and above the inalienable rights of individuals. However, while these rights do depend on popular deliberation for their validity, the inverse is equally true, he argues. In order for a legal community or public sphere to deliberate at all, an institutional context that upholds and ensures the liberties of its individual members must also exist. “A constitution-making practice requires more than just a discourse principle by which citizens can judge whether the law they enact is legitimate,” Habermas remarks; “Rather, the very forms of communication that are supposed to make it possible to form a rational political will through discourse need to be legally institutionalised themselves.” The form that this institutionalization must take is one that transforms persons into autonomous rights bearing individuals. “Without the classical rights of liberty that secure the private autonomy of legal persons, there is also no *medium* for legally institutionalizing those
conditions under which citizens can first make use of their civic autonomy," he maintains.41

Habermas thus believes that, armed with the insights of communicative action, he is able to resolve the long-standing dispute between civic republicans and liberals by demonstrating that popular sovereignty and individual freedoms are "equiprimordial and reciprocal." Both are required in all instances of legitimate law making, and neither can be deemed conceptually prior, or subservient, to the other. The fundamental question that must be asked by persons establishing a legal community in their constitutive moment thus becomes: "What rights must citizens mutually grant one another if they decide to constitute themselves as a voluntary association of legal consociates and legitimately to regulate their living together by means of positive laws?"42

This equiprimordial status of private and public rights entails that each must be equally respected and upheld by lawmakers. A legitimate law must therefore be enforced by a government that obeys the legal order and the rights of the individuals on the one hand, while also having been enacted with the input and consideration from citizens in the public sphere on the other.43 These two aspects of a legitimate law ensure its "facticity" and "normativity" respectively, as suggested by the title of his monograph *Between Facts and Norms*. In this somewhat roundabout manner then, Habermas ultimately defends a political model that combines the decision-making authority of a constitutional government with the normative accountability of a vibrant and institutionalised public sphere.

Given this detailed effort to legitimate the legislative procedures of liberal democratic states, it may seem as though Habermas’s earlier concerns with capitalism
have taken a backseat near the end of his career. Nevertheless, his vision does offer, on the one hand, the democratic input of a robust civil society which could potentially counterbalance capitalism's steering media of money and power, and on the other hand, social rights that could secure the material basis required for all to participate equally in this civil society. Such being the case, one might argue that Habermas's deliberative model provides precisely the social democratic alternative to neoliberal capitalism that is long overdue.

**First Lesson of Resistance: Power is Everywhere**

Approaches to political transformation that grant primacy to liberal democratic institutions as the principal agent of change have long been disputed by theorists of various persuasions. Such approaches contend that that participation in liberal democratic institutions such as the state or the public sphere could permit the ideas of anti-capitalists to gain prominence and eventually become enacted. It is believed that if only a sufficient number of individuals seeking to transform capitalism were elected into office (à la Bernstein), or if an adequate number of people in the public sphere were to recognise capitalism's irrationality and normative invalidity (à la Habermas), then these institutions could be mobilised to correct capitalism's inadequacies. Liberal democratic institutions are thus portrayed as being relatively neutral and inclusive political fields that could permit any idea to gain currency so long as it proves rational and convincing. Consequently, the extent to which certain voices and ideas are structured, assimilated, or excluded by these liberal institutions tends to be downplayed or ignored.

It is precisely these claims regarding the supposed autonomy and neutrality of liberal democratic institutions (whether this be the state or the public sphere) that have been disputed by Marxists dating back to *The Communist Manifesto* 's famous
pronouncement that “the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” So long as the mode of material production remains characterized by the domination of one class over another, the modern state will merely serve to buttress and reinforce this dominance, Marx and Engels argued. Lenin elaborated on this thesis decades later in The State and Revolution by explaining how the bourgeoisie is able to use its financial capital in order to ensure its de facto control of the state apparatus under modern capitalism. Not only can financial capital be used to directly bribe state officials in order to suit the needs of the capitalist class, but the state also remains utterly dependent on tax-revenues from industry in order to function in the first place. This fact ensures that the state maintains an inherent institutional interest in preserving harmonious relations with the capitalist class and in ensuring that the fortunes of this class continue to grow. On Lenin’s account then, it is the extraordinary financial resources of the bourgeoisie that enable it to exert enormous pressure on a democratic regime and that grant it far greater political influence than any majority could ever wield. Consequently, Lenin concludes, “a democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this […] it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that no change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it.”

The question of the state in Marxist theory resurfaced in the late 1960s with the onset of a debate between Nicos Poulantzas and Ralph Miliband that lasted well into the 1970s. Miliband sparked this exchange in 1969 with the publication of The State in Capitalist Society, which attempted to explain the state’s subservience to capital by empirically demonstrating that the highest offices of administration in the liberal
democratic state (including not just the government itself, but the civil service, the coercive apparatus, the juridical apparatus, etc.) tend to be overwhelmingly occupied by either members of the ruling class, or individuals with close personal ties to this class. This led Miliband to believe that, in addition to the economic influence discussed above, the liberal democratic state upholds bourgeois interests because certain institutional norms are enforced to ensure that the bourgeoisie's own people are actually physically stationed in influential offices within the state structure. The state thus becomes an instrument controlled directly by the capitalist class.\(^{45}\) Poulantzas immediately responded, claiming that the actual participation of members of the ruling class in government is irrelevant. He then posited his own explanation inspired by the structuralist Marxism of Louis Althusser. In order to understand why the state upholds capitalist interests, he claimed, it is necessary to consider the "objective role of the state" within the capitalist system. That role, he claims, is precisely to create cohesion between society and the capitalist mode of production by regulating and restoring equilibrium to the system's crisis tendencies. Since the state is structurally determined to perform this function, the class origins of those who occupy the seats of power is insignificant. "The direct participation of members of the ruling class in the State apparatus is not the *cause* but the *effect*" of the state's function in capitalist society, Poulantzas argued.\(^{46}\)

It is not necessary to detail either the particularities of the ensuing exchange which unfolded in the pages of *The New Left Review*, or the subsequent debate which emerged over the course of the following decade.\(^{47}\) For the purposes of the question at hand, it suffices to simply emphasise that at least three distinct limitations pertaining to state-centred projects of reform are identified in the Marxist literature. First, it is
suggested that the bourgeoisie is able to exert disproportionate influence on the state due to its financial resources; secondly, it is suggested that the bourgeoisie is able to use the state "instrumentally" by staffing it with personnel who ally themselves with capitalist interests; and thirdly, it is suggested that the "structural" function of the state demands that it perform a specific role in the interests of capitalism. Each of these insights help to discredit the claim that the liberal state is a neutral and autonomous force capable of transforming economic and social relations using democratic procedures.

Nevertheless, while these Marxist critics of reformism may have laid out a fruitful direction for a critique of liberal democratic and state-centred politics, they ultimately succeed to identify only one aspect of the problem at hand. Despite exposing the class bias inherent in the liberal democratic institutions of late-capitalism, they fail to recognise that these institutions are equally cultured spheres of politics. Just as liberal institutions function in a manner that privileges the voices of particular class interests over others, so too do they tend to privilege the voices of the society’s dominant cultural groups while silencing others. Consequently, any resistance movement that limits resistance to the confines of the liberal democratic apparatus will necessarily risk excluding vital forms of knowledge, traditions, and modes of social organisation from their movement, and will thereby lie at risk of perpetuating deeply entrenched modes of imperial domination.

To fully appreciate this point, it may help to briefly consider the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. According to Bourdieu, all social action must be understood as taking place in the context of what he calls a 'field.' This concept of the field is similar to the notion of a ‘game’ in Wittgenstein’s theory of language use – that is to say that a field is a socially inscribed and fluid set of background rules (both tacit and
explicit) and customs that guide action while endowing them with meaning in a given context. Fields can be very broad, such as the ‘intellectual field’ for instance, which would encompass all the universities, journals, institutes and other arenas in which persons compete for intellectual prestige. Other fields may be far more limited in scope – a restaurant or a pub could constitute its own field for instance. Fields also overlap, as would be the case when I accompany my professors to the pub to discuss philosophy, for instance.

Considering the setting of a restaurant as an example of a field, one can identify the various norms and standards of appropriate behaviour that function in the background of this context, subtly structuring our conduct. For instance, patrons of the restaurant might be expected to wait for the server to seat them, to chew with their mouth closed, and to leave a suitable tip. One may also be expected to have a reasonable knowledge of fine-tasting wines, to ask the server intelligent questions, and to know what cutlery ought to be used for each dish. Indeed, there are countless standards of conduct silently at work in any given field.

So complex and layered are the rules and customs at play in the context of a field that it would be virtually impossible to rationally deduce the most strategic course of action on the spur of the moment. Actors must therefore rely on more of an intuitive feeling for what attitudes and behaviours are possible and appropriate in a given situation. If we are to say that the field is the social game being played, then it is precisely this “feeling for the game” that Bourdieu hopes to capture by introducing his famous notion of habitus. One’s habitus, as described by Bourdieu, is an ensemble of:

durable, transposable dispositions [...] principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious
aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.\textsuperscript{50}

Beginning at a young age, these dispositions are developed and internalised by way of one’s social and cultural upbringing. Initially they are passed down from one’s parents, and later they are reinforced through the education system. Eventually one’s habitus comes to be performed subconsciously as though it has become “second nature”.\textsuperscript{51} It constitutes an ethos that one carries with them, embodied in their conduct, and finding expression in their aesthetic tastes and lifestyle choices.

However, in the context of a field, some behaviours and attitudes garner more social prestige than do others. Bourdieu refers to this prestige as “symbolic capital.”\textsuperscript{52} Returning to the restaurant field, we can imagine that if I were to demand that my steak dinner be sent back to the kitchen because it has not been prepared according to my liking, I might earn prestige and respect from my colleagues by having demonstrated my highly refined culinary standards. In contrast, if I were to pick my teeth, belch aloud, and lick my plate clean upon finishing my meal, then I would lose prestige due to my odious table manners. Indeed, each of the attitudes that one displays, and each of the bodily actions that one performs – from the way one walks to the way one holds one’s shoulders – could either raise or lower one’s symbolic capital in the context of a given field, and thereby contributes to establishing one’s position in a corresponding social hierarchy. Hence, as Bourdieu remarks, “the arms and legs are full of numb imperatives.”\textsuperscript{53}

Bourdieu emphasises how the transmission of a habitus from one generation to the next acts as a vital mechanism in the reproduction of symbolic capital and social privilege. This is so because the dominant cultural standards of a society at any given moment in time will be those of the dominant group, which is situated in a position that
enables it to set the terms of what counts as good or bad manners and taste, and which is thus permitted it to establish its own cultural practices as the standard by which all others are measured. Consequently, those who inherit the habitus of the dominant group – that is, those who are taught to appreciate certain forms of art, to express their beliefs in a particular way, and generally to conduct themselves in the particular manner deemed appropriate – are generally better equipped to earn symbolic capital more readily in key social fields than are others. Those who accrue symbolic capital are, in turn, rewarded with power and influence in important state and economic institutions. Within the education system for instance, children from dominant groups will be positioned to succeed simply because they have been raised with the cultural practices that constitute ‘good behaviour’, ‘proper language’, ‘acceptable’ social skills, and an appropriate style. This will earn them the titles and recognition (e.g. degrees, awards, etc.) required to one day assume a position of influence within the society’s existing power structure.¹⁵⁴

Liberal democratic institutions must be understood as fields like any other in precisely Bourdieu’s sense. This is to say that, far from constituting a neutral terrain that sits above society, liberal democratic institutions are actually constituted by, and infused with, social relations that privilege the voices of those who adhere to the prevailing cultural standards while silencing others. Whether it be in the context of electing representatives to office, hiring civil servants, or lobbying parliament – liberal democratic institutions act as a field that, either deliberately or indeliberately, rewards those who demonstrate themselves as having particular forms of institutional recognition (such as degrees and titles), particular ways of thinking and communicating (making reference to appropriate cultural allusions, speaking in accordance with a “proper” grammatical
structure, etc.), particular aesthetic tastes (expressed in one’s dress, hairstyle, or artistic preferences), and particular modes of behaviour, over and above others. Of course, these preferences are arbitrary in the sense that there is no reason why they should be favoured over others, yet they are also very deliberately selected so as to secure and reproduce the symbolic capital and privilege of the dominant social groups. Thus, as David Hoy remarks in his discussion of Bourdieu, “There is no ‘level’ playing field in the real social world, although one may be taken in by the illusion of equality.”

Bourdieu makes this exact point with regard to the modern state in an article that has only very recently been translated into English, which traces the transformation of the medieval dynastic state into the modern bureaucratic state with which we are familiar today. This transformation is often said to have marked a great step forward in the rationalisation of state power by severing the supposedly ‘natural’ hereditary rights to public office and replacing them with standards of “professional competency.” However, Bourdieu convincingly argues that this transformation can also be understood as one that saw the state’s power and resources, which were formerly monopolized by the interests of a single sovereign, come to be held by a very exclusive “minority of claimants designated by the quasi-hereditary possession of educational capital.” Thus, “the establishment of a properly bureaucratic logic, an impersonal and interchangeable power [...] has all the appearances of ‘rationality’ even as it is invested with the most mysterious properties of magical efficacy.”

Moreover, the research of Indigenous scholar Taiaiake Alfred demonstrates that even the very concept of the liberal democratic state is so deeply imbued with the traditions, philosophical assumptions, modes of subjectivity, and bodies of knowledge
characteristic of the dominant European culture that political participation in state institutions is effectively ruled-out for any individuals who wish to conduct themselves in accordance with a different civilizational tradition or worldview. Alfred identifies a number of key values that are central to virtually all of the Indigenous cultures of North America, such as the co-existence of opposites, the quest for balance and harmony, and the peaceful coexistence among all the elements of creation.\textsuperscript{59} These values are inseparable from Indigenous cultures and traditions he argues, yet they are also fundamentally at odds with the values promoted by Western state structures and institutions. “Western institutions were designed within the framework of a very different belief system, to achieve very different objectives,” he remarks.\textsuperscript{60}

For instance, Alfred notes that Western political institutions are based on the concept of “sovereignty,” which holds that individuals transfer their own personal freedom and power to the state, as explained in the various different versions of social contract theory. According to the European political tradition, this hypothetical transfer of power constitutes the source of the state’s legitimacy when it exercises its power and imposes its authority. Indigenous political philosophy, in contrast, is based on principles closer to that of autonomy, and does not distinguish between “society” and “the state” as such. Rather, “autonomy” requires that each individual be persuaded to pool together their individual power in the interest of the collective good. Thus, whereas Western style governmental structures rely on coercion to ensure that dissenters fall in line with majority decisions, there is no such notion of coercion in Indigenous traditions, but rather, “only the compelling force of conscience based on those inherited and collectively refined principles that structure society.”\textsuperscript{61} Indigenous traditions are thereby profoundly
egalitarian Alfred notes, and do not draw as firm distinctions between “the leaders” and “the people” as do Western governments.\textsuperscript{62}

The concept of justice in Native American traditions is also considerably different than in the Western tradition. Whereas Western institutions tend to understand the source of justice and injustice as stemming directly from the actions and demeanour of particular individuals, according to many Indigenous traditions justice emanates from a relationship between all individuals and the environment. On this account, justice is achieved when balance, harmony, and equilibrium can be said to exist, whereas injustices occur when this balance and co-existence has been disturbed or upset. Unlike the Western tradition, no one person can be deemed accountable for a particular “act” of injustice because reestablishing harmony requires consideration of the many components that lie in disequilibrium with one another.\textsuperscript{63}

These insights of Bourdieu and Alfred help to shatter the age-old myth that the liberal democratic state provides citizens with a culturally and politically neutral playing field that ensures the best ideas will rise to the top and be put into practice. They also help to refute the common assumption the liberal democratic state is an institution which could serve the interest of people from any tradition or culture whose members occupy positions of power within this field. By contrast, what we have seen described by Bourdieu and Alfred is an institution that is deeply infused with, and premised upon, the philosophical assumptions of one particular intellectual current within a particular civilizational tradition. The condition of possibility for participation in such institutions is thus the a priori acceptance of this particular mode of understanding and, consequently, the renunciation or bracketing of any other cultural frameworks to which one might
otherwise remain committed. The liberal democratic state thus operates by rewarding those individuals who adhere to the traditions and worldviews upon which it is premised, while largely discounting and discrediting those who adhere to other traditions. These observations call attention to the imperialist and assimilationist undertones that lie dormant in anti-capitalist strategies such as those of Bernstein, which grant primacy to liberal democratic institutions and to the expansion of the state's administrative capacities as central tactics in the struggle against the injustices of capitalism. In doing so, such approaches implicitly privilege and perpetuate the dominance of certain European modes of thinking and frameworks of understanding, while marginalising all possible ways of opposing capitalism aside from those generated from within these frameworks.

It may be slightly less obvious how such a critique applies to the model of liberal-democracy proposed by Habermas, which, by shifting critical debate to a public sphere outside of the state proper, is designed precisely to account for the types of power imbalances found within state institutions. Nevertheless, careful consideration of Habermas's model reveals that it too proves guilty of relying on mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that promote certain modes of being-in-the-world, certain forms of knowledge, and, ultimately, certain voices to the exclusion of others.

As seen above, Habermas's strategy is to chisel away at the field in which moral and political critique occur, in an attempt to excavate something more akin to pure, unadulterated discourse and communicative reason, unconstrained by coercion or exclusions and undistorted by the steering media of power and money. His model attempts to take certain steps in this direction by demanding that every relevant argument be included in the search for a normative consensus; that every person who wishes to
participate be allowed to do so; that every speaker be permitted to question or introduce new claims and express their beliefs or sentiments; and that no force but that of the better argument be admitted into the deliberative proceedings. However, as Nancy Fraser remarks, "declaring a deliberative arena to be a space where extant status distinctions are bracketed and neutralised is not sufficient to make it so."\(^{64}\) If Habermas is to insist that his model permits the full and equal participation of all voices, then he must also account for one other crucial aspect of human communication – that is, its confinement to the body of human subjects.

In short, Habermas can introduce any number of rules of discourse that insulate deliberation from the social inequalities of the surrounding world, but these regulations cannot eradicate the "linguistic habitus" of speakers which reflects these inequalities, and which, thus, immediately reintroduces them back into the deliberative arena.\(^{65}\) As Iris Marion Young notes, "The deliberative ideal tends to assume that when we eliminate the influence of economic and political power, people’s ways of speaking and understanding will be the same; but this will be true only if we also eliminate their cultural differences and different social positions."\(^{66}\) Cultural and social differences can be expressed very subtly in bodily gesticulations or patterns of speech, but they are also very fundamentally present in the underlying frameworks that enable people to make sense of their world and to understand what counts as a compelling argument. For instance, Young notes that modern Western institutions tend to privilege forms of argumentation that are assertive and confrontational, dispassionate and disembodied, and which proceed from premise to conclusion, or from general principles to specific instances. Other forms of speech, such as humour, storytelling, and oral histories, or those that are "tentative, exploratory,
conciliatory”, and emotional or figurative, are given less value or credibility in the Western deliberative field. As Young emphasises, these different approaches to speech and understanding are learned, and thus tend to be specific to certain cultures, socio-economic groups, or sociosexual gender categories. The fact that participants enter public spheres from diverse socio-cultural upbringings, with different frames of reference, and possibly bearing very different communicative habitus, poses a potentially very serious problem for Habermas’s project. It seems as though communication, even in its most raw and insulated form that Habermas hopes to extract, cannot shed itself of the conditions of socio-economic and cultural difference and inequality in which it is produced.

Of course, Habermas is conscious of plurality, and it is largely for this reason that he places such an emphasis on the practical activity of deliberation between individuals or groups that share different perspectives, hoping that this process will permit such differences to be worked out rationally. Nevertheless, it must be asked how participants might reach a consensus on the validity or invalidity of a contested norm if their worldviews diverge sufficiently to prevent them from agreeing on the standards that deem an argument reasonable or legitimate in the first place. Three possible solutions to this question come to mind. First, it is possible that the groups whose voices, beliefs, and perspectival frameworks are typically marginalized and excluded by the discursive hegemony of dominant socio-cultural groups might opt not to participate in the deliberative process described by Habermas given their warranted concerns that they may be impeded from presenting their views in their own terms, as has often been the case in past experience. However, Habermas rules this option out by insisting that no one be excluded from the proceedings, that every opinion be heard, and that the consensus on a
norm's validity be universally acceptable. In light of this, a second option would be to allow each participant to contribute to the discussion in his or her own language and culturally appropriate manner. This would permit each to explain to all others how their background beliefs and frames of reference are structured, as well as how these beliefs give rise to a particular sense of self, a particular relationship to others and to the cosmos, and a particular way of assessing the validity or invalidity of an argument. The objective of this approach would not be to reach a universal agreement once and for all regarding which worldview is the best or the most rational; rather the objective would be to listen carefully to all of the diverse perspectives and to come to an appreciation for the multiplicity of equally valid ways that a single scenario can be understood. Participants might then choose to modify their own views accordingly. 68

Yet, Habermas rejects this approach as well. Instead, he opts for a third solution which is to address the existence of diverse worldviews by insisting that all participants in the deliberative process adopt one common framework with which to envision the world, and that they each adhere to common standards of validity and rationality that he deems to be universal. By imposing these common standards and worldview on all participants in the discursive exchange as such, Habermas provides participants with a procedure that allows all to agree in unison on what claims are the most rational or valid. As James Tully demonstrates, the worldview that Habermas selects is that of the “decentered subject,” which he claims to be the most evolutionarily advanced way of seeing the world. 69 As Tully describes:

A person who recognises herself as a decentered subject has accepted and internalised the decentered view of the world, the view that ‘reason has split into three moments’. She understands the world to be differentiating into a ‘totality’ of three domains of validity corresponding to the external, social and subjective dimensions of reality, and these to the three moments of ‘modern science, positive law and posttraditional morality, and autonomous art and institutionalised art
criticism'. She sorts questions into one of these three compartments, corresponding to claims of truth, justice and truthfulness and validates or invalidates them in accord with the forms of rationality uniquely appropriate to each [...] She sees this organization of consciousness as the apex of individual and historical development.\textsuperscript{70}

This does not imply that individuals who adhere to a different worldview and who do not see the world according to this decentered perspective will be excluded from participation in the discursive processes \textit{per se}. Rather, Habermas affirms that all speakers must be free to express their perspectives, exchange reasons, and critique any claim \textit{so long as} they do so in reference to the conditions of argumentative and normative validity that he has established in accordance with the decentered worldview, thereby allowing others to evaluate the degree of rationality and correctness of these perspectives according to a common measure. As Fraser remarks, Habermas seems to believe that these procedures are so universally valid that they are “utterly bereft of any specific ethos” and thus able “to accommodate with perfect neutrality and equal ease interventions expressive of any and every cultural ethos.”\textsuperscript{71}

Habermas offers three sorts of arguments that explain why this particular decentered worldview must be accepted as the universal standard, however, as Tully shows, none of these arguments are convincing. Briefly, the first of these three arguments states that to reject these rules of communicative rationality is to be immediately guilty of a “performative contradiction” since any speech act presupposes that one has necessarily already accepted these rules, as explained above. But Tully notes that this simply shields Habermas’s decentered subject from any possible critique by automatically deeming every other perspective to be automatically irrational, illegitimate, and culturally relativist before it has even been articulated – a position that even Habermas himself finds to be unsatisfactory and unconvincing.\textsuperscript{72} Habermas thus supplements his defence of the
decentered worldview with two other lines of argument, both of which claim that it can be accepted as a universal standard because it is the best and most historically advanced worldview. First, he considers the psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of the individual’s “moral development” from infancy to adulthood and argues that the “post-conventional” moral outlook associated with discourse ethics (whereby individuals inter-subjectively determine the universal moral principles to which they are bound) is akin to the adulthood stage of human morality in Kohlberg’s theory, and thus marks the highest stage of human moral growth. Finally, he makes a very similar argument regarding the developmental trajectory of societies from primitive through to modern stages, claiming that the decentered worldview only emerges with the rise of modern societies (the most advanced stage of a society’s historical development), and that this worldview is therefore the best.\footnote{73}

These types of evolutionary development arguments involve an effort to uncover an impartial standard that can objectively demonstrate the superiority – and thus the higher degree of social evolution – of some societies or worldview over other. As Tully notes, such strategies “have been used since the late seventeenth century to try to establish the superiority and universal significance of European ways and they have been often employed to legitimise European imperialism.”\footnote{74} Unfortunately for Habermas, finding such impartial criteria is as dubious as it is difficult. “The problem with this line of defence,” Tully explains, “is that it is prone to circularity, to Eurocentrism or, to use Habermas’ own term, ‘presentism’: the stages are described and ranked by criteria that are not neutral, but partial in some way to the purported highest stage.”\footnote{75} Ultimately then, Habermas’s theory proves incapable of providing a convincing account as to why the
particular worldview and modes of reasoning that he associates with the modern decentered subject ought to be adopted universally by all participants in his procedural theory of discourse ethics. “In short, the claims to universality of his theory remain, as he readily acknowledges, suggestive, inconclusive and fallible,” Tully remarks.⁷⁶

The effect of Habermas’s attempt to elevate one legitimate form of argumentation and one worldview to an incontestable universal status is to render his project equally as guilty of institutionalising a logic of inclusion and exclusion as that of Bernstein. As argued above, Bernstein’s focus on the institutions of parliamentary democracy implies that those who possess institutionally recognised credentials or symbolic capital (i.e. those endowed with a particular habitus), will be given greater access to a powerful platform from which to pursue their ideas, while others will tend to be excluded from this platform. Habermas’ model functions differently in so far as it locates critical deliberation in the public sphere and demands that all individuals be permitted equal participation in this process, with equal rights to express their perspective, to challenge any claim, or to introduce their own claim. Yet, Habermas’s model excludes certain voices through this very act of inclusion by demanding that all participants necessarily accept the rules of deliberation, standards of validity, forms of rationality, mode of subjectivity, and worldview that he takes for granted.

As Chantal Mouffe notes, rather than presenting this particular legitimization procedure as ‘political’ – that is open to critical deliberation itself – Habermas presents the frontier between the legitimate and the illegitimate as being “dictated by rationality or morality” which is ultimately “to naturalize what should be perceived as a contingent and temporary hegemonic articulation of ‘the people’ thorough a particular regime of
inclusion-exclusion." Participants who attempt to call this worldview into question by subjecting it to its own process of critical inspection will be immediately accused of 'performative contradiction.' Further, other standards, procedures, or ways of evaluating the world that are introduced into the discussion must be measured vis-a-vis the taken for granted ideal of the decentered worldview that Habermas himself has determined. Evaluated according to this standard, competing frameworks could only possibly be deemed less rational or less valid. Ultimately then, although Habermas does demand that all individuals participate in this consensus forming process, he nevertheless blocks participants from expressing themselves in their own voice. He thereby establishes discursive assimilation as the background condition according to which all deliberation must take place. The ultimate effect is thus the same as what we have seen in Bernstein's model — certain viewpoints are silenced or disregarded.

Demanding that all speakers adopt this one orientation (which so happens to be the dominant orientation characteristic of European modernity) reintroduces the very same types of power imbalances and inequalities that Habermas's deliberative model intends to eliminate. Indeed, Habermas appears guilty of what Keith Topper describes as "implicitly premising institutional power and voice on possession of linguistic and cultural competencies that are neither equally distributed among individuals and groups nor redistributed through education," the consequence of which being that the "democratic ideals of equal opportunity, access and participation are deeply undermined." Thus, the first lesson of resistance to be drawn from strategies such as those of Bernstein and Habermas is that attempting to ground critique and resistance by securing an institutional condition in which power and inequalities are neutralised or
subdued is doomed to fail. Such power relations are part and parcel of both institutional politics and resistance movements. First, all such sites of politics are embedded in larger socio-economic contexts that generate inequalities. Secondly, these idealised social spaces must then employ their own technologies of inclusion and exclusion that privilege certain voices and certain forms of knowledge over others within this space. To simply deny that such exclusions remain at work in the background of any social space and then proceed as if they do not exist, or to claim that these particular forms of exclusion are natural or universal, is to render such idealised projects all the more dangerous, insidious, and imperialist.

One way or another, anti-capitalist theories must come to grips with the idea that there is no neutral standpoint from which critique and resistance must be grounded. Anti-capitalist movements that restrict their resistance to one particular field of politics will impoverish their own movement by silencing and excluding certain voices and perspectives from their ranks. By doing so they will invariably perpetuate the imperial character of the very field in which their struggle is situated. New strategies with which to combat capitalism must therefore be generated that recognise and remain sensitive to the fact that all political relations are infused with power and with technologies of inclusion and exclusion. One way to think about this is to envision an anti-capitalist struggle characterized by the proliferation of diverse fronts and tactics, rather than the concentration of resistance to one, or even to several restricted fields, locations, or institutions. Proliferating the loci of resistance as such cannot eradicate all exclusions, but it can ensure that more voices will be heard, as each locality becomes empowered to combat capitalism according to its own situated standpoint and experience. I thus tend to
agree with Nancy Fraser when she remarks that, "in stratified societies, arrangements that accommodate contestation among a plurality of competing publics better promote the ideal of participatory parity than does a single, comprehensive, overarching public." Project Such an approach will be considered further in Chapter Four.

**Second Lesson of Resistance: Universal Theories of Justice and Morality**

The second lesson to be taken from approaches such as those of Bernstein and Habermas follows rather easily from the first – that the seeds of the most violent and atrocious imperial endeavours are often sown with the pronouncement of universal principles of justice and morality. Once it is claimed that such principles have been determined, and once the institutions that embody these principles have subsequently been designed, then it can be said that – in the name of justice, morality, peace, and reason – these institutions should be spread throughout the world and forcefully imposed on those who do not already have them and who are consequently thought to live in a state of injustice, immorality, savagery, and irrationality. We have already seen how the approaches of Bernstein and Habermas require either the exclusion or the assimilation of certain people’s voices at the domestic level of the state. By turning our attention to each of their outlooks on international politics we will now observe a second imperial aspect of their thought.

Bernstein’s tendency to couch acts of imperial aggression in the language of universal moral principles is brazenly explicit. As we have seen above, Bernstein came to the position that socialism ought to be about “the implementation of a social principle,” and that principle was precisely the principle of individual liberty. “The aim of all socialist measures, even of those which appear outwardly as coercive measures, is the development and the securing of a free personality,” he proclaimed. We have also seen
that Bernstein came to believe that the institutions of liberal democracy embodied this principle, and that the expansion of these types of institutions could therefore be equated with the expansion of liberty and socialism in the world. Spreading these institutions would gradually "draw the other parts" of the socialist struggle "after it as the magnet attracts to itself the scattered portions of iron" he claimed; "Social democracy cannot further this work better than by taking its stand unreservedly on the theory of democracy – on the ground of universal suffrage with all the consequences resulting therefrom to its tactics."\textsuperscript{81}

From here one need make only a very short step before coming to the conclusion that acts of imperialism which spread these principles are just and warranted. If liberal democratic institutions promote freedom, and if freedom is to be universally regarded as the highest value of humanity, then it must follow that the imposition of these institutions on peoples who are not free (i.e. who do not have these institutions) is a morally praiseworthy activity. The imposition of institutions as such may seem to violate the very principles that they are intended to promote (namely freedom), but Bernstein argued that overall "the coercion included will raise the sum total of liberty in society, and will give more freedom over a more extended area than it takes away."\textsuperscript{82}

It is precisely this logic, reminiscent of Kant's vow that war and imperial conquest will gradually pave the road to perpetual peace and liberty, that allows Bernstein to conclude that:

...the subjection of natives to the authority of European administration does not always entail a worsening of their condition, but often means the opposite. However much violence, fraud, and other unworthy actions accompanied the spread of European rule in earlier centuries, as they often still do today, the other side of the picture is that, under direct European rule, savages are without exception better off than they were before. Even before the arrival of Europeans in Africa, brutal wars, robbery, and slavery were not unknown. Indeed, they were the regular order of the day. What was unknown was the degree of peace and legal protection made possible by European institutions.\textsuperscript{83}
The same is true elsewhere, he contends. In the United States, for example, "where previously a few hundred Indians fought endless internecine battles over hunting grounds, [today] sixty million people, most of them perfectly respectable, live and export food for further millions of people [...] Whatever wrongs were previously perpetrated on the Indians, nowadays their rights are protected..."84

On the basis of these remarks it should be apparent that, although Bernstein declared that socialists must be "concerned" with the spread of the universal principle of freedom, clearly he was referring to the very specific form of freedom associated with European-style institutions, laws, and civilization. Bernstein was not at all concerned with what Kant described as the "lawless freedom" of non-European peoples. "The freedom of an insignificant people in a non-European or semi-European region does not carry the same weight as the free development of the great and highly civilized nations of Europe," he wrote; "We will condemn and oppose certain methods of subjugating savages. But we will not condemn the idea that savages be subjugated and made to conform to the rules of a higher civilisation."85 On Bernstein's account then, freedom is the universal principle towards which all should aspire, and European-style liberal democratic institutions are the highest embodiment of that freedom, therefore it is perfectly acceptable to think that these institutions should be imposed on non-European "savages" through coercive acts of colonialism and imperialism.

The direct relation between Bernstein's allegiance to the universal principles of liberty and his corresponding apologies for European colonial domination of "less civilized" peoples is thus unmistakably clear. As with our first lesson of resistance above however, the extent to which this second lesson applies to the political philosophy of
Jürgen Habermas is slightly less apparent. For instance, in the most recent formulation of his vision of international justice, Habermas appears to be critical of imperialism in so far as he condemns the US government under President George W. Bush for acting as an imperial hegemon, and for attempting to achieve peace and security by undermining the “juridification of International Relations” while opting instead for the “moralisation of international politics grounded in the ethos of a superpower.” Further, Habermas is also wary of the much-touted alternative to realist international politics which entails the creation of a “world republic” or world state. Here he evokes concerns (which he also attributes to Kant) that such a government would not only lead to cultural uniformity, but would also be likely to “degenerate into a ‘universal monarchy’.” At first glance then, it seems that Habermas’s vision for a just global order is actually sensitive to plurality in the domain of international politics and, consequently, might successfully evade the charges of imperialism.

As a “conceptual alternative” to both the liberal hegemon and world republic models of global justice, Habermas proceeds to consider how the political constitution of the international community might take shape without having it assume “the state-like character of a world republic.” He suggests that such a project could be accomplished through a pre-existing world organisation (namely the UN) that could be “suitably reformed” and equipped with the capacities to “impose peace” and “implement human rights” at the supranational level. Meanwhile, at the transnational level, the world’s “major powers” could be left responsible for dealing with “the difficult problems of a global domestic politics,” such as world economic and ecological issues. Their mandate in this sphere of “global domestic politics” would no longer consist of “mere
coordination,” but would be “extend(ed) to promoting actively a rebalanced world order.” Such entails the reorganisation of most of the world into “continental regimes” modelled after the EU, so as to generate new global players on the transnational stage. Habermas contends that this model of a supranational constitution in tandem with a transnational sphere for “global domestic politics” provides a conceptual example of how a cosmopolitan constitutional order could be established that avoids the problematic character of a global state.

We have seen in the discussion of Habermas’s political writings above that he believes a legal order’s legitimacy to depend not only on its adherence to the rule of law as outlined in a constitution or in a set of fundamental rights, but equiprimordially on processes of democratic deliberation that validate those constitutional rights. This democratic validation is required for supranational and transnational constitutions such as the UN Charter, just as it is for domestic political regimes. However, here a functional difficulty arises since the types of deliberative processes required for such legitimation are only practically conceivable at the level of the nation-state and not at the supranational level. Habermas is thus forced to argue that the type of supranational constitution that he proposes would be validated by the “upward” flow of legitimacy from the state level, and he presents two sets of reasons to explain why this is so. The first reason why such a constitution would be legitimate is because it would be modelled after the “advances” of the world’s pre-existing “democratic constitutional states” which have themselves legitimised certain normative principles and determined the political procedures required for the application of these principles. “Supranational constitutions rest at any rate on basic rights, legal principles and criminal codes which are already the
product of prior learning processes and have been tried and tested within democratic nation-states,” he argues; “Thus, their normative substance evolved from constitutions of the republican type,” which means that they must already hold legitimacy.92

Secondly, Habermas argues that additional legitimacy will be conferred upon the supranational and transnational levels because, underlying these structures, the world will be organised into a “state-centred system” that arranges each polity in conformity with the constitutional model outlined in Between Facts and Norms. On this model, each constitutional state would “secure citizens equal access to the politically binding decisions of the government through institutionalised publics, elections, parliaments and other forms of participation.” It would also implement the appropriate “administrative mechanisms” to “ensure the equal inclusion of citizens in the legislative process.” Modelling each polity in this fashion would thus permit legitimacy to be transferred vertically to the transnational or supranational level. Once again, the EU could provide the model for the vertical transfer of such legitimation if the liaisons between its democratic institutions at the national and transnational levels are sufficiently deepened.93

Habermas’s alternative to the “global state” on the one hand, and to US driven imperialism on the other, thus consists of the following: (1) that supranational institutions be granted the power to enforce a set of “basic rights, legal principles, and criminal codes” that have already been validated by the “advances” of legitimation from democratic constitutional states94; (2) that all nation-states be reorganised into “continental regimes” on the transnational level, roughly modelled on the EU, to deal with “global domestic politics”; and (3) that the world’s polities be organized in a system of constitutional states resembling those of Europe, and in conformity with the
established universal procedures of legitimate law-making (which are themselves premised on a particular decentered worldview that also emerged from the modern European tradition, as demonstrated above). In so far as Habermas's model is based on globally extending institutional forms, constitutional principles and procedures of legitimisation, forms of argumentation, and modes of subjectivity, each derived from those forms established in Europe, it is difficult to see how this alternative is not imperial itself.

Nevertheless, Habermas could still potentially argue that this is not an imperial model because this constitutional arrangement must be consented to and entered into freely by all the peoples of the world, without having it coercively imposed by a self-interested superpower. Regrettably, however, this is not the position that Habermas adopts. Bearing striking resemblance to Kant's position in *Perpetual Peace*, Habermas maintains that if an enlightened world hegemon were to make use of existing "asymmetries of power" in order to promote the "civilising force of universalistic legal procedures," then history would ultimately redeem this superpower for their actions. "Hegemonic law is still law," Habermas contends; "A well-intentioned and far-sighted hegemon of this sort would be the darling of future historians who lived to witness the happy outcome of the difficult experiment."95 It is precisely this logic that led Habermas to defend the US-led assault on Iraq during the Gulf War in 1991. Acknowledging the ambiguous position of the US in relation to international law during this period, in the case of the Gulf War Habermas contends that the US and its allies "claimed the legitimation of the UN until the end". "In theory, they acted as deputies of the world organisation,"96 and in Habermas's view this is a sufficient condition for the Gulf War to
be considered both worthy of support and a step forward in the transformation of “wars” directed by the foreign policy objectives of a few great powers, into mere “police actions” directed by the constitutional norms of global domestic policy.  

Habermas concedes that his global vision and that of the US administration under George W. Bush remain in “abstract agreement in their goals” in so far as both seek to secure international peace while promoting democracy and human rights. The basis upon which Habermas denounces Bush’s “ethically grounded unilateralism” lies in its efforts to obtain these goals by taking matters into its own hands rather than promoting a law-governed and politically constituted world society. He laments that Bush seeks to secure peace not by asserting international law or legally sanctioned “police actions”, but by asserting American imperial power instead. Yet, it is difficult to see why Habermas’s alternative should not be denounced as imperialist on its own right. As we have seen, his vision of the “cosmopolitan condition” calls for the creation of a supranational body empowered with the authority to enforce a set of constitutional rights and laws that have already been “upwardly” legitimised by European-style democracies. Further, he demands that the rest of the world must be reorganised into “continental regimes” modelled off of the European Union, and into a system of constitutional states with institutionalised public spheres modelled off of the European example and created in conformity with the standards of legitimate lawmaking outlined by Habermas himself in *Between Facts and Norms*. While one might at least expect that the people being subject to this constitutionalisation project would have to enter into its fold as free and equal partners, in fact Habermas is not adverse to the possibility that this juridical regime of
international law would have to be coercively imposed on the rest of the world under the weight of a “well-intentioned and far-sighted” superpower.

Ultimately it seems that Habermas is so convinced by the rationality and the universal legitimacy of his own procedures of normative validation that he cannot possibly understand how imposing these procedures (and the institutions in which they are embodied) upon others might constitute an act of imperialism itself. This is precisely Chantal Mouffe’s point in the following rhetorical remarks made in reference to the Habermasian approach:

Clearly, if liberal constitutional democracy is such a remarkable rational achievement — the reconciliation of the rule of law and human rights with democratic participation – on what grounds could one ‘rationally’ object to its implementation? Every opposition is automatically perceived as a sign of irrationality and moral backwardness and as being illegitimate. The implication is obviously that all societies should adopt the liberal democratic institutions which are the only legitimate way to organize human coexistence.99

Considered in this light, Habermas’s position ends up bearing close resemblance not only to that of Bernstein, but to that of Kant himself. Whereas the latter grounds his theory in the name of universal principles of right, Habermas justifies his theory in the name of universal procedures of normative validation. In the end these amounts to the same – a project seeking to refashion the entire globe based on the European institutional model, and a justification for having to coercively impose these institutions on non-European peoples through war and violence, or “police actions”. This approach also amounts to an important lesson for contemporary anti-capitalist thought: Beware of universals. For, as Bill Martin warns, they may sound appealing and comforting on one level, but they have “also been used as a cover for the most grotesque crimes committed by the West, of which the Gulf War has been only one […] this rhetoric has rarely held the West back from committing large-scale crimes against humanity.”100
CHAPTER TWO

Historical Materialism and Anti-Capitalist Revolution:
From Marx to Hardt and Negri

No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb.

— Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*

If there had ever been one real revolution, there would be no more history. Unity would have been achieved and death would have been satiated. That is why all revolutionaries finally aspire to world unity and act as though they believed that history were dead [...] just as metaphysical rebellion demanded the unity of the world, the twentieth century revolutionary movement, when it arrived at the most obvious conclusions of its logic, insisted with threats of force on arrogating to itself the whole of history.

— Albert Camus, *The Rebel*

The Dialectical Materialism of Karl Marx

The troubled efforts of Bernstein and Habermas to prescribe particular modes of being and acting in the world that are grounded on a conception of universally valid principles of justice and morality could have been foretold by Hegel long ago. In the opening decades of the nineteenth century, Hegel famously objected to Kant’s deontological moral theory by claiming that his Categorical Imperative remained void of concrete content, and thus proved incapable of telling us anything specific about what we ought to do in the actual world. Hegel acknowledged Kant’s important contribution to moral theory — in particular, his insistence that to be free is not to simply act upon one’s every whim and desire, but rather that freedom is obedience to the commands of reason and to do one’s duty for duty’s sake alone. But, while this marks a seminal development in Western moral philosophy, Hegel objected to Kant’s prescriptions because they ultimately failed to indicate anything specific regarding the types of actions in which we must actually engage in order to perform our duty. “Action for itself requires a particular content and a determinate end, whereas duty in the abstract contains nothing of the kind,” Hegel observed; hence “the question arises: what is duty?”

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Kant’s answer was that one should only act according to those maxims and principles that can be universally adopted by all without contradiction. Yet still this leads us only to “abstract universalisation” and thus to nowhere in particular, Hegel replies. For instance, the universalisation of the maxim “do not steal” is no less contradictory than the universalisation of the maxim “none shall own property.” Only if we were to take for granted the idea that property or human life should exist and be respected does it then become a contradiction to commit theft or murder, Hegel astutely observes. Yet, nothing in Kant’s theory tells us why property or life should be valued in the first place. Surely we could introduce this content into Kant’s formulation on our own accord, but if it is permissible to arbitrarily introduce this content into the formulation, then there would be nothing to stop one from arbitrarily introducing any other manner of ghastly and horrendous principles as well. Hegel thus concludes that Kant’s Categorical Imperative prohibits any “immanent theory of duties” and thus results in nothing but “an empty formalism” and “empty rhetoric of duty for duties sake.” The universal can only exist in a particular form, yet Kant’s moral theory is of shamefully little help in answering the thorny questions of which particular form this might be.3

Rather than grounding philosophy in a set of universal principles abstracted from space and time, Hegel’s dialectical approach seeks to explain how freedom rationally unfolds in the world itself and over the course of history. Hegel proceeded to loft a devastating attack on the most rudimentary and taken for granted principles of formal logic, particularly the principle of non-contradiction and the principle of the excluded middle, which had previously acted as the cornerstones of European philosophical investigation. The principle of non-contradiction effectively states that once something
has been identified (e.g. $A = A$), it cannot be something else at the same time (e.g. $A \neq \neg A$). What follows is that a thing must be either "$A$" or "not $A$" but can never be both at the same time. However, just as Hegel had shown Kant’s Categorical Imperative to be void of content, so too are these principles of formal logic, he argued. To claim, for instance, that "Being" is "Being", or that a "tree" is a "tree", tells us nothing that we did not already know beforehand. One can only really begin to understand "Being" by contrasting it with that which it is not – "non-Being". If such is the case, Hegel has thus demonstrated that, contrary to the principles of formal logic, "Being" must already contain "non-Being" within itself. Likewise, every concept must necessarily contain its very own contradiction. Being and non-Being are therefore constitutively dependent upon one another, and in this sense they actually form a higher unity and are one in the same.

However, the conceptual unity of Being and non-Being must, in turn, also reach the limit of that which it is not. Concepts thus continue to develop, or to "move" through time by continually reaching their limits and forging a new unity as such. "The moving principle of the concept, which not only dissolves the particularizations of the universal but also produces them, is what I call dialectic," Hegel states.\(^4\) History must be understood as unfolding in this very same dialectical manner. Concepts must be given a particular content in the world, but history eventually reveals the limitation of this particularization, at which point a new, higher and more fully developed particularization of the universal must emerge. This higher form is never the absolute negation of its predecessor. Indeed, just as it can be shown that no thesis is ever entirely true, nor is any thesis absolutely and utterly false. Every stage of a concept’s dialectical development contains at least some partial truth that remains buried within the concept even once it has
overcome the limitations of one stage and has proceeded on to a further developmental stage. Hegel thus states that, "The higher dialectic of the concept consists not merely in producing and apprehending the determination as an opposite and limiting factor, but in producing and apprehending the positive content and result which it contains; and it is this alone which makes it a development and immanent progression." Ultimately then, in contrast to Kantian philosophy, Hegel asserts that reason is always in motion, immanently unfolding in the world over the course of history, fuelled by contradictions and limitations of partial thoughts or moments, and seeking a greater and higher unity of the Idea.

By the time that a young Karl Marx arrived at Berlin’s Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität as a law student in 1836, Hegel’s powerful philosophy had already taken the German intellectual establishment by storm and had come to dominate debate within the German academy. Perhaps it is unsurprising that this climate should have left such a recognisable imprint on Marx’s thought. Indeed, as a student Marx was known to move about within the Young-Hegelian circles of the day, which comprised the leftist variant of Hegel’s intellectual heirs. As is well known, Marx also adopted Hegel’s conception of history as a process that unfolds dialectically by moving through the contradictions inherent in one stage and forming a higher unity in a subsequent stage. But while Hegel’s influence on Marx cannot be denied, Marx also remained one of Hegel’s fiercest critics, railing against the inadequacies of his theory. Marx insisted that, for a philosopher whose pretension was to construct a philosophical system that could explain the immediacy of world-historical experience, Hegel’s theory had remarkable little relevance to the actual reality and struggles faced daily by the human beings who lived in that
world. Hegel's theory could only make sense of human experience by relating it to the
dialogical progression of logical categories and the unfolding of Consciousness; thus it
remained largely abstract and removed from the concrete existence of human struggle.

“For Hegel the human being – man – equals self-consciousness,” Marx wrote in
the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts. Such being the case, Hegel's theory
ultimately comprehends human alienation and worldly suffering as “nothing but
estrangement of self-consciousness,” or “an estrangement of pure, i.e., abstract,
philosophical thinking.” This estrangement is not the result of the human being’s
objectification “in opposition to himself,” but rather it is the result of his objectification
“in opposition to abstract thinking” Marx claimed. The implications of such thinking
leads to a profound conservatism since it implies that, ultimately, its is the consciousness
which need be modified and superseded while the human being’s actual condition in the
world can remain largely unchanged. “This superseding in thought, which leaves its
object in existence in the real world, believes that it has really overcome it,” and thus
“becomes a confirmation of the alienation,” Marx argued. As Henri Lefebvre explains,
“the Hegelian Transcending […] ‘allows the material and sensible substratum of the
different alienated forms of consciousness to survive’; it describes the Master and Slave,
but actual slavery remains and Hegel’s freedom is purely mental. It describes the divided
mind and expresses the spiritual malaise of the modern world but seeks to put an end to
them only in and through philosophy.”

Such abstract and idealist philosophy is only capable of describing the world in
various ways, whereas “the point is to change it,” Marx famously declared in the eleventh
of his Theses on Feuerbach. If Hegel’s dialectical method were to be worth anything at
all then, it would literally have to be brought back down to the earth, and made able to account for the actual material conditions of human existence that make human consciousness possible in the first place. "The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary," Marx and Engels would proclaim in _The German Ideology_. 8 The fundamental condition of possibility for human existence is humanity’s production and reproduction of its means of material subsistence. Further, since this productive activity cannot be fulfilled by individual human beings in isolation from one another, humans must also enter into relations with others in order to survive. 9 Thus, write Marx and Engels “the first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history [is] that men must be able to live in order to ‘make history.’ But life involves above all eating and drinking, a shelter, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, material life itself.” 10 Hegel’s idealism wittingly brackets and neglects these fundamental facts about human reality, even though they remain logically prior to the unfolding of the very forms of human consciousness that Hegel himself had set out to explain. “Consciousness does not determine life, but life determines consciousness,” Marx and Engels affirm. 11

In order to understand the unfolding of history then, one must begin not by examining human consciousness, but by studying the far more elementary conditions of human existence – these being how people produce what they produce (the forces of production), as well as the particular forms of social organisation involved in this production process (the relations of production). These are the underlying premises of the analysis that would come to be known as dialectical materialism. By examining these fundamental conditions, one comes to understand not only that different modes of
production have existed throughout history, but also that these modes of production profoundly impact the entire structure and operation of human societies at large. Politics, law, morality, religion, art, metaphysics, indeed all of "mental production" and human consciousness are generated in human societies as "a direct result of their material behaviour [...] conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the relationships corresponding to these," Marx and Engels maintained.\textsuperscript{12}

Throughout most of history, the productive \textit{relations} of a given society are organized in such a way that complements and encourages the growth and development of the society's \textit{forces} of production, thus permitting the advancement and progression of the society's \textit{mode} of production as a whole. Eventually, however, each historic mode of production reaches a point in its development at which these relations become a hindrance and begin to impede any further development. "At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production [...] within the framework of which they have operated hitherto," Marx explained; "From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters."\textsuperscript{13} At this moment, the existing mode of production can be said to have reached its limit and its internal contradictions then become increasingly evident. In order for the society's productive forces to progress and develop further, the form of relations which act as their restraint must be cast aside. This is easier said than done. The dominant class of each historical period cannot be expected to voluntarily renounce its privileged status without objection. For this reason, the progression from one mode of production to the next can occur only once a new emerging class comes to
consciousness and overpowers its predecessor through class struggle and social revolution. Thus, “revolution is the driving force of history” Marx and Engels maintain.\textsuperscript{14}

“In our view all collisions in history have their origin in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of interaction,” Marx and Engels wrote, and indeed, they both undertook a number of ambitious attempts to explain all preceding historical periods in accordance with this dialectical analysis.\textsuperscript{15} These contradictions “form in the whole evolution of history a coherent series of forms of interaction,” they affirmed; “The coherence consists of the fact that in the place of an earlier form of interaction, which has become a fetter, is pit a new one corresponding to the more developed productive forces and thus to an advanced mode of the self-activity of individuals, a form which in turn becomes a fetter to be replaced by another.”\textsuperscript{16} For example, the emergence of capitalism occurs at a moment in history at which the productive limitations of the feudal system have been exposed. Private property had existed in the feudal age, but only in the limited form of an individual labourer’s ownership of their means of production – such as the peasant’s ownership of a small plot of land, or the artisan’s ownership of a simple tool. The feudal system is limited so far as this “mode of production pre-supposes the parcelling of the soil and the scattering of the other means of production.” Feudalism thus precludes the further concentration of the means of production, the further division and specialisation of labour power, the further control over the “forces of Nature” by society, and further development of society’s productive powers more generally. Feudal relations are “compatible only with a system of production, and a society, moving within narrow and more or less primitive bounds” and therefore they “must be annihilated,” Marx explains in the first volume of \textit{Capital}. The rise of the bourgeoisie – the historical
actor destined to achieve this feat — and the succession of the capitalist mode of production facilitates the "transformation of the individualized and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones," thus permitting human society to attain a level of productive capacity and development that had previously been unknown.  

Yet, Marx predicted that capitalism was equally bound to eventually run up against its own historical limits, just as had every mode of production that came before it. The separation of labourers from their means of production enables the capitalist to exploit the labouring classes by paying them a daily wage worth less than the actual value of the products that they create in a full day of labour. The remaining surplus value — that is, the difference between the price that the capitalist paid the labourer to make the product (its necessary labour value) and the value that the product was actually worth on the market (its exchange value) — is appropriated from the labourer, who had created this value in the first place, and then deposited into the pockets of the capitalist himself. Over time, this exploitation of the proletariat escalates as the ranks of the proletariat grow ever wider and as the worker is forced to work even more intensively over longer periods of time each day. The capitalist is thus increasingly able to appropriate an even larger surplus value from the worker's labour; however in order to actually realise this surplus, the capitalist must still convert the product to capital by selling it on the market. This becomes increasingly difficult with the progressive enlargement of the proletariat and the simultaneous deterioration of its working conditions to the point at which the labourer is paid nothing more than the minimal "means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race." Paradoxically then, the moment that the capitalist system reaches levels of productivity exceeding far beyond those that were
ever previously known is the very same moment that capitalism’s ultimate limits are revealed, expressed as an “epidemic of over-production.”

Having “conjured up such a gigantic means of production,” modern bourgeois society now appears “like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world which he has called up by his spells.” Capitalism begins to suffer evermore frequent and serious crises just as the destitution and immiseration of the proletariat reaches utterly intolerable magnitudes. However, as it becomes increasingly evident that the bourgeoisie has become “unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society,” the proletariat develops a consciousness of itself as a united revolutionary class “for itself” and an unstoppable historical actor. The “centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour” that capitalism first encouraged “at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument.” It is the historic task of the proletariat to burst this integument asunder, at which point “the knell of capitalist private property sounds,” and “the expropriators are expropriated.” As Marx explains in unmistakably Hegelian terms, this “negation of negation” denotes the onset of a communist future “based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era.”

Marx’s dialectical analysis of capitalism thus succeeds to avoid the problems that have been identified with the Kantian approaches outlined in Chapter One. First, because Marx’s materialist approach places fundamental importance on the mode of production and the class antagonisms particular to the capitalist system, his analysis calls into question the effectiveness of seeking to reform capitalism through democratic institutions without having first carried out a revolutionary transformation of capitalism’s productive relations. “[A]ll struggles within the State [...] the struggle for franchise, etc., etc., are
nothing but the illusory forms in which the real struggles of different classes are carried out among one another,” Marx and Engels wrote. Only in the case of the revolutionary victory of the proletariat would the capitalist class be forced to concede defeat. Secondly, unlike Kant, Marx’s dialectical analysis does not rely on the positing of universal principles of morality or justice in order to ground his critique. “The communists do not preach morality at all,” Marx and Engels declared. Indeed, Marx could only have been suspicious of any such principles since he believed that they merely reflected the ideology of the particular historical epoch, which is itself determined by the dominant class of the time. “The class having the means of material production has also control over the means of intellectual production, so that it also controls, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of intellectual production,” Marx and Engels observed. Such being the case, dialectical materialism sought to develop an “immanent critique” of capitalism that proceeded to “scientifically” study capitalism’s laws of motion, in such a way that served to highlight the contradictions internal to this mode of production itself that would one day be its ruin.

**Hardt and Negri’s Empire**

Fast-forward to the year 2000. At this point in time nearly a decade had passed since many of the real-world communist experiments which were conducted during the twentieth century had proven to be so drearily unsuccessful that they more or less voluntarily threw in the towel and embraced an unbridled capitalism market. On the other hand, it had now become painfully apparent that the post-cold war pronouncements of a bright and jovial capitalist future were little more than an empty facade. A sense of general disillusionment with the world’s state of affairs had set in, as a restless public keenly anticipated a new emancipatory political vision towards which they could turn. It
was in this context that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s *Empire* was first received, becoming an immediate bestseller, and hailed by some as “the Communist Manifesto of the 21st century.”

*Empire* is arguably one of the most significant and discussed contributions to the Marxist canon in recent years. By engaging with both classical Marxist thinkers (from Marx to Lenin and Luxembourg) and contemporary Marxist analyses (such as those of Fredric Jameson and David Harvey), in addition to the notable influence of certain post-structural theorists (namely Deleuze and Guattari), *Empire* provides a detailed and systematic effort to explain the particularities of the capitalist order as it exists at the dawn of the third millennium. In so doing, Hardt and Negri’s account also provides a useful Marxist-inspired explanation as to why history has not unfolded in the manner that was predicted so long ago by the original theorists of dialectical materialism. Contemporary capitalism has now reached an even higher stage than the imperialist stage that was once predicted to be its “highest” by the likes of Marxists such as Lenin and Luxembourg. Luxembourg had argued that by exporting its economic and political contradictions abroad, imperialist expansion served as the “historical method for prolonging the career of capitalism” and postponing its collapse. Given the finite space of the earth’s surface however, Luxembourg argued that this expansionist tactic of postponement could only remain effective for so long before capitalism’s contradictions would prove insurmountable and would lead to its general collapse. Rather than having collapsed however, Hardt and Negri argue that capitalism has been adapted to its global condition by introducing a new logic of rule that they call “Empire”.
Whereas the imperialist stage of capitalism's development was characterised by a non-capitalist "outside" into which capitalism could continue to expand, Empire emerges only once there is no such outside left to colonise. "The full realisation of the world market is necessarily the end of imperialism," Hardt and Negri argue.\textsuperscript{27} The road to Empire is thus characterized by the establishment of an all-encompassing global order and the complete internalisation of capitalism's outside. "In the passage from modern to postmodern and from imperialism to Empire there is progressively less distinction between inside and outside," they explain.\textsuperscript{28} National boundaries, which limit and restrain the free flow of capital exchange, begin to wither away in order to allow capitalism to complete its development into a fully global system. Sovereignty is thus effectively transferred upwards from the level of the nation-state to a new global entity that "incorporates the entire global realm" and which finally permits capitalism to render itself fully universal. The effacement of these boundaries is largely what Hardt and Negri are referring to when they describe Empire as a \textit{smooth} space of "uncoded and deterritorialized flows," and a "\textit{decentered}" apparatus of rule.\textsuperscript{29} Whereas the imperialist age was once characterised by fierce competition between numerous sovereign imperial powers, today's Empire constitutes a single structure of rule that provides the "source of juridical definitions that tends to project a single supranational figure of political power."\textsuperscript{30}

Just as Marx's analysis of 19\textsuperscript{th} century capitalism posed a powerful rejoinder to the reformists of his age who, like Bernstein, sought to restrain capitalism by mobilising liberal democratic institutions, Hardt and Negri cast an equally gloomy shadow upon the vision of reformists such as Habermas who find emancipatory potential in the
supranational institutions that characterise this new world order, such as the UN and the WTO. In a very real respect, Hardt and Negri see this new apparatus of rule as even "more brutal" and sinister than the imperial order that it succeeded. In this new world order, financial capital and transnational corporations truly reign supreme throughout the globe, facing even fewer impediments than ever before and subjecting nearly all of humanity to exploitative relations. Communication industries, under the control of capital, wield unprecedented biopolitical control, enabling them to shape and produce entire populations or subjectivities according to their own choosing, while also lending Empire the tools with which it produces its own legitimacy in the act of so doing. Moreover, Empire's supranational juridical structures reserve the right to decide which principles and values are to be universally regarded as just, and to then intervene anywhere in the world and at any time in order to uphold these values in the name of legality. What was once known as war or military occupation in previous world orders is now presented as "police action" in the service of peace, order, and justice. Under this new regime war becomes "banalised" and "celebrated as an ethical instrument." To make matters worse, each of these economic, communicative, juridical, and military functions become increasingly interwoven and indistinguishable, eventually molding into one great "globalized bio-political machine."

So far as Empire becomes a universal system of governance as such, it thereby "breaks resolutely with every previous dialectic," since the dialectical analysis depends on an outside to act as the limit against which the system ultimately runs up, leading to its negation and transformation into a higher unity. In the absence of an outside, Empire appears to be a logic of rule that is all the more insidious since it is able to approach and
manage all resistance as though it were inherent to the very logic of the system itself. It seems at first glance that Empire is so “smooth” that there can no longer be any possible escaping its mode of command. In fact, resistance merely calls upon Empire to intervene in order to regulate the potential crisis situation and re-establish systemic equilibrium. In doing so, each insurrection effectively acts to “push forward the process of integration” and “call for even more authority.” All opposition and dissent is thus immediately drawn back under the reign of Empire’s own juridical structure, which reinforces the legitimacy of this structure at one and the same time. Empire is “called into being on the basis of its capacity to resolve conflicts,” and thus actually thrives off the resistance and potential crisis that it is designed to manage, Hardt and Negri explain.

Nevertheless, this same amorphous quality that allows Empire to neutralise all opposition by effectively producing the rules of the game as it goes along also comprises Empire’s gaping vulnerability which, Hardt and Negri believe, will ultimately permit the emancipation of the “multitude.” Empire’s ability to constantly reabsorb dissent back into its midst gives the impression that it is firmly at the helm. However, the desire to constantly establish its command at all places and all times forces Empire to become a fundamentally reactive force that frantically responds to each new crisis situation and potential breakdown that arises. Ultimately then, this implies that it is actually the multitude which constitutes the “real productive force of our social world, whereas Empire is a mere apparatus of capture that lives only off the vitality of the multitude,” Hardt and Negri argue. The multitude may be restricted to remain “within” Empire, they argue, yet it can still remain against Empire all the same. Through its creative antagonism, the multitude holds the power to direct Empire in such a way that leads to
the creation of something entirely new, especially as these resistances and crises begin to occur with greater frequency. In fact, this is precisely how Empire arose in the first place, they argue. It was actually the multitude’s desire for liberation – expressed in the international proletarian struggles of previous generations – that initially broke down the rigid territorial barriers of the nation-state and thereby forced capital to react by reconsolidating itself as its own global force.\textsuperscript{38} “The multitude called Empire into being,” they claim, and equally it is the multitude that, through its continued struggle and its drive towards immanent freedom, holds the power to guide the further metamorphosis of the system to a place beyond empire and toward a communist future.\textsuperscript{39} This creative potential of the multitude ensures that the future trajectory of Empire’s biopolitical machine remains open, and thus nourishes Hardt and Negri’s “irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist.”\textsuperscript{40}

\textbf{Third Lesson of Resistance: World-Historical Stages of Development Theories}

In the early 1850s, Karl Marx worked as a foreign correspondent for the \textit{New York Daily Tribune} – a leading English-language newspaper of the day. For several years, his weekly contributions earned him a modest wage with which he was able to support his ongoing research into political economy. It was in this capacity that Marx wrote a series of short articles on British colonialism in India. Marx described the British rule in India and the actions of its East India Company as “monstrous,” and he explained how they had inflicted great misery and suffering on the Indian subcontinent. This colonisation project was “actuated only by the vilest interests,” and in fact Britain had been “stupid in her manner of enforcing” these interests, he claimed. Nevertheless, the reasons for Britain’s colonial endeavours and the manner in which they were pursued were ultimately of marginal significance, he believed. The more important question was, “can mankind
fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia?" If not, he responded, then "whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution."⁴¹

Marx is well known for advancing the cause of proletarian revolution and for advocating a communist future. He is less often remembered as an apologist for bourgeois society who presented arguments in favour of the capitalist mode of production, and who defended the dissemination of capitalism throughout the world by way of European imperialism and colonial expansion. Close examination of Marx's oeuvre reveals that he offered at least four clusters of arguments, employed in various contexts, to explain why capitalism should be welcomed as a positive event in the history of human development, despite its inadequacies and limitations.

First, Marx frequently argued that the emergence of capitalism works to the benefit of humankind because it drastically increases the productivity of human societies and advances the productive forces at humanity's disposal. As mentioned above, Marx believed that capitalism acts to concentrate and centralise all the means of production that had previously been scattered throughout the countryside in the possession of many different small-time producers. This centralisation process leads to numerous other spin-off effects, each of which contributes to the enhancement and improved efficiency of the society's productive capacities. Marx writes:

Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by the few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodological cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour only usable in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and with this, the international character of the capitalist regime.⁴²
Taken as a whole, these changes generate an enormous advance in society’s overall productive capacities, as is described by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*:

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature’s forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation or rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground — what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?\(^1\)

Indeed, capitalism’s productive forces reach such previously unknown heights, that they actually begin to *overproduce*. “Too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce”, they remark — a situation that “in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity.”\(^4\) In the case of India, political unity, the electric telegraph, a professionally trained army, the free press, steam power, science, and modern education are each identified by Marx as among the important gifts granted to the Indian subcontinent by British colonialism and by capitalism. Each of these contributes in its own way to increasing India’s productive powers, and they thus mark an advance in India’s historic evolution.\(^5\)

Secondly, Marx understood capitalism as a welcomed development because it uproots and displaces all the modes of production of the indigenous societies that existed “before” capitalism and colonialism. Not only did Marx believe that indigenous and “pre-capitalist” modes of production were less productive, but he also thought that they were generally just primitive and backward in comparison to capitalism. It is the sheer efficiency of capitalism which causes it to uproot these lesser-developed modes of production at every turn, he explains in the *Manifesto*:

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians’ intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois
mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.46

No other mode of production can possibly compete with the low cost of capitalism’s products, and accordingly, capitalism spreads itself throughout the world, overwhelming all other systems in its wake.

This is precisely the process that Marx described as having occurred under the British rule in India. “From immemorial times, Europe received the admirable textures of Indian labour,” he observed. But, with the introduction of capitalist industrial production this immediately changed. British industrial production became so efficient that it actually “inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons.” “It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian hand-loom and destroyed the spinning-wheel,” which previously had constituted “the pivots of the structure of that society”, he remarked. The flooding of the Indian market with cottons manufactured in England disrupted the delicate balance between Indian agriculture and manufacturing on which its village system, and indeed the entire Indian way of life, had long depended. The immediate results were devastating. “England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptoms of reconciliation yet appearing,” Marx wrote; “This loss of the old world, with no gain of a new one, imparts a particular kind of melancholy to the present misery of the Hindu, and separates Hindustan, ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions, and from the whole of its past history.” But, despite the short-term social disruption and misery that this transformation unleashed, Marx believed that the ancient structures and practices of Indian civilization were backward and unchanging to begin with, and hence, capitalism’s abolition of these structures could ultimately be greeted with good riddance. He wrote:
Ickening as it must be to human feeling to witness those myriads of industrious patriarchal and inoffensive social organizations disorganized and dissolved into their units, thrown into a sea of woes, and their individual members losing at the same time their ancient form of civilization, and their hereditary means of subsistence, we must not forget that these idyllic village-communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unsurpassing tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies [...] We must not forget that this undignified, stagnant, and vegetative life, that this passive sort of existence evoked on the other part, in contradistinction, wild, aimless, unbounded forces of destruction and rendered murder itself a religious rite in Hindustan. We must not forget that these little communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery, that they subjugated man to external circumstances instead of elevating man the sovereign of circumstances, that they transformed a self-developing social state into never changing natural destiny, and thus brought about a brutalizing worship of nature, exhibiting its degradation in the fact that man, the sovereign of nature, fell down on his knees in adoration of Kanuman, the monkey, and Sabbala, the cow.47

Friederich Engels had defended the French colonisation of Algeria, and the US annexation of Northern Mexico on similar grounds a number of years earlier.48

Thirdly, Marx welcomes capitalism and its colonial expansion because he believes that its emergence must occur before a future communist society can ever be achieved. He offers a number of different variations on this argument. In The German Ideology, for example, Marx and Engels argue that communism “is only possible as the act of dominant peoples ‘all at once’ and simultaneously,” which requires, “the universal development of productive power and interaction.” It is the historic role of capitalism to establish the conditions that enables such an act of people in unison, they contend. Capitalism’s “development of productive forces [...] is an absolutely necessary practical premise because [...] only with this universal development of productive forces is a universal commerce among men established which produces in all nations simultaneously the phenomenon of a ‘propertyless’ mass [...] and finally replaces local individuals with the world-historical, empirically universal individuals.” It is precisely capitalism’s imperialist tendency to uproot indigenous economies and societies as it spreads itself through the globe that is the condition of possibility for communism then,
Marx affirmed in typical Hegelian fashion. Without these conditions set in place, he argued that: 
“(1) communism could only exist locally; (2) the forces of interaction themselves could not have developed as universal and thus intolerable powers, but would have remained homebred, superstitious ‘conditions’; (3) any extension of interaction would abolish local communism.”49 Regarding India then, Marx stated that “England has to fulfil a double mission: one destructive, the other regenerative – the annihilation of old Asiatic society and, the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia.” “The bourgeois period of history has to create the material basis for the new world,” he affirmed.50

Finally, on a certain level, capitalism and its imperial expansion find a certain justification in Marx’s writing so far as they are both described as inevitable and unstoppable historical forces. Indeed, imperialism is described as a crucial process that is inherent to the logic of both the capitalist mode of production and that of world-historical development more generally. “The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe,” Marx and Engels write. “It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.”51 Much like Hegel, Marx argued that without the expansion of historical “movement” to societies like India, then such societies would be destined to remain “never changing” and hence with “no history at all.”52 Years later Marx would confirm this view in the Grundrisse where he argued that the oriental mode of production “hangs on the most tenaciously” of all the “pre-capitalist” modes of production, and that its progression to a higher stage is “hardly possible, except by means of altogether external influences.”53
Of course, to describe a historical process as inalterable is not quite the same as saying that it is morally praiseworthy. Indeed, we all know that Marx was astutely aware of the great horrors of the capitalist market, and that he relentlessly documented these horrors. However, the entire purpose of Marx’s dialectical analysis was not to defend one mode of production or another on moral grounds. Rather the objective was to scientifically describe the laws of motions in the materialist development of human societies. As Eugene Kamenka describes, “Marxism was a science; it did not advocate socialism, it showed that socialism was inevitable [...] It did not confront society with moral principles, but studied the ‘laws of motion’ that governed social change.”

Just as Marx sought to defend socialism by claiming that the mechanics of history make it unavoidable, so too, I would argue, did such mechanics lend de facto justification to the destruction of indigenous societies throughout the globe by the capitalist mode of production. The “destructive influence” of capitalism, at least in these initial periods of its development and dissemination, was nothing less than the product of the powerful forces of world-historical development, and the “inherent organic laws of political economy.” As such, it could not be resisted by indigenous societies with any seriousness.

Taken as a whole, this series of arguments amount to little short of a complete justification for both capitalism and its expansion to every corner of the globe through the vehicle of European conquest and colonialism. Marx justified the coercive imposition of capitalism on non-Western societies because he believed that it would make these societies more productive, that it would eradicate their own primitive and unchanging ways, that it was necessary to pass through this historical formation in order to progress
through to socialism, and finally, because he believed that this process was historically unstoppable in any case and thus understood any resistance to colonialism as mere confirmation of the backwardness of Indigenous peoples.

Far from being an exception to the rule, Marx’s writings on the British rule in India should not be interpreted as an isolated misjudgement within his oeuvre. Indeed, it is not simply Marx’s analysis of the situation in India itself that poses a problem. Much more seriously, these writings reveal a fundamental problem with the dialectical materialist method on the whole – a method that hinges on an understanding of all human societies according to a progressive succession of “stages” of “world-historical development.” Over the course of their lifetimes, Marx and Engels undertook a number of ambitious efforts to characterise each of these historical stages, and to arrange them according to an ascending hierarchy stretching from the most primitive to the most advanced forms of society. Capitalism may not have been the highest stage of human evolution possible on Marx’s account, but he did believe that it was the highest stage of development that had ever been achieved to date. He definitely believed that it was a higher mode of existence than had ever been obtained on any continent outside of Europe. Such being the case, the imposition of capitalism on the societies that were indigenous to these continents could constitute nothing other than a marked advance in the dialectical unfolding of world progress. Marx’s defence of imperialism in India thus reveals the unavoidable consequences of adopting the dialectical materialist method. As such this defence should be seen as fully consistent with the approach to the study of capitalism and human societies that he developed over the course of his lifetime.
Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, on the other hand, believe that their critique of the contemporary capitalist world order avoids the above-mentioned difficulties associated with the dialectical materialist method. "[T]his is not simply another variant of dialectical enlightenment," they claim; "We are not repeating the schema of an ideal teleology that justifies any passage in the name of a promised end." Nevertheless, borrowing an expression from Marx and Engels, we might say that, despite Hardt and Negri's best intentions, their account of Empire and the multitude remains unmistakably "stamped with the birthmarks" of dialectical materialist thought itself. Indeed, Hardt and Negri repeat many of the same assumptions regarding world-historical progress and development that have remained firmly embedded in Marxist thinking since its nineteenth century origins, and ultimately they admit their approach to be a certain form of "materialist teleology."

First, Hardt and Negri follow Marx's lead by claiming the dawning of the new phase of capitalism characterised by the juridical structure of Empire to be "an irresistible and irreversible" process. In fact, the description of Empire's materialization is presented in even more deterministic language than Marx himself ever used to describe the onset of industrial capitalism because whereas Marx described the emergence of capitalism as still a very much an incomplete process - as a system that was still bringing itself into being - Hardt and Negri repeatedly insist that the passage from imperialism to Empire is already complete. "Imperialism is over," they boldly claim. Much of the literature commenting on Empire has critiqued Hardt and Negri for sounding the death knell of imperialism too quickly. The escalation of the US "War on Terror" and its unilateral occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years have offered particularly
convincing evidence in support of those who argue that imperialism is, in fact, alive and well and that no such Empire exists as of yet. Nevertheless, Hardt and Negri insist that Empire is a fact and that it is here to stay. “We cannot move back to any previous social form,” they state, so Empire might as well be accepted as a done deal; “The struggle to contest and subvert Empire, as well as those to construct a real alternative, will thus take place on the imperial terrain itself.”

Secondly, like Marx before them, Hardt and Negri present this new stage of capitalism that they describe as a good thing in so far as it follows from a previous historical stage that was, in many respects, much worse. “Flirting with Hegel, one could say that the construction of Empire is good in itself but not for itself,” they claim. At the dawn of modernity, the multitude broke with the transcendental doctrines of theology and sought to discover the plane of immanence by bringing the powers of heaven down to earth and affirming this world, Hardt and Negri argue. However, this revolutionary project was immediately met with an opposing effort to restore order and recontain the multitude’s desire. The modern imperialist power structure, characterised by the doctrines of sovereignty and the nation-state, constitutes the embodiment of these counter-revolutionary efforts to erect a new transcendental authority. This new order was designed to discipline the multitude, and to inhibit the realisation of its full potential. “One of the most powerful operations of the modern imperialist power structures was to drive wedges among the masses of the globe, dividing them into opposing camps, or really a myriad of conflicting parties,” they argue. The enforcement of the rigid boundaries characteristic of this modern logic of rule imposed limits on the multitude and prohibited it from expressing itself in unison.
By dividing the multitude against itself and drafting the multitude to fight wars against its fellow members, nation-states served as “key agents of capitalist exploitation” and as a “central link in the chain of domination” in the imperialist world order of old. As such, the nation-state had to be destroyed by the multitude and in fact the international proletarian struggles of the past century were “really a project for the destruction of the nation-state and the construction of a new global community,” Hardt and Negri argue.\(^{64}\) With the passage to Empire then, they remark that “[o]ne might be tempted to say that proletarian internationalism actually ‘won’ in light of the fact that the powers of nation-states have declined in the recent passage toward globalization,” although it is perhaps more accurate to say that “what they fought for came about despite their defeat.”\(^{65}\)

Although the passage to Empire does not mark the final victory that the multitude has long yearned for, it undeniably marks a progression on Hardt and Negri’s account. “[W]e insist on asserting that the construction of Empire is a step forward in order to do away with any nostalgia for the power structures that preceded it and refuse any political strategy that involves returning to that old arrangement, such as trying to resurrect the nation-state to protect against global capital,” they explain; “We claim that Empire is better in the same way that Marx insists that capitalism is better than the forms of society and modes of production that came before it [...]. In the same way we can see that Empire does away with the cruel regimes of modern power and also increases the potential for liberation.”\(^{66}\)

The idea that the passage to Empire increases the multitude’s potential for liberation provides a further reason why this development ought to be embraced and celebrated. As explained above, Marx believed that capitalism provides the conditions
under which the proletariat can act all at once and in unison. Thus, communism could only be achieved by first moving through the stage of capitalism, Marx believed. In much the same way, Hardt and Negri argue that Empire lays down the conditions for the future attainment of a communist society and a more complete fulfilment of humanity’s potential. Now that the barriers of the nation-state have been effaced, the multitude and Empire each assume a universal form, confronting one another directly and squaring-off for one final showdown, they explain:

Having achieved the global level, capitalist development is faced directly with the multitude, without mediation [...]. Without that barrier [of the nation state], then, the situation of struggle is completely open. Capital and labour are opposed in a directly antagonistic form. This is the fundamental condition of every political theory of communism. 67

Whereas the imperial power of the previous modern world system was concentrated in the great metropoles of the imperial nations such as Washington or London, the global terrain of this new confrontation implies that this is no longer the case. The new imperial power is described as located in a “non-place” since no singular node in its network is granted priority over any other. Although it may seem that this non-place quality might render imperial power far more difficult to identify and target, Hardt and Negri argue that this actually opens up powerful new possibilities for the multitude’s liberation. The multitude is no longer confined by having to target one particular center of power because, in the age of Empire, every site of conflict is granted equal importance and centrality. “[T]he more capital extends its global networks of production and control, the more powerful any singular point of resistance can be [...] Empire presents a superficial world, the virtual center of which can be accessed immediately from any point across the surface,” they explain. 68 Empire thus becomes especially vulnerable since every struggle
of the global multitude "leaps immediately on the global level and attacks the imperial constitution in its generality."\textsuperscript{69}

On Hardt and Negri's account then, Empire represents a welcomed development so far as it sets in place the conditions of possibility for the multitude's eventual liberation. The "essential novelty of the imperial situation" is precisely that it empowers the multitude to confront power directly and in unison, and in so doing, raises the stakes of struggles that were previously thought to be of marginal importance. Empire thus "creates a greater potential for revolution than did the modern regimes of power" Hardt and Negri argue.\textsuperscript{70} The "counterpower" that will eventually take us beyond Empire can only emerge from within Empire, they contend. In order to achieve liberation we must therefore "push through Empire to come out the other side."\textsuperscript{71}

Ultimately then, despite Hardt and Negri's claim to escape the dialectical materialist model, they repeat several of it central tropes nevertheless, first by claiming that the passage to Empire is inescapable, secondly by suggesting that it is an improvement on the previous historical stage, and thirdly by arguing that it is necessary to pass "through" Empire in order to achieve communism. These commonalties with Marxian dialectics have very significant stakes and consequences, and are therefore not of merely incidental importance. By repeating these signature tendencies of historical materialism, so too do Hardt and Negri repeat the grievous inadequacies of this approach that were discussed above. For instance, the teleological approach that Hardt and Negri adopt resembles, in the end, a justification for the very same brutal and oppressive forms of capitalism and imperialism that they initially set out to condemn. Picking up on this tendency, Chantal Mouffe observes "many uncanny similarities between Hardt and
Negri's views and the third way theorists and cosmopolitan liberals”. Indeed, from the celebration of global capitalism's homogenising effects, to their triumphant claims about capital's inevitable victory over the nation-state, and the portrayal of a global sovereign as a marked progression in historical development, Hardt and Negri's vision bears a disconcerting likeness to Habermas's cosmopolitan vision discussed in Chapter One, despite the critical pretensions of the authors. One commentator has even gone so far as to label *Empire* a "counsel of surrender" and "a manifesto on behalf of global capital", while another remarks that it "is an argument compatible, ironically, with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and Hayek."73

Perhaps even more troubling however is the question as to what Hardt and Negri’s teleology has to say to those peoples in regions of the world that have not yet been fully integrated under Empire’s global reach. We have seen that Marx justified the spread of capitalism to regions of the world where it had yet to be fully established by arguing that this process was unavoidable anyway, that capitalism was actually a better system than those to which these other regions were subjected, and that the passage of these societies through capitalism was required for the world to eventually achieve liberation. Given that Hardt and Negri make these same claims regarding the passage to Empire, it must be asked whether they too would advocate Empire’s imposition on those peoples who have not yet been assimilated by the imperial machine.

This is a question that Hardt and Negri deliberately avoid by relentlessly asserting that the passage to Empire is already complete – that Empire and global capital already "rule over the entire ‘civilized’ world”, that there is no *outside* to Empire, and that Empire governs over a *smooth space*.74 Indeed, if such is the case – that is, if there really
is no outside to Empire – then Hardt and Negri do not have to address the difficult consequence that their analysis entails: that any outside that may still exist would be better off if it were assimilated and made part of the inside. What is perhaps most revealing about Hardt and Negri’s analysis then is how they simply tend to remain quiet with respect to the peoples and regions of the world which fit less comfortably into their grand narrative framework. Kevin C. Dunn has remarked that “Despite Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s attempt to examine the supposed changing relations of power in world politics, they surprisingly fail to provide many non-Western examples for their grand theory”. Dunn argues that this silence is unavoidable for a grand narrative such as Empire because when the experiences of many non-Western peoples are made explicit, “Hardt and Negri’s central claims concerning sovereignty, the state, and the new spatiality of Empire are put in considerable doubt.”

The omission of the African continent from Hardt and Negri’s model has drawn particular criticism. Dunn claims that Africans are treated like “unwanted actors in their grand theatre,” while David Moore suggests that that Africa constitutes a “black hole at the middle of Empire.” Dunn and Moore both argue that Africa never experienced modernity in the same way as did Europe and the Americas. Consequently, to proclaim that the entire world has already moved beyond this particular experience of modernity and into a post-modern non-place of global politics where we are all subjected to the same universal regime is to disregard and downplay the importance of the particular challenges faced by peoples of Africa today. As Moore asks, if the era of “modernity” is said to have come to an end as Hardt and Negri claim, then “what about those whom it has not yet fully subsumed?” Moore notes that many of the historical process that are
said to constitute the modern era (according to Hardt and Negri), such as primitive accumulation and the consolidation of the nation-state continue to ravage and disrupt the African continent to this very day. Should Africans hope to accelerate this process so that they can properly become a part of Empire and finally join the rest of the world in its struggle as a unified multitude? “Will they desire to be Taylorized, Fordized, and disciplined all the way to the full subsumption of their labor”, Moore asks. On Hardt and Negri’s account, the answer would seemingly be affirmative, because as Moore notes, “Empire’s map does not indicate any turns off the main road leading to alternative structures of political economy or identity.” The exclusions and violence that result from such teleological thinking are drawn out further in the following section.

**Fourth Lesson of Resistance: The End of History – Problematising the Revolutionary Imaginary**

By the end of the Second World War, Albert Camus was regarded as one of the foremost thinkers in French public life. It was from the influential heights of this intellectual milieu that Camus caused great discomfort among the French Left of his age by renouncing Marxism and launching a scathing attack against the doctrine. Just as the Cold War between American capitalism and Soviet communism began to heat up, Camus’s publication of *L’homme revolte* in 1951 dared to draw powerful equivalencies between the most central tenets of Marxist philosophy and the Soviet Union’s extermination camps. The uproar which ensued saw slanderous insults levelled against Camus in the French journal *Les Temps Modernes*, charging that Camus was a second-rate philosopher who had betrayed the Left, and finally led to the well-known falling-out between Camus and France’s other intellectual giant of the age – Jean-Paul Sartre.
Regardless of the fervour generated at the time, today Camus’s critique of Marx remains as compelling as it is devastating. Horrified by the monstrosities of the Second World War, Camus soon found himself sandwiched between the atomic bombs of capitalism’s military industrial war-machine on the one side, and those of an equally cruel and ruthless communist empire on the other. Perhaps it is thus unsurprising that Camus’s chief intellectual task was to grapple with the absurdity of the ontological condition in which he found humanity existing. The fact that we find ourselves thrust into a world devoid of any sense or higher meaning served as Camus’s entry point into philosophical inquiry. Neither God nor any transcendental moral code can offer a firmly grounded purpose to our lives, he believed – despite our insatiable demand for the endorsement of our existence, each one of us is condemned to die an unreconciled death. Humanity’s existence is absurd precisely because our desperate holler for meaning in the universe is eternally greeted by an empty, hollow silence echoing back at us. “In a universe suddenly divested of all illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger,” Camus wrote; “His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land.”81

To live in the absurd condition requires one to both recognise our crushing fate, and to refuse it all the same – it is both the “awareness and rejection of death.”82 To live the absurd life one must not deny that we face an absence of meaning, but nor need one embrace the world as it is in all of its injustice and suffering. By its very nature, “the absurd has meaning only in so far as it is not agreed to,” Camus remarks.83 To live the absurd life is thus to live the life of the rebel who acknowledges the absence of meaning and justice in the cosmos, but who refuses to accept this fact all the same. True rebellion
is an unending and irresolvable struggle that must be lived day in and day out, without any hope of success, unto death. If anything can lend a certain meaning and validation to our life then it could only be the absurdity of this struggle itself, Camus suggested.

Rather than living this absurd existence of rebellion however, many of us attempt to simply deny the absurd condition altogether by attempting to discover a fundamental truth or objective that underlies human existence after all. Indeed, the rebel lies eternally at risk of tricking her/himself into believing that some such meaning does exist, and thereby abandoning her/his rebellious origins. In the place of crumbled churches new temples are built, Camus observed. The Jacobin belief in a revolutionary moment capable of restoring justice and rationality to an otherwise cruel and irrational world exemplifies one such effort to deny the absurd. Marxism provides yet another textbook example so far as it carries on this revolutionary mythology and messianically prophesies the coming of a future classless society at which point all of society’s antagonisms will finally be dissolved and a certain resolution to history achieved. Marxism, and the entire revolutionary tradition more generally, effectively replaces the Beyond with the Later On, Camus observed.84

Like Camus, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe emphatically reject the idea that any such harmonious end of history could ever possibly exist. In her recent work titled *On the Political*, Mouffe adopts the insights of Carl Schmitt and argues that social relations necessarily entail we/they distinctions. This does not mean that all such relations are at all times antagonistic – or in other words, *political* – but it does mean that any such relations can become politicized at any time. Any we/they distinction can become “the locus of an antagonism” she argues, and thus “the possibility of emergence
of antagonism can never be eliminated.” It is therefore mistaken to believe that any historical formation could dispose of antagonistic relations once and for all, Mouffe argues; “Antagonism [...] is an ever present possibility; the political belongs to our ontological condition.”85 New subject positions can always emerge to mount a political challenge to the prevailing social arrangement where no such challenge previously existed. Indeed, as Camus remarked: “Just as aristocratic society has been succeeded by a society without an aristocracy but with classes, it must be concluded that the society of classes will be succeeded by a classless society, but animated by a new antagonism still to be defined.”86

The very notion of a future society which could end human conflict and unite all of humanity as one, must necessarily entail that all existing social identities be universally subsumed into one singular overarching category, and that no new factional identities be permitted to re-emerge from that unitary category. Indeed, such an idea is nearly as frightening as it is inconceivable. But whether or not such a critique is warranted in relation to Marx is another question. It is often stated that Marx revealed very little regarding the precise form that the future communist society would take. He did say that there would be a period of revolutionary transition from capitalism to communist society, and that this transition would be paralleled by a political transition in which the state apparatus would be controlled by a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.87 Nevertheless, Marx was also clear in explaining that the purpose of this transitory period was not to entrench the rule of a new political class, but rather the purpose was to work for the elimination of the very idea of classes and politics altogether. “The condition for the emancipation of the working class is the abolition of every class,”
he tells us; “The working class, in the course of its development, will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power properly so-called, since political power is precisely the official expression of antagonism in civil society.” This statement could not demonstrate with greater clarity that Marx’s vision of a future socialist society entailed the eradication of social antagonisms and, consequently, the obliteration of the political itself (hence the reason why the state would eventually be allowed to whither away). Communism “turns all existing conditions into conditions of unity,” he maintained.

However, Camus’s point is not simply that the teleological belief in the coming of the end of history is unrealistic and impossible to ever achieve. Much more seriously, Camus charged that such teleological thinking results in systematic extermination and the rationalised mass-murder. In order to wage a revolution in the name of the future unity and eternal harmony of the human species, one must endlessly resolve to eliminate and suppress all dissenting subject positions that presently exist, or that might arise in the future. This is why “[r]evolutionary governments are, most of the time, obliged to be war governments,” Camus explained. It becomes “simultaneously war, obscurantism and tyranny, desperately affirming that one day it will be liberty, fraternity and truth.” Indeed, if the revolution seeks to unite humanity in its universally proper condition, then there can be room for no more than one single type of revolutionary subject that is destined to become the future universal subject position of all. From Marx’s perspective, this revolutionary subject could only possibly have been the proletariat. “Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class,” he and Engels tell us. This helps to explain why Marx adopted
such a remarkably hostile and brazenly dismissive attitude toward all those other social
groups and classes which each contested capitalism on the basis of the injustices that they
had suffered in light of their own collective experiences. Marx dismisses these groups
and their resistance. The resistance of these groups is “not revolutionary, but
conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of
history,” states the *Communist Manifesto*.93

For instance, Marx is well known for having poured particular scorn on the
unemployed, who he and Engels derogatorily referred to as the “lumpenproletariat.” In
his famous debate with Marx surrounding the First International, Mikhail Bakunin had
argued that this class of people, which lived in even greater squalor than the factory
workers themselves, had been entirely rejected by the capitalist order and thus posed a far
greater threat to that order than the proletariat ever could ever muster precisely because
they held no vested interest in maintaining that system. In contrast, the proletariat, which
Bakunin referred to as “the aristocracy of labour,”94 retained at least some interest in
upholding the system that provided them with their means of survival, and could also be
quite easily placated with small offers of advancement. Nevertheless, Marx resolutely
denied that the “lumpenproletariat” constituted a properly revolutionary class at all,
discarded their protest as mere reaction, and preferred to see these types of people be
eliminated rather than being taken seriously. Indeed, Marx’s polemical attacks against
capitalism’s most downtrodden and marginalised people contain notably virulent
language. He described them variously as the “offal, refuse of all classes,”95 and “the
dangerous class, the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest
layers of the old society.” 96 Its material conditions render these people unfit for
revolution and "prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue," Marx insisted.  

In a very similar vein, Marx also discounted the seriousness of rural peoples – such as farmers, peasants and other agrarian workers – as a progressive revolutionary force, and denied that they had much to contribute of any importance to an anti-capitalist movement. This position is best expressed in Marx’s reflections on the 1851 coup of Napoléon III in France. Here Marx argues that, in France at this time, the peasantry lived a secluded and sheltered existence, cut off from each other as much as they were from rest of society. He argued that since each peasant family produced most of the goods which they require for themselves, "their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse". Furthermore, this rural livelihood hinders the future development of the productive forces in agrarian societies, which then results in even further isolation, backwardness, and marginalisation. "Their field of production, the small holding, permits no division of labor in its cultivation, no application of science, and therefore no multifariousness of development, no diversity of talent, no wealth of social relationships," Marx declared. Taken together, these isolated communities ultimately constituted something akin to the homologous and bland existence of a sack of potatoes, he concluded. 

Not only did Marx believe that such an atomised and antiquated lifestyle would hinder the capacity of these people to organise themselves politically as a class, but he even went so far as to suggest that the extreme segregation of agrarian people from one another calls into question the extent to which they could be considered a class at all. "Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants,
and the identity of their interests forms no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not constitute a class,” he argued. Thus, if agrarian peoples were to be defended from the cruelties of capitalism, then this duty would have to fall on someone else, given that these peoples were “incapable of asserting their class interest in their own name.” Agrarian peoples “cannot represent themselves, they must be represented,” Marx concluded; “Hence they find their natural ally and leader in the urban proletariat, whose task it is to overthrow the bourgeois order.” This vanguardist attitude towards the capacity of rural peoples to stand up for their own interests sheds additional light on Marx’s lack of enthusiasm for the resistance against English colonialism in India, which so happened to be an overwhelmingly agrarian nation. Indeed, this also helps to explain why Marx placed such great importance on Europe as the principle source of all revolutionary anti-capitalist resistance in the world. Outside of the handful of Europe’s industrial cities, most of the rest of the peoples of the world lived a predominantly agrarian existence in the nineteenth century and therefore remained incapable of defending their own interests in Marx’s eyes.

It is no wonder that Marx showed such disdain for such non-proletarian peoples. If the socialist revolution was indeed to put a cessation to all division as he had hoped, then ultimately something would have to be done not only with the bourgeoisie, but also with every other class (aside from the proletariat class), since the very existence of these other classes posed a persistent threat of rupturing Marx’s dream of humanity’s future reconciliation. Marx found a simple solution to this problem however by asserting that these classes faced an “impending transfer into the proletariat” in any case. “The other classes decay and finally disappear” he explained, and thus, at the moment of the great
revolutionary crisis, only the two important classes would be left standing face to face, prepared for one last war to end all wars. However, Camus remarks that once these classes actually refused to dissipate after all, "[t]his particular simplification was to prove expensive for the kulaks who constituted more than five million historic exceptions to be brought, by death and deportation, within the Marxist paradigm." In the long run, such exterminations would hardly matter though – for no society of the future would shed tears for the victims of such atrocities if it was their very suffering which led to the creation of the "Eternal City." Camus’s moving objection to this teleological logic was not simply to state that ‘the ends do not justify the means’; rather, the thrust of Camus’s argument was that history has no ends – all it has are means.

According to Laclau and Mouffe, in the period following 1896 it became increasingly apparent to European socialists that the future unity of Europe’s working class was not as set in stone as Marx had believed. With this awakening, the Marxist paradigm reached a state of crisis as it could no longer adequately account for the continued proliferation of new subject positions and persistent ruptures within the ranks of the working class itself. Marxism “finally lost its innocence at this time,” Laclau and Mouffe explain in Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. They then begin a genealogical march through the variety of different ways in which Marxists responded to this crisis by having to “think those discontinuities” within the proletariat in ways other than Marx himself had. Nevertheless, while Marxists from Luxembourg to Sorel and from Althusser to Gramsci each attempted to account for this plurality of subject positions differently, ultimately they all refused to give up on the idea that the working class would play the historic role of the central protagonist in the anti-capitalist struggle, and that
once the socialist revolution was finally achieved, all of these other divisions would disappear and unity would be attained.

This type of thinking has severely restrained the socialist movement from realising its full potential as a radical movement in the past, just as it continues to do in the present, Laclau and Mouffe argue. Indeed, it is no longer strictly the other classes that are silenced and excluded when the working class is granted centrality as the sole revolutionary agent. Today, just as capitalism affects people of countless different backgrounds in countless different ways, so too can capitalism be radically contested from a wide-range of different subject positions, not all of which correspond to a class identity in the properly Marxist sense. Today, many different groups of people oppose aspects of capitalism on the basis of their own perspective and lived experiences, including critical members of groups from all walks of life who are uncomfortable with many different aspects of neo-liberal globalization. Members of each diverse collectivity put forward their own critique of specific capitalist relations on the basis of the unique manner in which capitalist relations intersect with other forms of power to act upon them. This is not to say that each and every one of these collectivities is inherently anti-capitalist. But, since capitalist power intertwines with the unique technologies of power encountered by each diverse collectivity situated in their own particular relations, it thus follows that members of these collectivities critique, contest, seek to modify, and even seek to transform at least some capitalist relations in the course of their engagement in their own struggles as particular types of subjects. Diverse collectivities are thus able to engage in anti-capitalist struggle without having to renounce their own particular identity and without becoming subsumed within a universal anti-capitalist subject position. Each
collectivity can thereby combat capitalist power on the basis of the particular manner in which it operates on them, while also remaining in solidarity with others engaged in their own struggles against the capitalist present.

So far as Marx is concerned, members of diverse groups could be welcomed into the socialist movement, but only so long as they participate in this movement as working class subjects and thereby renounce any other anti-capitalist identity that one might adopt. Marx thereby requires all properly anti-capitalist subjects to struggle for working class interests alone rather than permitting them to resist capitalism from the position and perspective of any of these other types of subjects. In order for a unitary revolutionary identity to be achieved, the working class must therefore either overwhelm or eliminate not only every other class distinction, but also every other possible identity formation. To deem this one perspective as the only truly revolutionary perspective however, and to forcefully demand the assimilation of all these identities under one single category as such, is to deny the creative possibility and radical potential that an anti-capitalist movement incorporating such a vast array of different voices and experiences holds. “Only if it is accepted that the subject positions cannot be led back to a positive and unitary founding principle – only then can pluralism be considered radical,” Laclau and Mouffe state.103

Yet, even contemporary Marxists such as Hardt and Negri have failed to adequately heed such lessons, choosing instead to remain faithful to the belief in a future devoid of all agonism, and continuing to believe in the ability of a proletarian class to constitute a meta-revolutionary subject capable of bringing such a world about. It is true that Hardt and Negri do demonstrate a concern not to exclude people from their
revolutionary project. In fact, the very notion of the multitude appears to be their way of conceptualising a global movement that incorporates *all* people and which is not strictly limited to the European industrial working class that has traditionally been championed by Marxists. Indeed, the great victory that was achieved with the emergence of Empire was precisely that, by becoming a fully global system of command, Empire shattered all the rigid boundaries and barriers of the modern imperialist order that had generated exclusions and kept the multitude divided in the past. In the absence of these barriers, the multitude is able to move freely throughout the globe without constraint. “Autonomous movement is what defines the place proper to the multitude. Increasingly less will passports or legal documents be able to regulate our movements across borders,” Hardt and Negri explain.\(^{104}\) This global condition thus enables the multitude to finally unite in the interests of the “common species”\(^ {105}\) as a fully inclusive planetary movement, undivided by the modern categories of power such as race, nationality, culture, and ethnicity. “We believe that toward the end of challenging and resisting Empire and its world market, it is necessary to pose any alternative at an equally global level,” they state.\(^ {106}\) Only such an alternative would permit the “bringing together all populations and all languages in a common journey”\(^ {107}\) and the constitution of “a multicoloured Orpheus of infinite power.”\(^ {108}\) Hardt and Negri thus believe that their revolutionary actor of the multitude *does* embrace plurality *precisely because it is a universal subject* – if the multitude is universal, then naturally everyone must be included as a part of it, their logic implies.

On these grounds Hardt and Negri vehemently oppose all resistance that is rooted in “local” or non-universal identities. They contend that it is actually these *local* forms of
resistance that are exclusionary and fail to embrace plurality since they rely on the
reinforcement of “fixed-boundaries” to “shield themselves” from Empire rather than
embracing the unconstrained and universal movement of the multitude.\textsuperscript{109} For instance,
considering the actions of the Black Panthers and other black nationalist groups that are
well known for having organised African American communities in the United States by
creating community-based projects such as meal programs and neighbourhood
development initiatives, Hardt and Negri state that, despite the apparently progressive
aspects of such organising, these “progressive elements are accompanied by their
reactionary shadows. The repressive forces of nation and people feed off the self-
valorization of the community and destroy its multiplicity.”\textsuperscript{110} More generally, they
reproach all such attempts to “recompose sites of resistance that are founded on the
identities of social subjects or national and regional groups.”\textsuperscript{111} In their eyes, this
“localisation of struggles” is not just “entirely reactive”, but further it is “both false and
damaging”.\textsuperscript{112} It is \textit{false} because this approach “can easily devolve into a kind of
primordialism that fixes and romanticizes social relations and identities.” “We cannot
move back to any previous social form,” they warn.\textsuperscript{113} It is \textit{damaging} because such local
struggles are “destined to end up as a kind of ghetto,”\textsuperscript{114} and furthermore they “actually
feed into and support the development of the capitalist imperial machine.”\textsuperscript{115} Even the
idea of an “international” struggle does not quite capture the spirit of the multitude as
Hardt and Negri envision it, since international implies a coming together of different
people or nations into “a kind of consensus” that “preserves their differences but
negotiates some limited agreement” rather than constituting a properly universal
subject.\textsuperscript{116} “Today’s celebrations of the local can be regressive and fascistic when they
oppose circulations and mixture, and thus reinforce the walls of nation, ethnicity, race, people, and the like [...] The concrete universal is what allows the multitude to pass from place to place and make its place its own,” they contend.\textsuperscript{117} Evidently then, Hardt and Negri claim that Empire must be met with a “counter-Empire” can be interpreted quite literally.\textsuperscript{118}

Hardt and Negri also reject the usefulness of both postmodern and postcolonial theory for similar reasons. It is not that they doubt the commitments of such theorists to democracy, equality, and even to anti-capitalism; however, they do believe these theories to be outmoded since they focus on the deconstruction of modern forms of power and, in doing so, target an adversary that has already ceased to be of relevance in the contemporary world. Postcolonial theory, for instance, “remains primarily concerned with colonial sovereignty,” which makes it suitable for studying history they claim, but not for studying contemporary power.\textsuperscript{119} But, what makes these theories even worse according to Hardt and Negri, is that both postcolonialism and postmodernism advocate the “politics of difference” in order to defy and escape the binaries and boundaries of modern power and sovereignty. By endorsing difference as such, these theorists actually play directly into the hands of the contemporary capitalist ideology and the logic of the world market, they argue. “[P]ostmodernist and postcolonial theorists who advocate a politics of difference, fluidity, and hybridity in order to challenge the binaries and essentialism of modern sovereignty have been outflanked by the strategies of power,” they write; “Power has evacuated the bastion they are attacking and has circled around to their rear to join them in the assault in the name of difference.” In fact, following Jameson and Harvey, Hardt and Negri argue that contemporary forms of power are not
only “resistant” to demands for difference, but are said to actually “thrive off them.”  

The world market likes nothing more than the free movement of trade and capital unhindered by any national borders and fully capable of providing commodities to suit the diverse needs of all people, no matter what their race, creed, or culture might be. Regardless of its intentions then, “the postmodernist politics of difference not only is ineffective against but can even coincide with and support the functions and practices of imperial rule,” they claim.

But, if the multitude is neither permitted to forge resistance grounded in any “local” identity without becoming “regressive and fascist”, nor permitted to advocate a postcolonial politics of difference without inadvertently reinforcing capitalist ideologies, then it must be asked in what capacity people are permitted to contest Empire? One answer to this question that Hardt and Negri provide, somewhat unsurprisingly, is that when referring to the multitude, all along what they have really been talking about has actually been the proletariat. However, to equate the multitude with the proletariat is not to simply restrict its reach to the “industrial working class” or the “male mass factory worker,” as Marx did in the past, they insist. “We need to recognise that the very subject of labor and revolt has changed profoundly,” they state, and that “[t]he composition of the proletariat has transformed”. Today, the proletarian class includes everyone whose labour is “directly or indirectly exploited by and subjected to capitalist norms of production and reproduction.” But production has widened its scope too, they insist. We are now living in an era of “immaterial labour” and “biopolitical production” that is performed by all people and at all times. “In the biopolitical context of Empire [...] the
production of capital converges ever more with the production and reproduction of social life itself,” they explain. Hence:

This wide landscape of biopolitical production allows us finally to recognise the full generality of the concept of proletariat [...] As labor moves outside the factory walls, it is increasingly difficult to maintain the fiction of any measure of the working day and thus separate the time of production from the time of reproduction, or work time from leisure time. There are no time clocks to punch on the terrain of biopolitical production; the proletariat produces in all its generality everywhere all day long.\textsuperscript{123}

Despite retaining the category of the proletariat as the subject of revolt and revolution then, Hardt and Negri believe that they are not excluding other subject positions from the global struggle because the proletariat is now a universal category that already incorporates everyone within its very own identity. Just as the whole world has already been subject to capitalist relations (hence the imperialist expansion of capitalism is no longer necessary), so too has the whole world already been submerged into the proletariat (and hence the eradication of all other forms of identity is no longer necessary either). “This fact of being within capital and sustaining capital is what defines the proletariat as a class,” they state.\textsuperscript{124}

But, equating the universal category of the multitude with the universal category of the proletariat still does not answer the question posed above: In what capacity are people permitted to contest Empire? If, the proletariat and the multitude include everyone at all times, then how can it possibly act as a political, or as a revolutionary, subject? Hardt and Negri certainly have good reasons for wanting to avoid the types of violent exclusions that Marx’s category of the proletariat entailed, and it is thus understandable why their conception of the world-historical agent is a subject that is intended to include all. However, Hardt and Negri also want this subject that includes everyone to be a political subject and, even more, a revolutionary subject. Hardt and
Negri thus want to have their cake and eat it too. Such is not possible. One cannot have a universal subject and still have politics at the same time. The multitude, therefore, cannot possibly exist in the universal form that Hardt and Negri describe unless it is reduced to a fundamentally apolitical actor.

Yet, as several commentators have noted, the subject that Hardt and Negri describe is not apolitical when, for instance, in the closing sections of the book they demand that it be granted the rights to global citizenship, to a social wage, and to “reappropriation.”\textsuperscript{125} To claim such political rights on behalf of the multitude requires it to renounce its universality after all and to thereby “set the stage for politics, difference, and exclusion,” as Paul Passavant remarks. “In practice, there would be struggles in which the rights claims that Hardt and Negri have put forward might be considered antagonistic to other rights that people believe are essential to justice,” Passavant notes, and even if these rights could be agreed to by all in the abstract, still disagreement is liable to arise when these rights are actually implemented in a concrete way.\textsuperscript{126} Indeed, as Ernesto Laclau comments, “All struggle is the struggle of concrete social actors for particular objectives, and nothing guarantees that these objectives will not clash with each other.”\textsuperscript{127}

This observation helps to explain why, whenever it is suddenly called into political action, the multitude reveals itself to be not quite as universal as is otherwise claimed. For instance, Hardt and Negri celebrate the birth of a new conception of immanent sovereignty that was born with the United States, and which is based on “the multitude’s power to construct its own political institutions and constitute society.”\textsuperscript{128} They see one of the earliest expressions of this “radically democratic” freedom as
existing on the American frontier with its “open and continuous process of expansion” allowing the multitude to construct and reconstruct itself immanently. Yet even Hardt and Negri admit that this purportedly immanent and unbounded freedom of the multitude, and in fact the existence of the “frontier” itself, would not have been possible without “wilfully ignoring the existence of the Native Americans.”129 Peter Fitzpatrick attentively remarks that “the freedom advanced by Hardt and Negri’s new republican people [...] is a freedom specifically constituted in the sacrifice of indigenous peoples.” This example demonstrates that the moment the multitude is called upon as a political agent to exercise its democratic self-constituting freedom in a worldly context, it must first demarcate who is included in its ranks and who is not.

Further, if the multitude is the universal and quintessentially revolutionary subject, then how would Hardt and Negri account for all those people in the world who are subjected to capitalist relations but do not fit Hardt and Negri’s description of the boundlessly mobile class of immaterial labourers? In his discussion of Africa’s place in Empire, David Moore notes that “One only has to come down to earth to remember that the millions of African refugees constitute a qualitatively different realm of existence than that lived by those rendered borderless by jets and cyberspace.”130 Further, “most of Africa’s exploited have not ‘moved outside the factory walls’ because they have yet to be inside.” So, are Africans included as a part of Hardt and Negri’s universal subject? If not, then are their struggles “for food in cities, for land in the country, to avoid war and famine”131 of equal worth as those of the multitude? Or, are the people of African expected, once again, to wait on the margins for the really important world-historical
events and revolutions to occur because their own struggles are just too antiquated and uninteresting to have any real prominence in the age of Empire?

Ultimately, Hardt and Negri’s revolutionary meta-subject completely fails to be of any conceptual usefulness because one simply cannot uphold the belief in a universal subject that includes everyone and remains capable of engaging in real world political struggles at the same time. In fact, the only way that one might maintain the belief in such a universal subject at all would be to forcefully subsume and assimilate all other identity formations into one singular universal category (à la Marx). Such an undertaking requires a tremendous commitment to the eternal conduct of war, repression, and genocide. Ultimately, as Ernesto Laclau has argued, what Empire is sorely lacking is a theory of articulation, which would allow diverse peoples of different subject positions to articulate their own local struggle against capitalism with those of other people in their own localities. Only such a theory would make a radically plural anti-capitalist politics genuinely possible.

There are three lessons to be drawn from this section. First, anti-capitalists must rid themselves of their Jacobin revolutionary imaginary, obsessed with the belief that a single political moment can resolve the world’s great antagonisms once and for all. We need not give-up on our hopes for a radical transformation of the world as we know it, but we must be very wary of calls for revolution. Secondly, and further, anti-capitalists must forget about the idea that victory is only achieved once no such divisions and distinctions continue to exist within the ranks of humanity. No such end of history or final solution is ever possible on earth. In fact, in the past, it has tended to be precisely these types of final solutions that, more often than not, have created the real problems in
the first place. Anti-capitalists must therefore consider how to approach the world’s problems without issuing final solutions. Thirdly, and lastly, the struggle against capitalism must embrace radical plurality by articulating the diverse resistances of diverse peoples in a wide range of spaces and localities. Only in this manner can the anti-capitalist movement be permitted to fight on all fronts and thereby realise its most powerful, radical, and vibrant potential.

In conclusion, we can now see that Marx failed in his effort to ground dialectical analysis in “material” conditions and to thereby stand Hegel on his head as has often been claimed. In fact, Marx’s “dialectical materialism” hinges on the same categories of historical development that he inherited from Hegel himself (and indirectly from Kant’s Universal History). Further, Marx inherited Hegel’s dialectical model which led him to assume that the development of these historical stages proceeds through their contradiction and their eventual overcoming, implying that all of humanity’s great divisions will one day culminate in higher stage of unity. Rather than carefully examining the real world “material” conditions of the capitalist mode of production in the wide variety of different societies and contexts it is situated in throughout the world, Marx instead remained trapped in Hegelian idealist categories and conceptual frameworks that led him to believe that capitalism would develop more or less identically along a “scientific” and predictable trajectory regardless of the diverse real world contexts in which it was to operate. Consequently, Marx’s idealism blinded him to the actual historical conditions of capitalism’s development, which are not, and can never be, identical to that which any grand narrative presupposes. Moreover, this led Marx to completely misread and misunderstand all those diverse forms of resistance that
capitalism encountered which did not accord with his conceptual schema. He thus interpreted these forms of resistance to be nothing more than reactionary vestiges of previous historical formations that were unwilling to change and progress, but which would soon disappear in any case as soon as history continued to unfold. Marx, the godfather of materialism was, evidently, not materialist enough.

It is precisely this tradition of the grand narrative that Hardt and Negri carry forth, certain that this time they have got it right after having discovered that there was actually one finally category of development called Empire that Marx had failed to foresee, and thus explaining why capitalist development did not play out as he had predicted. However, as this chapter has shown, so far as they remain committed to the idea that world history unfolds according to a grand narrative, Hardt and Negri remain rooted in the tradition of Hegelian idealism and are thus not any more successful at accounting for the actual material conditions of capitalism's real world-historical development than were either Marx or Hegel before them.
CHAPTER THREE
A Fifth Lesson of Resistance:
Power Relations and Practical Systems

[If a factory is torn down, but the rationality which produced it left standing, than that rationality will simply produce another factory. If revolution destroys a systemic government, but the systemic patterns of thought that produced that government are left intact, then those patterns of thought will repeat themselves in the succeeding government.

– Robert Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

Power in Modern Western Political Theory
One of the distinguishing features of modern Western political theory, at least prior to Nietzsche, has been its tendency to conceive of political power as something that is located in overarching structures of domination and which govern society by imposing its will directly on subjugated individuals using force, physical coercion, violence, or the threat thereof. Although similar depictions can be found in earlier periods throughout the history of political thought, the conception of power as something imposed unilaterally from above can be said to have gained particular force with the emergence of the doctrine of sovereignty in early modern Europe.

Barry Hindess has argued that this top-down model of sovereign power stems largely from the tendency of modern Western theory to conceptualise power as a “quantitative phenomenon” and as “a capacity to act.” In order to exemplify this point, Hindess turns to Thomas Hobbes as a paradigmatic thinker of early modern political philosophy and as the preeminent theorist of sovereignty. Hobbes’s conception of power is straightforwardly an individual’s capacity “to obtain some future apparent Good”.¹ Although this capacity can take many forms – ranging from one’s strength and nobility to one’s riches and friends – ultimately all of these forms can be reduced to a single quantifiable substance, or as Hindess describes, “some common stuff, some shared
underlying capacity or essence of effectiveness, which each of those attributes possesses in some quantity.\textsuperscript{2} It is thus assumed that an individual who has a higher quantity of this substance called "power" will prove more able to achieve their desired ends than those who have less.

On Hobbes's account, the quantity of power held by any one individual can be transferred to any other individual, thereby creating a combined total of power that is greater than that previously held by any one individual in their isolation. Hobbes thus imagined that if enough individuals were to invest their power into a single person (or assembly of people) so as to create an accumulated total of power that would easily overwhelm any other combination of groups or individuals in the society, then that person or assembly could be said to constitute the supreme authority of the society and the source of all laws governing individuals within the given territory. As Hindess explains, from Hobbes's time on the political power in any given society was thought to be located in a singular and unified center of authority known as the sovereign from which all laws and legislation were thought to emanate. Hindess moves on to describe a number of variations on this model which subsequently emerged in modern political theory, but he argues that the basic observations made by Hobbes regarding what sovereign power is and what it should be remained "at the heart of what is now regarded as modern political theory."\textsuperscript{3}

Indeed, this vision of sovereignty inherited from Hobbes and from early modern political theory more generally, would not only become the cornerstone of modern political theory, but this vision would also provide the basic constitutional logic for all of politics in the modern world. As Warren Magnusson has argued, the rise of the modern
period entailed a violent and coordinated effort to “fix politics in a particular form, to centre politics upon the sovereign institutions of the state”;\(^4\) thereby entrenching sovereignty as fundamental among the “organising principles of the new world order”.\(^5\) Politics came to be enclosed within the state, which was consequently regarded as the highest authority in its given territory. Not only were individuals deemed subject to the state’s command, but so too were all other organizations and sources of power, such as businesses or organized religions. As Magnusson nicely describes:

> Each state was a neat container with its own laws, its own government, its own economy, its own society, and its own culture, and thus its own politics. At the center of each modern state was some sort of sovereign authority – no longer a king simply, but perhaps a parliament like Britain’s or an even more complex set of institutions like the ones created by the U.S. Constitution. Politics – serious politics, at least – seemed to focus on these centres […]\(^6\)

Given that the state came to be thought of as the source of all power and authority as such, it should be no surprise that, likewise, early political scientists were fixated on the state and state institutions and focused their political inquiry on this center. In the course of so doing, political science largely reproduced the boundaries of political space that were carved off in the formation of the modern world, while also reproducing the assumption that politics must be centred on a sovereign of one form or another. As Magnusson argues, even Marxist analyses, which locate power in economic relations rather than the state itself, still “reflect a basic assumption of sovereignty, which is that politics must have a single axis of struggle.”\(^7\)

Michel Foucault observed that the ultimate consequence of this domination/subjugation model which locates power in a fixed center has been that “the way power was exercised – concretely, and in detail – with its specificity, its techniques and tactics, was something that no one attempted to ascertain.”\(^8\) Indeed, the portrayal of macro-level power as constitutive of totalizing structures has blinded political theory
from understanding the importance of what Foucault called "micro-power" or the "micro-political." The practices of everyday life and of everyday relations were thought to have no serious relevance to politics or to political theory and were thereby virtually ignored. Indeed, the conceptual tools developed by liberals and Marxists alike lacked the analytical capacity to effectively make sense of any such practices, or of anything that lay outside of the structures typically associated with politics. This oversight has had crucial (dare I say detrimental) implications for both the theorisation and the practice of resistance—implications that continue to hinder political resistance to this day.

For instance, modern Western political theory has overwhelmingly conceived of resistance as either reformist or revolutionary in orientation, as exemplified in Chapter One and Chapter Two respectively. Indeed, this should come as no surprise given that power was thought to act directly on individuals, cast down from structures on-high. Conceiving power as such implies that in order to transform power relations subjects must either enter within the overarching power structure and then use its power to modify the structures themselves (reform), or subjects must smash and destroy these structures altogether (revolution). Yet, despite these important differences, the reformist and the revolutionary approaches are ultimately one and the same in so far as they each reach vertically toward the macro-political structures as their privileged sites of political confrontation while virtually ignoring the radical and transformative practices of resistance that might be possible on an "everyday" micro-political level.

Furthermore, emphasising macro-level structures has led much of Western political theory to assume that these structures function identically regardless of any context to which they are applied (just as neoliberal structural adjustment formulas are
thought to be applicable to every society uniformly with the same predictable results). It is not surprising then that resistance to oppressive macro-level structures has repeatedly sought to replace one set of totalizing structures with another equally totalizing arrangement. Indeed, if macro structures can be exported to different contexts with the same generalised effect, then theoretically it should be possible to determine which type of structure or procedure would universally be the best. This logic helps to explain the desperate efforts of modern political theorists to uncover the singular best types of political and economic formations based upon their insights into the universal nature of history, morality, or humanity. However, the focus on macro-structures has prevented modern theories of resistance from considering the diversity of ways in which power is executed and experienced on the ground in different localities, even when these localities are governed by similar power structures. Consequently, modern theories of resistance have not only ignored the plurality of local forms which effective practices of resistance may take, but far too often they have also discounted such site-specific practices as irrational, backward, and reactionary.

All four of the previous problems with the Kantian- and Hegelian-inspired models of resistance explored in Chapters One and Two thus seem to stem from the general theoretical incapacity of modern political analysis to account for the manner in which power is executed “concretely” in a diversity of forms in each different scenario. Thus, the fifth and final lesson of resistance offered in this essay is that anti-capitalist thought remains in urgent need of developing tools and analytical frameworks that can account for the diverse manners in which capitalist power operates in different sites, contexts, and localities. Since this problem seems to be largely the cause for each of the four previous
problems with anti-capitalist theory discussed above, then finding a way to think about capitalist power in such a way that takes this fifth problem into account might potentially indicate how one could contest capitalist power without falling prey to these aforementioned problems. This chapter considers Michel Foucault’s notion of the “practical system” as one possible manner in which the relation between macro-political structures and the micro-political relations in which power operates might be theorised more adequately. I then explore how such an analysis might help us to gain insight into the ways in which capitalist power operates in the world, before finally moving on in Chapter Four to examine the implications of such an analysis on approaches to anti-capitalist movements.

In his effort to break away from the standard conception of power as a physically domineering force imposed by a sovereign from the top down onto largely passive individuals, Michel Foucault devised a theoretical model that understands power as embedded and exercised in our immediate relations with others. By analysing power as it operates in specific relationships – what Foucault calls “practical systems” – one can come to understand more precisely “what [people] do and the way they do it.”

If power is to be understood as embedded in relationships as such, then it must always be composed of two sides, or two players, each of whom assumes an agonistic stance towards one another. The technological side of this relationship incorporates the governing party and all the different modes of rationality and organisation that s/he employs so as to guide and direct the actions of others in predictable and regimented ways. The strategic side of this relation, in contrast, is composed of the subject of power and the manner in which s/he ultimately conducts him/herself in relation to these
techniques or practices of governance by either accepting, rejecting, contesting, modifying, or transforming the rules that s/he has been offered.\textsuperscript{10}

Foucault also describes practical systems as functioning along three axes of contestation – the axis of knowledge, the axis of power, and the axis of ethics.\textsuperscript{11} Each of these axes contributes to the constitution of the subject in unique respects. The axis of knowledge refers to certain modes of inquiry and discursive formations that claim to hold “scientific” authority, on the basis of which they classify individuals by creating certain categories of people.\textsuperscript{12} For instance, in *The Order of Things*, Foucault identifies three general fields of “human sciences” that categorise human beings in such a manner. First there are those human sciences such as economics or classical political economy which categorise individuals as certain types of *labouring* subjects, said to follow predictable patterns of behaviour in our roles as consumers, producers, buyers, or sellers. Secondly there are those human sciences that classify individuals as certain types of *living* subjects. Examples would include psychiatry, which designates us as either “mad” or “sane,” or the health sciences, which classify us as either “healthy” or “ill.” Finally, Foucault identifies those sciences such as linguistics which classify us as *speaking* subjects – as members of certain linguistic groups for instance. By tracing major changes in the accepted forms of knowledge in the human sciences, Foucault seeks to emphasise the contingency and variability of knowledge over time. He demonstrates that any form of knowledge can be deemed valid only in so far as they fulfil the criteria set out by the established “Regime of Truth” – that is, the established conditions that distinguish “true” knowledge from that which is “false” for a particular society at a particular historical moment.
This classification of human activity according to bodies of knowledge contributes to our subjectivation and governance in two key respects. First, it provides a rationale that informs and legitimates our subjection to certain institutional forms. Additionally however, these categories influence how we are defined by our selves and by others – that is, how ‘we recognise ourselves and are recognised by others, constitute and are constituted, and question and are questioned as a specific subject of knowledge (“games of truth”).’

The second axis of a practical system is that which Foucault refers to as either “power” or “the rules.” By this he implies the various “concrete forms” in which thoughts manifest themselves, such as in institutions or in the enforcement of regulatory norms. These structures impose certain codes of behaviour on the subject, and differentiate permissible actions from those which are forbidden by formal rules or informal norms. The power axis is intimately intertwined with the discursive formations discussed above in so far as these institutions are both constructed around, and upheld by, a given body of knowledge. Further, regulatory institutions permit the production of even more knowledge about individuals and populations. As Foucault writes, “Truth” is linked in a circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it.

It is the axis of power that Foucault takes-up as his primary subject of study in his examination of punitive practices in *Discipline and Punish*. In this case, the prison system can be identified as an institution that physically organises, divides, and governs individuals based on a body of knowledge that deems them to be “criminal” or “delinquent.” Having identified criminals as such, the prison system is then able to guide
the behaviour of these subjects with the strategic use of space, codes and techniques of
discipline or normalization such as surveillance, enclosure, examination, or the use of
timetables. At the same time, these strategies enable the accumulation of additional
knowledge of each subject by providing the institutional structures required to survey,
study, and classify individuals more effectively. Institutional structures could thus be
said to contribute to the constitution of subjects in two ways – first by making individuals
subject to a given set of rules and procedures of governance, and secondly by enabling
the production of discursive formations that contribute to the further categorization of the
individual as a certain type of subject.¹⁶ These first two axes (knowledge and power)
largely account for the “technological side” of any practical system that guides and
directs the subject to think and to act in certain ways.

However, it is the third axis of the practical system – the ethical axis – which
quite possibly constitutes Foucault’s most remarkable contribution to the study of power.
Indeed, Foucault devoted much of last years of his life to the theorisation of this side of
power relations. Foucault describes the ethical axis of a practical system as the relation
of the self to itself, or, in other words, what we might call the individual’s mode of
subjectivity. This axis incorporates how the subject understands who s/he is and,
consequently, the modes of conduct that s/he identifies as possible. Once again, this axis
is closely linked to the previous two. Bodies of knowledge and institutional structures
both play an influential role in the formation of an individual’s subjectivity and the
manner in which s/he acts, as explained above. Paul Patton remarks that “[c]ertain ways
of being a subject are created by means of particular techniques for the government of
others.”¹⁷ Yet while these techniques of governance may influence the subject’s mode of
being, a certain 'recalcitrance of the will' and 'intransigence of freedom' is always retained by the ethical subject which ensures that s/he is an active participant in the process of subject formation.\textsuperscript{18} Ultimately, an individual's understanding of who they are and of the range of possible or appropriate behaviours available to them entails a type of relationship to one's self that each individual must adopt on their own accord. Certainly the power and knowledge axes of governance significantly inform subject formation, however, in the final instance these technologies of governance cannot control the individual without his/her own active participation.

What is striking about Foucault's introduction of this third axis into the study of power is that it immediately challenges the intuitive conception that power is something which physically forces inactive subjects to perform actions against their will, as discussed above. As David Hoy remarks, "Social Beings are not zombies who have no awareness and agency in their formation."\textsuperscript{19} Indeed, Foucault teaches us that power relations do not coerce individuals so much as they induce individuals to act a certain way – that is to say that power 'acts on the actions of others.'\textsuperscript{20} James Tully explains that for Foucault, "[p]ower is not a relation which moulds passive receptacles into obedient subjects [...] Power is any relation that governs ethical subjects by guiding them, with diverse means, to engage in specific practices of the self by which they constitute and conduct themselves as governable subjects, or refuse to do so."\textsuperscript{21} Power relations thus succeed to govern subjects only in so far as they succeed to induce individuals to adopt a certain subjective understanding of who they are and what range of possible actions are available to them as this type of subject. Power relations can thus be broadly understood as processes of subject formation, or subjectification, as it unfolds along these three axes.
and through the interaction between hegemons and subalterns. Hence, Foucault remarked, "It is not power, but the subject, that forms the general theme of my research."\textsuperscript{22}

Ultimately then, Foucault's conceptualisation of power constitutes a radical departure from typical political theories in the Western canon. But, who of all the great anti-capitalist theorists of centuries past would not have scoffed at Foucault for daring to suggest that capitalism is little more than a mode subjectivity and a way of thinking, or for suggesting that capitalism's victims actually freely participate in this mode of governance? Indeed, it must be asked how Foucault's practical system model, which understands power relations to be interactive processes of "subjectification", could possibly make sense of a form of power that has proven to be as ruthless and as violently exploitative as capitalism. This is the question which the remainder of this chapter sets out to explore.

**Capitalism: Mode of Production or Mode of Subjectivity?**

As we have seen above, to study power as a practical system is to study how certain domains of knowledge, institutional structures, and normative codes are employed so as to encourage specific modes of thought. In other words, to study practical systems is to study forms of thought. Foucault thus referred to his genealogies of various practical systems as "histories of thought" where, once again, thought refers not to ideas, but to this manner of making sense of actions, relations, and the self.\textsuperscript{23}

The practical system model and this history of thought approach appear to offer a fertile new method for the study of certain social formations such as prisons, classrooms, or sexuality, but how could one possibly apply this model to a social structure as pervasive and as complex as capitalism? Is it possible to accept that our subjection to the
entire power structure of capitalism is contingent on our very own ways of thinking and modes of subjectivity? Does it make any sense to claim that by altering the way that we think and make sense of our actions, or by changing our relation to ourselves and rejecting our capitalist subjectivities, that we could somehow liberate ourselves from the powerful clutch of capitalism? Before answering these questions, one must consider how we could possibly come to think about capitalism differently using Foucault’s model of the practical system – in other words, to understand capitalism not strictly as a mode of production, but rather as a mode of subjectivity – as a way of thinking that makes sense of our actions, of our relations, and of ourselves.

Foucault did not take up the task of studying capitalism using his history of thought methodology, nor did he even attempt to indicate how such an analysis might help us to understand capitalism differently. The absence of a serious discussion of capitalism in Foucault’s work can be largely attributed to his concern to distance himself from Marxism and to demonstrate that other social relations were equally as deserving of study and consideration as capitalism. However, this is not to say that capitalism could not be studied from such a perspective; indeed, Foucault suggested that all types of relations ought to be reconsidered as a practical system and from the perspective of the history of thought. Thought “can and must be analyzed in every manner of speaking, doing, or behaving in which the individual appears and acts as knowing subject, as ethical or juridical subject, as subject conscious of himself and others,” he wrote; “There is no experience that is not a way of thinking and cannot be analyzed from the viewpoint of the history of thought.”24
Perhaps the first and most apparent consequence of approaching capitalism in such a radically different manner would be to re-conceptualise capitalism not as a singular, overarching and domineering “world system,” but rather as a myriad of unpredictable, overlapping relationships between individuals. As Foucault states, “There is no such entity as power, with or without a capital letter; global, massive, or diffused; concentrated or distributed. Power exists only as exercised by some on others, only when it is put into action.”25 What this re-conceptualisation implies is that capitalism cannot possibly affect each individual in each different circumstance in a uniform manner. If capitalism functions only on the level of relationships between individuals, then the effects of capitalism will necessarily differ depending on the particularities of each relationship. Not only will capitalism have to be understood as affecting each individual uniquely then, but in fact capitalism will necessarily affect the same individual differently depending on the various types of relationships in which that person is involved.

However, if capitalism constitutes a complex nexus of relationships, each of which is unique and produces different outcomes, then it must be asked what purpose there would be in maintaining a singular category such as “capitalism” to describe this entire multiplicity of diverse relationships. What logic would there be in branding each of these unique relationships together under the single category of “capitalism”? Perhaps we can no longer actually talk about capitalism as a “thing” at all, if it is indeed no longer to be understood as uniform process or activity. At the very least, some characteristic or element must remain common to each relationship considered “capitalist” if this category is to retain any meaning or force. Perhaps this common element can be discovered by
considering the three axes of practical systems as they would apply to capitalist power relations.

To understand the axis of knowledge in a capitalist practical system one might begin by considering capitalist economic theories of value and exchange. Certain assumptions regarding human nature and human behaviour can be identified as common to all capitalist economic theories ranging from the classical, to the Keynesian, and to the neoliberal paradigms. For instance, each of these theories assumes human beings to be profit-maximizing creatures motivated by a desire for material accumulation. We are all assumed to act in the manner that secures our person the most wealth at the least personal expense. Based on these assumptions, economic theory is then able to classify individuals by distinguishing “rational actors,” (those who behave as expected) from those actors who engage in “non-rational” economic behaviour. Further, this assumption that humans are materially motivated also allows capitalist economic theories to “scientifically” classify items according to an exact numeric figure that represents its worth. By considering the extent to which a good or service is desired in relation to its availability, economic theory represents the worth of objects numerically by assigning each a value that stands in comparison to the assigned value of all other items. Even an individual’s activities can be deemed more or less “valuable” than that of another in monetary terms by subjecting it to this same form of analysis.

The structures and normative orders that we recognise as capitalist are each constructed and dependent upon this knowledge of economically rational action and monetary value, while these same institutions also permit the further production of such knowledge. The creation of banks and monetary systems permit individuals to
comprehend the relative value of items according to a common frame of reference (monetary units). Markets offer buyers and sellers up-to-the-minute details pertaining to fluctuations in the availability and value of products. Property laws are devised to serve each individual's purported interest in guarding their possessions from use or appropriation by others.

Specific types of social relations are organized around capitalist bodies of knowledge as well. Assuming that human beings are driven by material acquisition, capitalist social relations are organized with the express purpose of satisfying the material desires of the concerned participants. Each participant is assumed to enter into these relations with the objective of personal gain. Institutional and normative structures are thereby designed to facilitate exchange and maximize the profit for each party involved. Consider how social relations are constructed in a grocery store for instance. Customers approach a cashier with the purpose of purchasing an item. As the cashier rings the article through, the two individuals may exchange a brief comment or two, probably relating to the economic transaction at hand. Once the transaction is complete, the customer is expected to promptly leave. Any attempt to instigate a relationship that is unrelated to the transaction could be considered "strange" or "inappropriate", as would be the case if a customer were to line up just to talk to the cashier without the intention of purchasing anything at all, or if the customer were to inquire as to the cashier's dietary habits or sex-life. Capitalist economic knowledge also provides a rationale and basis for hierarchy and authority. For instance, labour relations effectively amount to the agreement of one individual to place him/herself under the command and authority of
another individual in exchange for monetary compensation equal to the assigned value of a performed task.

This entire institutional apparatus that constitutes the market system is turned back upon the individual and used to accumulate additional knowledge and to classify his/her status in relation to other individuals. By assigning a particular market value to the labour activities of each individual, capitalist institutions are able to classify each individual's labour as more or less "productive," more or less "valuable," and more or less "desirable" than that of other individuals. This sum value of an individual's total labour can, in turn, be used to measure the extent to which that individual has contributed to the society in which he lives on the whole. Further, these institutions are able to measure the wealth that each individual has accumulated up to the present moment. The capacity to determine an individual's personal wealth has been refined to such an exact measure that any individual can access the precise numeric value of his or her wealth at any given moment by referring to his or her bank statement. Bank accounts and vast computer databases track all the minute by minute fluctuations in one's own personal wealth, measuring its exact status to a hundredth of a single monetary unit. Such measurements are then employed to decipher the economic grouping, or class, to which an individual belongs, deciphering those who are "poor," those who are "wealthy," and those who have an "average" economic standing.

Finally, capitalist relations incorporate a third crucial axis, which consists of the various modes of subjectivity that are assumed by a relation's participants. Capitalist power structures can succeed to govern an individual only in so far as that individual agrees to understand and to conduct himself in a given manner. The capitalist techniques
of governance (bodies of knowledge and structural formations) discussed above each function with the intent of persuading individuals to assume an assigned role and to act in a given manner. In particular, these technologies encourage individuals to seek material reward through their actions and relations, and to accept the established rules regarding the types of behaviours in which they can and cannot, or should and should not, engage. In effect, this is to say that the subject is requested to take up a certain relation to himself, or to assume a specific mode of subjectivity. But, despite the pressures and seductions faced by the subject of any capitalist relation, he or she always remains free to reject their capitalist subjectivity and to mould their self in an entirely different manner. Equally, if the subject does take on a capitalist subjectivity, this is the subject’s own voluntary choice – a capitalist mode of subjectivity cannot be understood as being forced upon a passive individual without their own mediating action.

This is not to say that there is only one given mode of subjectivity which is the properly “capitalist subjectivity.” The specific mode of capitalist subjectivity that one is persuaded to adopt would necessarily be different in each specific circumstance and relationship. In one circumstance an individual might be induced to assume a consumer’s subjectivity, in another circumstance an employee’s subjectivity, and in yet another instance a managerial subjectivity. A capitalist subjectivity can take on a wide range of specific forms, just as capitalism refers to an endless variety of unique relationships. What characterises each properly capitalist mode of subjectivity then is a certain propensity towards material accumulation and profit-maximization based on the classification of all items and activities according to a numeric value, which motivates
one’s actions and guides one’s relations with others in accordance with the established ensemble of capitalist norms, rules, and infrastructures.

Thus, any capitalist relation depends upon the participants to assume particular modes of subjectivity in order for that relation to function properly. This is to say that each participant must adopt an understanding of themself as a materially motivated being, and must accept the proscribed limits of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour as laid out by capitalist institutions. For instance, if the cashier mentioned above simply stopped thinking of him/herself as a cashier or employee, and stopped thinking of him/herself as having to perform the tasks that a cashier or employee normally performs, then this capitalist relation would seemingly collapse. Similar outcomes would also result if individuals in capitalist relationships decided to no longer recognise themselves as bound by property laws for instance – doing so would not only threaten the entire schema determining relative value of goods and services, but would also expand the limits of possible action available to these individuals.

Considering these three axes of capitalist power relations as such sheds helpful light on the question of what capitalism is and how it operates. Applying this model, capitalism can be recast as a vast, diverse, and complex nexus of power relationships between specific individuals. Each of these relations shares the following characteristics: 1) They are based on a specific knowledge of “rational” human beings as profit-seeking animals; 2) they are based on a common understanding of what constitutes the value of goods and labour; 3) they function in accordance with rules and norms set out with the primary objective of economic transaction in mind; 4) the individuals participating in this relationship each assume a mode of subjectivity which corresponds with this ensemble of
knowledge and rules. “Capitalism” incorporates all relationships that are characterized by these different features as well as any action that aims to uphold or to strengthen these types of relationships.

Understanding capitalism in this manner presents us with a much different picture than that which is typically offered. Perhaps the most significant consequence of this analysis has already been mentioned above – that if capitalism manifests itself on a relational level as a direct exchange between specific individuals in a specific context then no longer can we theorise capitalism as a singular, clearly demarcated entity characterized by universal, predicable, and uniform effects. Rather, the particularities of each capitalist relationship must be studied as unique power relations by employing the practical systems model.

To enable us to do so, Foucault identifies five aspects of any power relation that can help to distinguish the differences between one set of relations and the next. 26 These aspects might be useful in order to understand the variety of different forms that capitalism can take. For example, Foucault asks us to consider the system of differentiation that authorize one actor to guide the actions of others in each power relation. In one instance, it might be my status as an employer that permits me to instruct others how to act. However, if one of my employees is a mechanic and my company needs to repair a piece of machinery then it is the employee who will instruct me what needs to be done on the basis of his/her knowledge. Secondly, different objectives can be identified that motivate actors within capitalist power relations. I have mentioned that capitalist relations assume material acquisition to be the fundamental human motivation, yet within this rubric various other sub-objectives can still be identified. For instance, in
order to increase my income I might act so as to befriend my boss, hoping for a promotion, or I might act so as to undermine my boss in hopes of one day taking over his job. Different instrumental modes used to enforce the rules can also be identified in capitalist relations. As a patron in a store, for instance, I might refrain from stealing a candy bar because a camera is surveilling me, or I might simply refrain because I have been disciplined from a young age into thinking that stealing is morally blameworthy. The forms of instrumentalisation, or types of institutional structures associated with capitalist relations could include anything from courtrooms, which enforce capitalist rules and laws, to shopping malls, where I can purchase goods and services. Finally, each capitalist power relation can be characterized as more or less effective at achieving the desired result, as more or less efficient, or as more or less capable of adapting to new situations as they arise, characteristics which Foucault refers to as the degrees of rationalisation. To these aspects of analysis I will add another – modes of subjectivity. That is, in each particular power relation, the subject comports him or herself differently in relation to the given conditions, by accepting, contesting, directly confronting, or seeking to modify the established rules. Considering this large range of possible different manifestations of capitalism then, it can only be concluded that capitalism is not a clear and singular thing as traditional political economy analyses (of both liberal and Marxist varieties) would suggest. Rather, capitalism is a descriptive category of many unique and particular relations.

The consequence of this relational analysis is that capitalism can no longer be understood as a form of power that dominates each subject entirely against his/her own will in a uniform manner. For instance, capitalism cannot be understood as a form of
power that is so domineering that it is able to physically coerce the labourer to get out of bed and go to the factory every morning and to then operate machinery all day long. Rather, capitalism must be understood as an entire ensemble of distinct power relations, each composed of two actively participating parties. The outcome of any capitalist relation must be understood as the reciprocal result of both these parties (hegemon and subaltern) and their interactions. The governing partner must therefore employ various technologies of governance that induce the subject to think about their limits of possibility in a given way and thereby persuade and convince the labourer to perform such tasks and duties voluntarily. Capitalist relations draw on certain bodies of knowledge and employ certain norms or regulatory standards of conduct that lead individuals to understand the possible types of behaviour and actions available to them as limited in various respects. For instance, capitalism classifies the labourer as labourer and then suggests that a whole ensemble of responsibilities, duties, attitudes, and lifestyles, and “limits” of possible behaviour that are associated with this identity. In turn, the subject freely chooses to accept, reject, or challenge the terms of governance set out for him/her. Ultimately, the hegemon can only be said to successfully govern so long as the subject adopts a certain relation to his/her self and agrees to abide by the rules of the game as laid out for him/her. Taking up a certain mode of subjectivity is always a “free” and active decision on Foucault’s account. This decision faced by the subject as to whether or not to accept their prescribed limits may prove to be a very lopsided one, yet in the last instance it is the subject him/herself who must freely choose to do so or not to do so.
Considering capitalism in such a light – that is, as a process that relies on the subjects’ very own self understandings – leads one to adopt much more of a subjective definition of capitalism than that which is traditionally offered. Capitalism was very much an objective phenomenon as understood by Marx, characterised as a system of production wherein one class owns the means of production and another provides the labour. On the Foucauldian model however, capitalism is understood as a phenomenon which encompasses far more than simply a relation to production. Capitalism is understood as being as much of an attitude and a mode of subjectivity as it is a system of production – it is shown to depend just as much on our relation to our self and to others as it depends on our relation to production. Means of production would remain one element of certain capitalist relations, yet Foucault did not intend to reduce all power to a single “root cause” or “chief enemy”. Rather, capitalism must be understood as a type of relationship with three irreducible aspects – knowledge, power, and subjectivity – none of which can be overlooked or ignored.

**Practices of Freedom and the Interstices of Capitalist Power**

Foucault’s remarkable re-conceptualisation of power relations and the mechanisms through which they operate could not be conceivable without a correspondingly radical new understanding of freedom. Indeed, if the axes of knowledge and power govern subjects by inducing them and conducting their conduct rather than directly subjugating individuals entirely against their will, then such technologies can be said to govern subjects *through* the subjects’ very own freedom and participation. Counter-intuitively then, Foucault came to the conclusion that in every power relation subjects must actually retain freedom – indeed, power necessarily implies freedom on Foucault’s account.
“Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are ‘free’,” he claims.\textsuperscript{27} It is this freedom which constitutes the \textit{strategic} side of the practical system.

Yet the claim that wherever power exists freedom must also exist seems odd without further consideration of what this implies precisely. By stating that subjects are free, Foucault does not mean to suggest that we possess an “empty” Sartrean freedom to do whatever we please at any moment we choose. Foucault understands the two partners in any power relationship as standing in a gaming, or agonistic, relation towards one another. Each partner is motivated by an objective which is opposed to that of the other, thus leading to a state of “permanent provocation.” While the governing partner seeks to install stable rules leading to predictable outcomes, the subject seeks to reverse the relationship and impose his/her own rules of the game. Each partner is free to choose from among a variety of available strategies in attempting to fulfil their objective. The governing partner’s strategy is to set the rules in such a way that will structure the subject’s limits. These rules may be used to induce, incite, seduce, make easier or more difficult, release or contrive, make more or less probable, or constrain and forbid. In short, strategies of governance manage another’s field of possibilities so as to render their actions predictable.\textsuperscript{28}

At the same instance however, the subject him/herself is faced with a range of possible strategies in opposition to the governor and in the pursuit of his/her own objectives. These “Strategic Games of Liberty” allow the subject to accept, reject, contest, negotiate, modify, or violently confront the governor’s rules. “Faced with a relationship of power a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may be opened up,” he remarks.\textsuperscript{29} So, although Foucault contends that we can
never exist outside of power relations, we still are not trapped — "we always have possibilities, there are always possibilities of changing the situation," since the outcome of a given power relation is the result of the interaction between each partner and their own objectives and strategies.\textsuperscript{30}

The research of James C. Scott provides very convincing empirical examples that help to confirm Foucault's contention that power often relies on the limited freedom of the subject rather than governing in a unilateral fashion.\textsuperscript{31} Scott associates the idea that all power relations can be governed in a predictable and uniform manner with the ideological outlook that he calls "high-modernism." The high-modernist vision, as described by Scott, is one which presumes that vast social fields can be governed most effectively by classifying these fields according to highly rationalised and scientific forms of knowledge and by subjecting them to elaborate quantitative models. Doing so allows the governing structures to simplify these complex social fields, thus rendering them legible. On the basis of this knowledge, standardized and codified plans and procedures can then be imposed so as to yield efficient and predictable results that are thought to generate progress and the betterment of the human condition. High-modernism can rightly be deemed ideological when the belief that all aspects of life should be administered according to scientific models is accepted uncritically and when "scientific" or "imperial" knowledge becomes the sole epistemological authority, while all "local knowledge" is overlooked, ignored, and discredited. Scott argues that these ambitious efforts to administer all social relations in such a standardized and unilateral manner are doomed to fail. He argues that the elaborate models employed by high-modernist regimes cannot possibly account for all of the contingencies and diversity of
practices or responses that are possible in any power relation or social field. Consequently, these models rarely produce the anticipated results. Even worse, high-modernist schemes demand that all inherited customs that are not based on “rational” scientific grounds be either reevaluated or eliminated. This causes the engineers of high-modernist plans to gloss over essential details that are necessary for the smooth functioning of a society, and ultimately leads to potentially disastrous consequences.

Although Scott provides a whole host of detailed case studies, ranging from the construction of Brasília to Soviet collectivisation, each of which demonstrates how the oversights of high-modernist social engineering have repeatedly caused their plans to go awry, he does not consider the devastating failures of capitalism’s high-modernist schemas when they too have adopted this outlook uncritically. Consider structural adjustment programs for instance. The IMF is well known for imposing strict economic conditions, or “austerity measures”, on countries that are facing financial crisis and in need of short-term, high-interest loans. The restructuring measures that the IMF demands are largely determined on the basis of abstract quantitative and economic models, analyses, and theories that are applied more or less uniformly in all circumstances. These scientific models are intended to foster economic growth and “development” without giving much consideration to the particularities of the social and economic context to which they are being applied. The results have consistently been disastrous.

The IMF’s efforts to force structural adjustment on Jamaica provides us with just one example from a long list of its dreadful failures. After improving the country’s balance of payments from negative $289 million to positive $225 million, the World Bank heralded 1984 as “a successful year for Jamaica.” This was achieved in the wake
of IMF adjustments which led to the elimination of 6,200 public sector jobs, a reduction in public investment of 30 percent, the elimination of food subsidies, and the decline of real incomes by 48% in just two years. Structural adjustment meant that many small-time agriculturists were run out of business as the economy was reoriented around the production of cash crops for export. Consequently, local food production declined by 13 percent while food imports rose by 57 percent. The Consumer Price Index increased by one third, while the price of food staples increased by over 65 percent between 1984 and 1985. Although the IMF and World Bank may have been quick to declare these reforms successful, a major social crisis ensued as the vast majority of Jamaicans suddenly found themselves unable to afford basic food staples and life necessities.32

Examples such as this buttress Foucault’s account of power because they demonstrate that modernist power structures fail miserably when they attempt to administer complex fields of social relations in an entirely top-down fashion. Scott’s analysis uses concrete examples to demonstrate that hegemons actually depend a great deal on the limited freedom of subjects to draw on their local knowledge of the situation and to either bend or modify the established rules and procedures in order to ensure that these rules are implemented more effectively. Labour movements that employ work-to-rule tactics are astutely aware that capitalist relations could never function properly or effectively if each and every rule and regulation were adhered to as closely and as carefully as possible. As Scott describes, when workers protest by actually following every rule and regulation by the book “[t]he result, fully intended in this case, is that the work grinds to a halt, or at least to a snail’s pace [...] Their action also illustrates pointedly how actual work processes depend more heavily on informal understanding and
improvisations than upon formal work rules." Scott observes that even Taylorism, which seeks to regiment and regulate each and every bodily motion in the name of efficiency and productivity, is a "utopian dream" which would never work if it were not for the ability of experienced workers to make the practical adjustments necessary when faced with changing circumstances in order to ensure that production continues to run smoothly.34

When structures of power do deny subjects this limited freedom to bend the rules based on their practical know-how, the governing partner often ends up having to refer back to the practical knowledge of these subjects in any case. For instance, Scott describes how the detailed plans to create a perfectly planned and ordered city in Brasília were quickly stymied by the "resistance, subversion, and political calculation" of the residents who eventually came to live in this city. Residents quickly began to use the space in entirely unpredictable ways – squatting, farming, and building their own structures – and demanded the right to do so in order to ensure that the city would serve the actual needs of the residents. Scott argues that "[t]he unplanned Brasílias – that of the rich and that of the poor – were not merely a footnote or an accident; one could say that the cost of this kind of order and legibility at the center of the plan virtually required that it be sustained by an unplanned Brasília at the margins."35

Another example of how, in the wake of their own failures, power structures end up relying on the unplanned and often illegal initiatives of citizens can be observed by considering the response of Argentine citizens to their country's massive economic collapse in 2001. The Argentine government's default on its $800m World Bank loan plummeted the nation into chaos, locking citizens out of their bank accounts, and
devastating their personal savings with hyper-inflation. In what was once Latin America’s wealthiest country, suddenly over 50% of Argentines were found living below the poverty line. However, Argentines responded with a wellspring of grassroots political organising. Neighbourhood assemblies were formed to organize, discuss politics, and provide essential needs for the community. An extensive underground economy emerged based on barter and mutual-aid rather than monetary transaction. Abandoned workplaces, including factories, banks, schools, health clinics, and public transportation systems, were occupied and collectivised by their former workers so as to ensure that the economy and society would continue functioning.

The crucial lesson to be drawn from all of this is that capitalism actually relies on an entire non-capitalist underworld (taking the form of both practical knowledge and relational modes) in order to ensure that it functions efficiently and effectively. This seems to confirm the intuition of sociologist Richard Day, who observes that “no matter how totalizing a system might be, it will never achieve its ambition of totality—it is impossible to create a system with no outside, even a system that appears to cover an entire planet. For there will always be holes, even when there are no longer any margins. And out of these holes will spring all manner of subjects.”

These limited spaces of freedom, wherein subalterns are permitted to practice counter-hegemonic alternatives to the dominant logic of governance, have been labelled the “interstices” of power by James Tully. Tully’s account of these spaces contests the typical narratives of capitalist expansion, including that of Marx, Hardt and Negri, and recent globalization scholarship, as well as theorists of international cosmopolitanism, all of whom tend to depict capitalist expansion as being so overwhelming that, for better or
worse, it tramples over the world’s diverse societies like a global steamroller, assimilating and smoothing out all peoples, traditions and cultures in its wake. As demonstrated in previous chapters, these typical narratives believe that capitalism rips apart the diverse traditions of the world’s peoples, leaving nothing behind but a singular, high-tech, and homogenous global culture. Virtually no trace of any pre-existing indigenous society is thought to remain intact, and those that are tend to be portrayed as residual and reactionary elements that will eventually disappear in any case. Although the devastating and disruptive effects of global capital’s unrelenting attack on all non-capitalist modes of existence certainly cannot be denied, Tully cautions us to remember that the situation is also far more complex than this global steamroller narrative permits. Capitalist expansion may have inflicted tremendous damage upon indigenous civilizations, but he argues that the narrative that portrays European imperialism and capitalist expansion as “expanding over and superseding a pre-modern Indigenous world that is a *terra nullius*, a state of nature, or, at best, a world of weak, pre-modern customary laws and constituent power practices that are bound to be superseded by progress to formal constitutionalism and modern representative government” is an “ignorant and self-serving view” which reflects a Eurocentric bias and over exaggerates the importance of Western thought and culture in world history.\(^{37}\)

Careful consideration of how capitalist globalization actually functions in real world contexts demonstrates that the world is not nearly as “smooth” as it is often claimed to be. “Beneath the veneer of globalization lies another world of legal, political, cultural, citizen and even economic pluralism that has survived, to varying degrees, within the interstices of the processes of modernization”, Tully observes.\(^{38}\) He argues not
only that Indigenous practices continue to exist alongside imperial structures, but that imperial power actually depends on the existence of these alternative practices. Indeed, Western imperialism must rely, to some extent, on “the collaboration of imperialized Indigenous peoples, for they form the vast majority,” he remarks. Although these interactions may be characterised by conditions of enormous inequalities between hegemon and subaltern, practices of subaltern freedom are nevertheless required to exist within the confines of these massive constraints. Except in certain extreme instances of total domination then, imperial power functions most effectively when some minimal space or capacity for freedom is left uncolonized, unassimilated, and beyond its own reach.

Rather than completely wiping Indigenous societies off the face of the planet, Western modernity finds ways to govern subalterns by engaging in a strategic interaction with the diverse civilizational traditions, legal orders, and bodies of knowledge of those Indigenous peoples that it colonises. Imperial power succeeds to govern Indigenous peoples by retaining a certain limited space of freedom in which these peoples are able to carry on their diverse civilizational practices within the structured confines of imperial rule. These spaces of limited freedom within the not-fully-colonized cracks and crevices of imperial power permit Indigenous peoples to silently and resolutely pass down their unique stories, art-forms, histories, mythologies, languages, spirituality, bodies of knowledge, traditions, practices and worldviews from one generation to the next. It is through daily practices of freedom that Indigenous peoples are able to maintain and carry forward these civilizational ways and to thereby live “in the present in their diverse constitutional formations and articulations of constituent powers as far as that is possible
in the interstices of the paramount modern, western way of living in the present."\textsuperscript{40}

Within the uncolonized interstices of imperial power thus survives a "multiplicity of counteractions of diverse Indigenous civilizations" that function alongside and in consort with the imperial civilization.\textsuperscript{41}

**Conclusion**

Each of the previous theorists considered in Chapters One and Two take for granted the idea that power is something imposed from the top-down that dominates subjects in a manner loosely based on the sovereignty model. Even Hardt and Negri, who arguably come closest to escaping modernist conceptions of power, still base their theory on the existence of sovereignty, which is now said to have been transferred upwards from the nation-state to Empire. Since the imperialist inclinations of these previous approaches seem to hinge on this top-down understanding of power, this chapter has attempted to reconsider capitalist power according to a relational model based on Michel Foucault's notion of the practical system. By doing so, it becomes clear that capitalist power actually relies on certain interstitial spaces of freedom wherein capitalist subjects are permitted to bend, negotiate, modify, or break the established rules of capitalism to a limited extent. This is confirmed by Scott and Tully, who suggest that entire networks of non-capitalist practices and forms of knowledge – or "alternative civilizations in the present"\textsuperscript{42} – should already exist within the interstices of capitalist power.

Rather than taking these non-capitalist practices seriously, previous anti-capitalist theorists have repeatedly sought to craft their own "high-modernist" alternatives that have remained blind to the existing alternatives and local forms of knowledge that people already practice in their everyday relations. By building strong alternatives to capitalism from within these spaces, it seems as though one might effectively be able to escape from
both reformist and revolutionary approaches, which each set out to either capture or to destroy what they consider the root cause of power. Further, by embracing these already existing alternative forms of knowledge and practices, it might be possible to avoid grounding anti-capitalist politics in universal pronouncements of morality or history, and to thereby embrace radical plurality within anti-capitalist struggles. Still, the very point that Foucault, Scott, and Tully each emphasise is that capitalism actually depends upon, and thrives off of the existence of subaltern practices of freedom. Grounding an anti-capitalist movement in these interstitial alternatives might therefore help to avoid the imperialist tendencies of previous approaches, but this still does not ensure that such an approach will necessarily retain any serious transformative potential. Is it possible to ground anti-capitalist politics in these actually existing and subordinated alternatives in such a way that genuinely threatens to transform capitalist relations rather than simply continuing to operate within the interstices of the broader capitalist order? This is the question that Chapter Four seeks to address.
CHAPTER FOUR

Creative Insurgence of Subjugated Practices:
Non-Capitalist Alternatives in Theory and in Reality

_I shit on all the revolutionary vanguards of this planet._
— Subcomandante Marcos

_Then! Just begin; start on the smallest scale and with the smallest number of men._
— Gustav Landauer

**Thinking Differently: Genealogies of Subjugated Knowledge**
Michel Foucault’s reconceptualisation of power might very well permit us to escape from
the domination/subjugation model that has characterised much of modern Western
political thought since the emergence of the doctrine of sovereignty, but whether or not it
offers an effective approach to resistance with transformative thrust while also avoiding
the perilous mistakes committed by the other anti-capitalist theories examined above, is
yet another question. Indeed, many have concluded that Foucault’s work is largely
useless to anyone who is seriously committed to social change in any shape or form.
Habermas has famously labelled Foucault a “young conservative”, while Nancy Fraser
has argued that Foucault’s work is “normatively confused” given that it fails to provide a
concrete moral theory able to distinguish “acceptable from unacceptable forms of
power.”¹ Others have been even less generous. Stephen Best claims that “Foucault’s
position appears to resemble the fool sawing off the branch on which he sits”, and that
“he unwittingly supports the mystifications of Orwellian doublespeak, now more rife than
ever, and blocks the discriminations necessary for social critique.”² To argue that
Foucault’s approach is the best, or that it does not harbour problems and difficulties of its
own is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, this chapter will attempt to
demonstrate that Foucault’s reconception of power relations does have the merit of
permitting us to think about anti-capitalist resistance in much more of a pluralistic manner.

In the previous chapter I demonstrated that, by adopting the Foucauldian model of power, capitalism can be understood as an ensemble of different relations in which individuals are induced to think about their limits of possibility in a given way. Capitalist relations refer to certain bodies of knowledge and employ certain norms or regulatory standards of conduct that lead individuals to understand the possible types of behaviour and actions available to them as limited in various respects. Capitalist subjects then proceed to think, act, and relate in accordance with those perceived limitations. In other words, capitalism does not coerce us entirely against our own will, but rather in most cases capitalism employs subtle and seductive technologies of governance which elicit the free and voluntary participation of subjects within prescribed limits, and which guide the subject to take up a certain relation to him/herself. Considering capitalist relations as such, it would appear as though the most obvious manner in which to resist such governance would be to call into question these limits of thought and action, and to thereby refuse the relation to the self that capitalism prescribes. The use of freedom to refuse the mode of subjectivity prescribed by the governing power/knowledge axes and to consciously refashion one’s self is precisely what Foucault calls “ethics” – “What is ethics, if not the practice of freedom, the conscious practice of freedom?” he demands; “Ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection.”

To practice an ethic then, on Foucault’s account, requires one to carefully and consciously consider our established modes of being and behaving in the world. He relates this reflexive attitude to the ethical traditions of ancient Greece, which stressed the
procurement of an *ethos* of concern for the self as the basis of "right conduct and the proper practice of freedom." In this tradition, to care for one's self implied critical reflection upon the entrenched and hidden manners in which we think about our self and our relations with others. By doing so, one would come to identify and to problematise the demands made upon them by external forces, such as those linked to technologies of power and knowledge, for instance. Foucault hopes that by identifying and problematising these previously unquestioned modalities of thought we will be led to exercise our freedom to *think differently* about the limits of what we are today, and to thereby come to an awareness of how we might transgress these limits tomorrow.

But, while the claim that one's path to liberation begins by thinking differently sounds easy enough, disciplinary and normalising practices can lead individuals to accept their present ways of thinking as being so natural and familiar that the very idea of thinking otherwise may never actually occur to them. Such being the case, it is reasonable to ask how one might really be expected to reflect critically on their present circumstance. Foucault provides one possible answer to this question by proposing genealogical studies, or historical ontologies, as a method with which to reflect on how our present state of affairs could be constructed differently. The genealogical method is one that descriptively traces the development of a belief or practice which is taken to be normal, and highlights the discontinuities in this practice's historical development. By doing so, the genealogist seeks to expose that which "is given to us as universal, necessary [and] obligatory," as being "singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints." A genealogy may emphasise the historical contingency of any one of the three axes of a practical system in order to problematise the system as a whole.
purpose is not to portray a current practical system as either better or worse than others, but to portray it as different and particular. This emphasis on difference is intended to make us realise that today’s limits of who we are, what we do, and what we say, may not have existed yesterday and need not exist tomorrow.

This explains why Foucault describes his philosophical approach to the present as a *limit-attitude*. Indeed, the objective that Foucault sought to achieve in writing his major genealogical works was to bring both himself and his reader to think differently about the limits of who they are and how they behave. He believed that his reflexive project of “problematisation” – exposing the taken for granted limits on our established patterns of thought – was the most pressing task of today’s philosopher:

> What is philosophy today – philosophical activity, I mean – if it is not the critical work that thought brings to bear on itself? In what does it consist, if not in the endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known? [...] The object [is] to learn to what extent the effort to think one’s own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently.

Foucault’s philosophical approach is thus a philosophical *ethos* of permanent critique. This critique stems from specific problematizations, or the “development of a given into a question,” rather than from a high-powered normative theory. This is to say that Foucault’s approach is not to propose alternative principles of right, or to discover the “natural” and proper state of human existence. “Criticism is no longer going to be practiced in the search for formal structures with universal value,” he states. Rather, Foucault’s criticism must be understood as a practical attitude – the “exercise of thought on thought”. As David Couzens Hoy remarks, Foucault’s critical approach is that of “desubjugation or desubjectivation of the subject,” seeking to detach one’s self from oneself (*se dépendre de soi-même*). Rather than positing a “more just” social alternative,
this philosophical critique operates by "dissolving your sense of who you are and disrupting your sense of what the right thing to do is."\textsuperscript{13}

Thus, once we have come to conceive of capitalism as a form of power that governs our conduct by placing limits on our modes of thought and subjectivity, it becomes clear that the first crucial step to be taken in order to contest capitalist relations is to identify and to reappraise those limits of possibility with which capitalist power/knowledge axes present us. The task for anti-capitalists is to critically re-evaluate one's own capitalist subjectivity – the ways that one silently thinks of oneself and of one's own limits which leads one to act capitalistically in one's everyday interactions. We must question and problematise all those patterns of thought and action that we believe cannot be otherwise, and we must challenge all those bodies of knowledge and forms of power that tell us that these limits must be a particular way. The challenge for today's anti-capitalists is to think differently about our relation to the present – to desubjectify ourselves from our taken for granted capitalist modes of subjectivity.

In order to embark upon this problematisation endeavour and to shake ourselves out of the established and familiar modes of thought with which we engage in everyday capitalist relations, we must begin in the spirit of Foucault by thinking about these relations genealogically – that is, we must identify the historicity of capitalist modes of thinking in such a way that leads us to reflect upon how our present state of affairs could have been scripted and enacted differently. To study capitalism genealogically then is not to illustrate why capitalism emerged historically so much as it is to narrate the hidden and unfamiliar stories of all the other historical possibilities that might have emerged other than capitalism. It is to bring ourselves to the awareness that capitalism’s rise to
prominence was a relatively recent event that occurred not because this way was better, but as the result of relatively arbitrary circumstances and haphazard historical events. The modern capitalist world is just one historic formation that arose by displacing the plurality of other traditions, bodies of knowledge and modes of existence in the world, and which could have been otherwise. By fostering a genealogical consciousness of history's forgotten alternatives and colonised scripts, the taken for granted categories of capitalist knowledge can be cast differently. Even if we do not embrace these historical alternatives uncritically, provincialising capitalist modes of thought allows one to acquire a certain inspiration and confidence in knowing that the present forms of relations in which we find ourselves have not always existed the past, did not have to be this way in the present, and need not remain the same tomorrow.

In fact, the previous chapter has already demonstrated that other ways of thinking about, understanding, and seeing the world already do exist and that these colonised perspectives are drawn upon, to a limited extent within the interstices of power. For instance, we have seen that by passing down oral histories, mythologies, spirituality, art forms, and languages, Indigenous peoples have succeeded to maintain and affirm bodies of knowledge which differ from those associated with capitalism. Many of the taken for granted categories of capitalist knowledge – ranging from the existence of property laws, to economies, markets, conceptions of ownership, value, relationships to the land and to others – can be cast in new light from the perspective of the worldviews of Indigenous peoples. Reflecting on these subjugated worldviews, capitalist knowledge can thereby be exposed as merely one way of looking at the world. It can be revealed that capitalist
regimes of knowledge govern our relations not because they are right or because they must be so, but only for contingent and arbitrary reasons.

The political significance of the everyday practices of “resiliency” and “diversification” that sustain indigenous traditions is often overlooked, and consequently these practices are often thought to reflect political indifference within indigenous communities. However, by practising and maintaining one’s ancestral heritage as such, Indigenous peoples are able to think differently about capitalist modernity and realize that it is but one possible way of being-in-the-world – and a particularly galling and destructive mode of existence at that. Drawing on one’s civilisational heritage can offer a different lens through which to make sense of our present conditions and can reveal that the ontology of capitalist modernity is far from being necessary and obligatory. Thus, the maintenance of the civilizational practices of Indigenous peoples may not be expressly political (i.e. not explicitly anti-capitalist), but nevertheless these practices are resolutely non-capitalist in so far as they promote a mode of being-in-the-world that serves as a living example of an alternative ontology of the present, enabling us to reconsider those relations of capitalist modernity to which we are presently subjected in a different light.

Orienting critique around the problematisation of the self in this manner ultimately enables a far more complete and pluralistic critique of capitalism to emerge. As discussed in Chapter Three, capitalism employs different technologies of governance (power/knowledge axes) which conduct the conduct of subjects in unique ways in each social site, and ultimately produce a diversity of different modes of subjectification. Such being the case, it only makes sense that capitalism be critiqued uniquely in each circumstance and by each subject. Foucault’s genealogical method attempts to
resuscitate history's silenced traditions and practices so as to expose the arbitrary character of capitalist modernity. From here, critique stems from a subject or collectivity that problematises their own constituted limits, and proceeds as an ethico-political project of critical work on one's self. Rather than dictating a universal critique of capitalism that is believed to apply to all, an entire multiplicity of critiques of capitalism can emerge as each subject reflexively asks themself how capitalism subjectifies and places limits on them.

Still, merely thinking differently about these limits is not enough. The more urgent and serious task is to transform the hegemonic relations to which we are subjected – not just to think differently about these relations while remaining subject to them. The inspiration and capacity to think differently about the world is only a first step. Next, this must find a way to translate into ways of transgressing our limits and acting differently in such a way that transforms the very logic of the power relations by which we are governed.

**Acting Differently: Ethical Practices and Experimentation**

On Foucault's account, the objective of critically problematising and thinking differently about the limits of that which we are is ultimately to constitute ourselves differently and thus to act differently. On the basis of our critique, we come to actively challenge our present state of being and, ultimately, to cast ourselves anew. Foucault likens this activity of self-formation to an ascetic practice – "as an exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being."¹⁵ This transformative process may prove trying and sacrificial, yet it ultimately allows us to radically reinvent ourselves, just as Baudelaire sought to do through his art.¹⁶
The end goal of Foucault’s ethics is precisely this – to approach our own life as if it were a work of art.17

The crucial and often overlooked point that Foucault intends to convey regarding this ethic of self-transformation is that such practices are profoundly political. Baudelaire never imagined that this “transfiguring play of freedom with reality, this ascetic elaboration of the self [...] [could] have any place in society or in the body politic.”18 But, Foucault believes that this type of activity is possibly the crucial political question, and the necessary starting point for any successful resistance movement. “To constitute an ethic of the self,” he writes, “may be an urgent, fundamental and politically indispensable task, if it is true after all that there is no first or final point of resistance to political power than in the relation one has to oneself.”19 Foucault’s vision is, thus, not one that is merely limited to the use of freedom within the constrained space of the political relations to which one already finds oneself subjected, but rather his vision is one that always remained committed to the transformation of those relations.

Still, although Foucault’s reconceptualisation of power may tell us that we can problematise our limits and act differently, at no point does Foucault teach us how we should act differently. Never did Foucault propose a better or alternative normative framework or way of acting, and this is what has led many commentators to interpret his work as “conservative,” or “normatively confused.” On the other hand, since historical ontologies expose the contingency of our limits, the focus of resistance can consequently be directed towards the experimentation with the possibility of transgressing these limits:

This historico-critical attitude must also be an experimental one. I mean that this work done at the limits of ourselves must, on the one hand, open up a realm of historical inquiry and, on the other, put itself to the test of reality, of contemporary reality, both to grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and to determine the precise form this change should take.20
Resistance thus manifests itself as an act of experimentation with new forms of behaviour, and new ways of living. The philosophical ethos of permanent critique must therefore be “at one and the same time the historical analysis of our limits and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them.”\textsuperscript{21}

The experimentation with new modes of being also expresses itself as the emergence of a new collective sense of “who are we” and as the experimentation with new ways of relating with one another. “We live in a legal, social, and institutional world where the only relations possible are extremely few, extremely simplified, and extremely poor,” Foucault states; “We should fight against the impoverishment of the relational fabric.”\textsuperscript{22} For instance, giving an interview for a homosexual men’s journal, Foucault states that the aim of their movement should be neither to stabilize and institutionalize the homosexual identity and culture that already exists, nor to reintroduce homosexuality into “normal” social relations. Rather, Foucault suggests that gay men have to “create a culture” – that they must “escape as much as possible from the type of relations that society proposes [...] and try to create in the empty space where we are new relational possibilities.”\textsuperscript{23} Clearly then, Foucault’s ethos of creative self-fashioning and experimentation is not simply an individual act of senseless rebellion that seeks to violate the established norms of conduct for no particular reason or political purpose, as it is often portrayed. Rather, the ethos that Foucault seeks to cultivate is a quintessentially political ethos, which understands the transformative practice of one’s self to constitute a refusal to be governed by the prevailing institutional arrangement and which thereby opens up a vast array of new relational possibilities for living with other social beings.
In order to tease out the *politically* transformative potential of Foucault’s ethics and its relevance to anti-capitalist politics, it is useful to briefly consider the ideas of Gustav Landauer, who was once known as an important anti-capitalist thinker in Germany at the turn of the century, but whose ideas have been largely forgotten today. Like Foucault, Landauer understood that although we may often talk about power as situated in overarching and totalising structures such as “the state” or “capitalism,” these power structures can only ever manifest their power concretely in relations between individuals. “The state is a *relationship* between human beings, a way by which people relate to one another,” Landauer famously remarked; “[W]e, who have found ourselves imprisoned within the absolute state, we must recognize the truth: we are the state.”

Landauer conceived of capitalism likewise – that is, as a mode of subjectivity which is adopted by individuals in their relations with others. For instance, capitalism manifests itself as a way of thinking that leads one to approach all relations as though they are governed by the dictates of money, profit, and material acquisition. Landauer observed that under capitalism “[t]he merchant doesn’t care who buys his products; the proletariat doesn’t care what he makes or works at; the enterprise does not have the natural purpose of satisfying needs, but the artificial one of acquiring things, in as big quantities as possible without consideration of, and as much as possible without work [...] Money has swallowed up relationships.” He emphasised that, as with the state apparatus, capitalism only determines our relations so long as we freely adopt this mentality in our personal engagements with others. “Money gets its life and powers from somewhere; it can get them only from us” he reasons. On these grounds, he thus
describes both capitalism and the state not as overbearing and coercive structures so much as they are each a “nothing that is considered to be a thing.”"^{27}

But, if capitalism and the state are both “nothings,” or in other words, if they are ways of thinking and relating, then it hardly makes sense to talk about crushing these nothings in the same way that one can talk of crushing a pop-can. Indeed, “[o]ne can overturn a table and smash a windowpane” Landauer observed; “but they are puffed-up word-spewers and gullible word-adorers, who hold the state for such a thing – akin to a fetish that one can smash and destroy.”^{28} On the other hand however, if power structures operate through our very own voluntary compliance as Foucault observed, we must retain a considerable degree of freedom with which we might behave differently within these power relations. Hence Landauer proclaims that “[w]e are at all times dependent and at all times free [...] There is a great deal that we can do”.^{29} If capitalism and the state are truly modes of relating to other people, then we can use our limited freedom to undermine these types of relations by, in Foucault’s words, working to “create in the empty space where we are new relational possibilities”.^{30} Thus, Landauer concludes that “one destroys [power structures] by entering into other relationships, by behaving differently to one another.”^{31} With regard to capitalism then, this power structure can be destroyed by refusing our capitalist modes of subjectivity and “no longer working for the non-genuine, profit and its market”. “Liberation is possible only for those who can step out of capitalism mentally and physically,” he remarks.^{32}

Landauer suggests that one possible way of stepping “out of capitalism mentally” is to look to all of those non-capitalist practices and forms of knowledge which have existed throughout history, thereby allowing us to realise that there are other ways
of living aside from those offered to us by capitalist modernity. In particular, Landauer argued that there was much that people of his era could learn from the practices and traditions of the European peasantry that might help to break free of the hegemonic capitalist worldview. "We now see the peasant in a completely new light and we know what an enormous task has been left to us, to speak with them, live among them, and revive and resuscitate in them what has wilted and atrophied," he remarks. However, Landauer does not propose that we uncritically embrace these alternatives or return to some previous era that is thought to be pure or authentic. Rather, the purpose of drawing on this heritage of practices and worldviews that modernity has attempted to forget is to learn from these traditions and to foster a deeper appreciation for other ways of thinking about our world. Doing so allows us to bring about a 'new spirit' that understands those relations to which we have become habituated in a new light.

Landauer emphasises that bringing such a 'new spirit' to life constitutes not only a personal act of self-transformation, but that this is also a quintessentially political activity. "A revolution of spirit is, for us, the first order", Landauer declared in 1895. Reiterating this point some years later, he stated that "[o]nly out of the spirit, only out of the depth of our inner need and inner richness will the great transformation which we call socialism come about." The cultivation of this new spirit or new ethos has transformative political consequences because to cultivate a new spirit requires one to challenge and transform the logic of the relations in which we find ourselves engaged and through which we have previously been governed. It requires us to experimentally create new emergent ways of acting and relating.
This experimentation can begin by strengthening and reviving all of those non-capitalist institutional forms that have continued to exist despite capitalism and within the interstices of its reign, he argues. “As a starting point we can use many things that contain some life, external forms of living spirit”, he writes; “Village communities with remnants of the old common property, with the farmers’ and field workers’ memories of the original common property which passed into private ownership centuries ago as well as customs recalling the common economy for work in the fields and in the crafts.”

Yet, Landauer also understands that the historical circumstances of today’s world are different from what they were in the past. Thus, to draw from the spirit of the past is equally to find new expressions for this heritage in the present. Political transformation can thus occur by drawing on and affirming non-capitalist practices in order to refuse that which we are and, at one and the same time, by creatively experimenting with crafting ourselves anew and creating new relational forms.

This also implies that non-capitalist modes of existence can be created without having to await capitalism’s eventual collapse – that we can begin to create these alternatives immediately. Indeed, “[s]ocialism is possible at all times”, he argues. We simply need to begin to create it and, most importantly, “we must practice it.” Far from constituting a blueprint of an ideal future society that must be implemented according to plan, socialism is more akin to an ethos, or a creative practice of experimentation with different ways of being, on Landauer’s account. He thus describes socialism as “an art”, as a “cultural movement”, and as a “struggle for beauty”. To create it is to “work out of a premonition of an intuited, yet unknown joy and happiness.” The end result of this creative activity cannot possibly be known in advance. Rather, “[s]ocialism as reality can
only be learned; socialism is, like all life, an attempt,” he tells us; “Everything that we frame poetically in words and descriptions [...] will become reality in the act of being realized and by no means will be arranged according to a predetermined pattern.” Indeed, no such plan could possibly predict what socialism should or could look like before it has been tried, tested, and put into practise. Each community of people and each generation faces different needs and must learn from its own unforeseen experiences and circumstances. Any attempt to follow a predestined path will merely stifle the creative potentiality that lends socialism its emancipatory appeal in the first place. If the socialist project is anything at all, then it must be an immanent and experimental one. “Yes indeed,” Landauer wrote in response to his Marxist contemporaries, “we want to do what you call experiments. We want to make attempts. We want to create from the heart.”

Experimental alternatives to capitalism may first emerge as non-capitalist practices found within the limited interstitial spaces of capitalism, however, by building on, strengthening, and proliferating these existing alternatives in such a way that refuses capitalism, a whole new world could potentially sprout up and grow away from capitalism. These experiments could eventually succeed to exist autonomously from, and in parallel with capitalist relations, thereby successfully transforming the logic of the relations to which one is subjected. For instance, when Argentinean workers occupied and took charge of their factories and workplaces during the 2001 economic crisis, their intention was not to thwart capitalism so much as it was to actually keep the economy afloat and in operation. These experiments thus buttressed the capitalist order to a considerable extent. Nevertheless, interstitial experiments such as these provide powerful examples of non-capitalist ways of operating that could potentially undermine capitalist
modes of power, knowledge, and subjectivity were they to be strengthened and multiplied. Based on the experience of successfully operating the factory in the absence of owners or management, workers demonstrated that the production process was able to function in much more of a cooperative manner than they may have previously realised. By expanding and broadening alternative relational forms such as these, it is possible that these alternatives could permit subjects to refuse capitalism, to practice a non-capitalist ethic, and to forge the basis of an entirely new relational logic. So, although non-capitalist relations may first begin “on the smallest scale and with the smallest number of men” within the broader context of capitalist society, the patient and resolute expansion of these practices can potentially create an alternative to capitalism that grows up and away from capitalism. As Landauer envisioned, “the few will become the many, and the many will also become few. Hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands – too few, too few!”43

The affirmation and proliferation of these non-capitalist alternatives becomes anti-capitalist to the extent that it is, at one and the same time, the refusal to be governed as a capitalist subject. Since technologies of power and knowledge govern by individualising subjects in specific ways, the reconstitution of one’s self is equally a rejection of these technologies of governance and a refusal of the manner in which one is governed. Hence, Foucault states that “[t]he political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our day is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from state institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality that has been imposed on us for several centuries.”44 The
refusal of one's mode of subjectivity constitutes a threat to the power relation as a whole. Herein lies the transformative potential of Foucault's practices of the self.

Perhaps no one has expressed the powerful potential of such refusal more compellingly than has Étienne de la Boétie in his short tract written in 1552 called *The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* — a piece which is now regarded as one of the great early contributions to the anarchist canon. Centuries prior to Foucault, la Boétie demonstrated his shrewd insight into power by observing that rulers could not possibly keep subjects in line simply with the threat of physical coercion and violence as is often assumed. Indeed, if power did operate strictly through these mechanisms, then there would be no rulers because power would clearly lie in the hands of the millions of subjects who vastly outnumber their masters. "Two, possibly ten, may fear one; but when a thousand, a million men, a thousand cities, fail to protect themselves against the domination of one man, this cannot be called cowardly," la Boétie notes. Thus, "[i]t is not the troops on horseback, it is not the companies afoot, it is not arms that defend the tyrant," but rather, there must be some other mechanism of power at work, he remarked. La Boétie's essay thus sets out by posing a modest yet profound question — "I should like merely to understand how it happens that so many men, so many villages, so many cities, so many nations, sometimes suffer under a single tyrant who has no other power than the power they give him".

La Boétie then responds to this problem by presenting a set of arguments about power that bear remarkable similarity to the analysis that would eventually be offered by Foucault over four centuries later. If power does not simply coerce individuals to behave against their will with the threat of physical force, then it must be the case that subjects
obey voluntarily, la Boétie affirmed. Long before Foucault observed that power must pass through the bodies of free subjects, la Boétie concluded that the commands of medieval tyrants can only possibly be exercised so long as their subjects recognise the tyrant’s authority and agree to carry out these commands. “How does he have any power over you except through you?” he asked his contemporaries; “How would he dare assail you if he had no cooperation from you? What could he do to you if you yourselves did not connive with the thief who plunders you, if you were not accomplices of the murderer who kills you, if you were not traitors to yourselves?”

Left on its own, this insight still fails to explain why these subjects would voluntarily obey a tyrant if indeed this tyrant’s rule was as wretched, oppressive, and intolerable as la Boétie describes. Here, the insights of la Boétie resemble those of Foucault once more. Like Foucault, la Boétie argues that, over the course of their lifetime, individuals are trained and disciplined by the power relations to which they are subjected in such a manner that leads them to regard voluntary obedience as the only possible course of action with which they are faced. “[I]t has always happened that tyrants, in order to strengthen their power, have made every effort to train their people not only in obedience and servility toward themselves, but also in adoration”, la Boétie writes. This training leads subjects to accept the conditions of their subjection as the natural condition for humans throughout time and place: “[M]en will grow accustomed to the idea that they have always been in subjection, that their fathers lived in the same way; they will think they are obliged to suffer evil, and will persuade themselves by example and imitation of others, finally investing those who order them around with proprietary rights, based on the idea that it has always been that way.” On la Boétie’s account then,
the ruler’s power operates by leading individual subjects to believe that the relations to which they are subjected, and the limits placed upon their conduct, are so natural and inalterable that the very idea that there might be other possible types of relations seems fanciful and unrealistic. “The essential reason why men take orders willingly is that they are born serfs and are reared as such,” he concludes;51 “Thus custom becomes the first reason for voluntary servitude.”52

But, regardless of this “powerful influence of custom” that guides the conduct of the subject in such a way that “he instinctively follows the tendencies that his training gives him”,53 la Boétique still insists that it always remains possible for the subject to reach an awareness that these taken for granted relations could be structured otherwise. In Foucault’s words, the subject can always come around and identify that what “is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory” may actually prove to be “singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints.”54 La Boétique suggests that one way in which an awareness of this contingency could be raised in the minds of subjects is by turning to history and “remembering their ancestors and their former ways.”55 If the subject were to “scan the account books of his father”, he might thereby “see if he is enjoying all the privileges of his legacy or whether, perchance, his rights and those of his predecessors have not been encroached upon.”56 Quite remarkably then, even four-hundred and fifty years ago la Boétique was looking back into history as a way of provincialising the taken for granted power relations of his present by exposing the fact that these relations have not always been the way that they are presently structured. La Boétique encouraged all those of his age who were “possessed of clear minds and far-sighted spirit”, and who were no longer satisfied to “see only what is at their feet” to “look about them, behind
and before, and even recall the things of their past in order to judge those of the future, and compare both with the present condition.” For these historically minded individuals, “slavery has no satisfactions, no matter how well disguised.”

Once it is revealed that that the ruler’s power is contingent upon the subjects’ own voluntary compliance, then so too does it become clear that the ruler’s authority could be immediately annulled if these subjects were simply to withdraw their compliance and refuse to obey his/her commands henceforth. “Resolve to serve no more, and you are at once freed,” la Boétie declares. Most of la Boétie’s successors in the modern period would come to believe that in order to topple a ruler it is necessary to physically seize the apparatus of power from that ruler. In most cases, this was thought to entail a potentially very complicated and messy process of violent revolutionary confrontation. La Boétie denies that this is the case, however. “Obviously there is no need of fighting to overcome this single tyrant” he remarked. Indeed, the solution is much more simple and immediate than that; by merely refusing to continue to serve the ruler, his/her power is rendered impotent and empty. Hence, la Boétie affirmed, “I do not ask that you place your hands upon the tyrant to topple him over, but simply that you support him no longer; then you will behold him, like a great Colossus whose pedestal has been pulled away, fall of his own weight and break into pieces”. In the case of tyrants, “if not one thing is yielded to them, if, without any violence they are simply not obeyed, they become naked and undone and as nothing, just as, when the root receives no nourishment, the branch withers and dies.”

It is this ethical practice and attitude of refusal so eloquently expressed by la Boétie over four hundred and fifty years ago that offers a very useful and fertile
contribution to the development of an ethico-political approach to the struggle against capitalism. Long before Michel Foucault reached a similar conclusion, la Boétie observed that power demands that subjects think and act a certain way in compliance with its demands in order for it to function as intended. However, to recognise that we are always free to act differently is equally to recognise that, by engaging in practices other than those towards which we are guided and compelled, power can be undermined and will fail to achieve its desired result. Therein lies the self-transformative quality of these ethico-political practices of refusal. To experimentally constitute oneself anew is to refuse that which we are told to be and the manner in which we are governed at one and the same time.

**Example: Anarcho-Indigenism – The Warrior’s Ethic and the Politics of Creative Contention**

The “anarcho-indigenous” approach to political contestation as outlined by Taiaiake Alfred in his recent book *Wasáse* offers a concrete example of how the affirmation of those traditions, alternatives, and forms knowledge that have been subjugated by capitalist modernity can generate a new ethos in critique of capitalist relations and a radical orientation toward political transformation. Alfred sets out by recognizing that the form of colonial power faced by the *Onkwehonwe*, the original peoples of North America, has shifted away from that of force, which often characterised the relationship between Settler society and Indigenous peoples in times past. “Onkwehonwe are not faced with the same adversary their ancestors confronted, but with a colonization that has recently morphed into a kind of post-modern imperialism that is more difficult to target than the previous and more obvious impositions of force and control over the structures of government within their communities.”62 Rather than relying on background forces of
coercion, today's post-modern imperialism functions in a far more inconspicuous and subtle manner by seeping into the very attitudes and mentalities of Onkwehonwe in a manner reminiscent of Foucault's description of power or *gouvernementalité*. Alfred describes the operation of contemporary colonialism as "mundane and internalized to Onkwehonwe life, and its effects subsumed within our cultures and psychologies." It is a type of power that attempts to eliminate the Onkwehonwe existence, not through mechanisms of physical extermination such as "machines, bayonets, barbed wire, or even soldiers", but rather by disconnecting Onkwehonwe from their heritage through "the choices made every day and in many ways by people who are enticed by certain incentives and disciplined by their fears."

This post-modern imperial power governs Onkwehonwe through their own limited freedom by offering liberal democratic institutions and capitalist economic development models that can be used to promote the self-determination of Onkwehonwe communities within the confines of the colonial state and economic system. However, the fact that these institutions permit Indigenous peoples a certain restricted freedom does not make them any less colonial. By looking to the history of colonial relations, it becomes clear that these institutions were imposed on Indigenous peoples by the colonial state in order to replace Indigenous traditions and prevent the practices of their ancestors from continuing to flourish and develop along their own paths. As Alfred explains, "[t]he political and social institutions that govern us have been shaped and organized to serve white power and they conform to the interests of the states founded on that objective. These state and Settler-serving institutions are useless to the cause of our survival."
For instance, the colonial state offers Indigenous peoples a whole range of “legalistic” pathways ranging from litigation to land-claims negotiations with which they are free to pursue the interests of their people and advance the cause of their communities. However, Alfred notes that all such approaches require Onkwehonwe to recognise the legitimacy and authority of the Settler society’s legal regime prior to the commencement of negotiation, and thereby result in even further “entrenchment in the state system as citizens with rights defined by the constitution of the colonial state”. This entrenchment jeopardises the idea of an independent Onkwehonwe existence even before any dialogue between Onkwehonwe and Settler society has taken place.\(^6_7\) Similarly, the capitalist economy offers Onkwehonwe certain opportunities to strengthen their communities by either implementing economic development models or by fostering capitalist enterprise, yet Alfred argues that such profit driven schemes merely seek to assimilate Onkwehonwe “into the consumer culture of mainstream capitalist society, which is the defeat of the possibility of ways of life associated with Onkwehonwe cultures.”\(^6_8\) Even if Onkwehonwe were to successfully make use or take control of these existing legal or economic regimes, they would simply be “mimicking foreign logics” and would thus prohibit the renaissance of Onkwehonwe practices and values on which the survival of their people depends. The manner in which colonial power works today is thus tremendously subtle so far as it offers Indigenous peoples the freedom to pursue their own interests, but does so in a manner that forces them to abandon the worldview and the spirit of their ancestors, and thereby succeeds to rope them into the economic and legal apparatus of the imperial power.
The fact that these post-colonial imperialist institutions work through the very psychologies of Onkwehonwe in the manner described above implies that it must be tremendously difficult to oppose this form of power using the insurrectionary tactics of the guerrilla warrior who seeks to overthrow colonial power in a violent revolution. Alfred does not reject violent insurrection on moral grounds, but he argues that it is no longer a "realistic" nor an "intelligent" pathway for Onkwehonwe to travel down on their journey towards self-determination. First, the revolutionary orientation is not realistic because such an approach would almost certainly lead to annihilation by the overwhelming and ruthless power of the Settler military industrial complex that quietly sits on-call and in the background of all Settler/Onkwehonwe relations. But further, and perhaps more importantly, the violent approach is not intelligent because it fails to recognise that colonial power succeeds to govern Indigenous peoples by seeping right into their consciousness and modes of subjectivity. Without addressing this much more evasive form of power, the guerrilla warriors who attempts to confront colonial structures with armed resistance will simply find themselves to be "punching at air".

From a strategic perspective then, violent confrontation can do very little to stop this mundane form of colonial power which threatens Onkwehonwe existence through its daily routinisation. If contemporary colonialism has indeed adopted this everyday form of power, then so too must it be confronted through everyday practices of resistance and defiance, Alfred argues. "All of the world's big problems are in reality very small and local problems [...] So, confronting huge forces like colonialism is a personal and, in some ways, a mundane process," he reasons. Alfred thus calls on the Onkwehonwe to move away from "materialist" conceptions of political change and to work instead
towards a "renewed spiritual foundation" by refusing the colonial modes of being thrust upon them, and by recasting themselves in accordance with an Onkwehonwe existence. He writes:

In our minds and in our souls, we need to reject the colonists' control and authority, their definition of who we are and what our rights are, their definition of what is worthwhile and how one should live, their hypocritical and pacifying moralities. We need to rebel against what they want us to become, start remembering the qualities of our ancestors and act on those remembrances. This is the kind of spiritual revolution that will ensure our survival.72

Alfred thus calls on his fellow Onkwehonwe to demonstrate a "living commitment" to "recreating our existences" and "regenerating our cultures" through daily acts and practices. He demonstrates that by drawing on this Indigenous heritage, Onkwehonwe are able to shake themselves out of the colonial mentality and think differently about their horizons of possibility. Rather than accepting liberal democracy and capitalism as the taken for granted 'field' in which the struggles of Indigenous peoples must take place, and rather than seeing this field as offering valuable opportunities within which Indigenous peoples can achieve "self-determination" or "economic development", Alfred demonstrates that drawing on Indigenous histories and worldviews portrays and problematises this entire field as an actual limitation on Onkwehonwe existence. It is by revitalising and drawing inspiration from Indigenous civilizational practices and worldviews that the limits of the social, political, and economic field in which one operates can be exposed. The importance of the "Indigenous" side of anarcho-indigenism lies precisely in this ability to cast the fields in which one is situated in an entirely new light.

However, the anarcho-indigenous approach does not end here. Alfred firmly stresses that the purpose and effect of this spiritual and cultural rejuvenation is not merely limited to the ethical or aesthetic realms, but rather this rejuvenation – or Wasáse – is a
profoundly political project. “Politics is the force that channels social, cultural, and economic powers and makes them imminent in our lives,” he explains; “Abstaining from politics is like turning your back on a beast when it is angry and intent on ripping your guts out.” This is to say that the ultimate objective is not merely to think differently about the world in which we live, but rather the objective is to transform that world. The cultural and spiritual resurgence that Alfred calls for is, thus, ultimately one that must be channelled into a force for radical political change. This is where we see the indigenous side of anarcho-indigenism carry over into the anarchistic side of this approach. Alfred argues that to regenerate the Onkwehonwe spirit in one’s daily life practices despite and against colonial power is to “rebel against what they want us to become” and to embody a current day equivalent of the warrior’s ethic. In a similar spirit of refusal discussed by both Foucault and la Boétie above, Alfred emphasises the importance of crafting an ethic of “defiance and non-violent agitation” that provokes the colonial system by refusing to give-in or to be placated. This is the ethico-political pathway of “personal and collective transformation” and of “spiritual-cultural resurgence” that Alfred believes to be the most radically effective pathway for Onkwehonwe action and freedom against today’s colonial reality.

It is important to stress that while calling for this regeneration of Onkwehonwe traditions Alfred is not advocating the return to an idealised past that is claimed to embody the “pure” or “essential” spirit of Onkwehonwe existence. In fact, he explicitly states that:

Regeneration means we will reference ourselves differently, both from the ways we did traditionally and under colonial domination. We will self-consciously recreate our cultural practices and reform our political identities by drawing on tradition in a thoughtful process of reconstruction and a committed reorganization of our lives in a personal and collective sense. This will result in a new conception of what it is to live as Onkwehonwe.
Drawing from “the old spirit” thus provides the inspiration and basis for the new warrior’s resistance to colonial mentalities on Alfred’s account, but from here it remains imperative that Onkwehonwe warriors “think through the reality of the present to design an appropriate strategy, fresh tactics, and acquire new skills.” For this reason, Alfred describes the warrior’s practices of cultural regeneration as “a creative reinterpretation of what it is to be a warrior” and as a process of “cultural redefinition” even though they remain “in full reverence and honour of the essence of the ancient warrior spirit”.  

Just as Alfred recognises that Indigenous peoples cannot return uncritically to the cultural practices and traditions of an idealised past without creatively modifying these practices to fit the present conditions, so too does he caution against the idea that Indigenous peoples could return to the traditional political and economic structures of their ancestors. Once again, he stresses that Onkwehonwe exist in a drastically different world than that which was inhabited by their ancestors. Contemporary Onkwehonwe institutions must reflect these differences. For instance, Alfred observes that “[t]he traditional governments and laws we hold out as the pure good alternatives to the imposed colonial systems were developed at a time when people were different than we are now; they were people who were confidently rooted in their culture, bodily and spiritually strong, and capable of surviving independently in their natural environment.” Rather than replicating previous political structures then, Alfred contends that new Onkwehonwe political practices must be permitted to emerge in and through the creative contestation of today’s new warriors. “The new warrior’s path, the spirit of Wasáse, this Onkwehonwe attitude, this courageous way of being-in-the-world—all come together to form a new politics”, he affirms. Once the new generation of warriors has brought new
meaning into what it is to practice a Onkwehonwe existence today through their creative contestation with the colonial society, and once these warriors have strengthened, united, and mobilised their communities, only then will it become clear and apparent what types of political and economic relations are best suited for that existence in the present.

We thereby see how the ethical practices of the new Onkwehonwe warriors ultimately crystallise into a profoundly political anarcho-indigenous vision. Drawing from Onkwehonwe heritage permits North America’s original peoples to dislodge themselves from the singular mentalities and modes of thinking that have been subtly entrenched by colonial power over the past 500 years. By historicising these colonial forms of thought, it becomes clear that other ways of thinking and relating in the world can, and do, exist. The ancestral traditions of the Onkwehonwe empower a new generation of warriors with the inspiration to “refuse any further disconnection from their heritage”\(^{81}\) by rejecting capitalism and the colonial state, and by creatively experimenting with new meanings of what it is to endow these traditions with life in the world today. It is through this daily struggle against Settler institutions that the emergence of new political, economic, and relational forms is made possible. The example set by the ethical practices of this new generation of Onkwehonwe warriors opens up “the potential to initiate a more coordinated and widespread action, to reorganize communities to take advantage of gains and opportunities as they occur in political, economic, social, and cultural spheres and spaces created by the movement.”\(^{82}\) These new relational forms may begin to take shape in the very limited and confined spaces within the interstices of imperial power; however, dormant within the determined efforts of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to live a different mode of existence lies the ever-present
possibility that these subjugated practices will achieve such strength that they will eventually undermine the monopoly of relational possibilities claimed by capitalism and the Settler state. At this point, these alternative civilizational practices may stand as parallel ways of being and relating in "peaceful coexistence" with those hegemonic structures with which we are all too familiar today.

**Conclusion – The Creative Insurgence of Non-Capitalist Practices**

In Chapter Three, I argued that the imperialist tendencies latent within anti-capitalist theory can largely be traced back to the domination/subjugation model of power that has formed the basis of much of modern Western political thought since the emergence of the doctrine of sovereignty in the mid-17th century. I then offered an alternative conception of power based on the insights of Michel Foucault, and demonstrated how this model might help to make sense of capitalism as a form of power that governs subjects through their free participation in power relations. In this chapter I have argued that reconsidering capitalism in this light also requires one to rethink resistance. It remains beyond the scope of this paper to prove that the approach developed here, which focuses on the affirmation and insurgence of subjugated non-capitalist practices, is "the best" way to approach anti-capitalist resistance or that it does not have problems of its own. However, in conclusion I would like to argue that this approach does have the merit of allowing us to think of the struggle against capitalist relations much more pluralistically, avoiding the aforementioned Eurocentric tendencies of certain past approaches.

**Critique as Problematisation – Multiplicity of Critical Subject Positions**

In Chapter One I considered the approaches of Eduard Bernstein and Jürgen Habermas as two examples of theorists who attempt to ground political critique on a Kantian universal moral theory, which they believe to be capable of distinguishing just social and political
practices from those that are unjust. It is thought that once the universal standards of justice and morality have been determined, capitalist societies can then be critiqued for failing to successfully adhere to those standards. However, I demonstrated that grounding critique in such claims to universality poses certain dangers. The universalism of Bernstein and Habermas is shown to justify the forceful imposition of the institutions that they claim to embody their principles on any society throughout the world that fails to organize itself in accordance with this particular institutional arrangement. In the case of these two thinkers, grounding anti-capitalist critique in universals is shown to lead to a theory that justifies war and imperial invasions abroad in the name of peace, justice, and reason, and which then proceeds with a missionary zeal to reorganize the entire world according to its particular vision of the one right way.

Marx always remained sceptical of moral theory and avoided the temptation to fall back upon universal principles as the basis of his critique, turning instead to a world-historical narrative of progress and development. However, in Chapter Two I argued that this approach ultimately reproduced many very similar imperialist propensities in yet a new form. Inherent in the dialectical materialist approach is a tendency to introduce hierarchies between different civilizational practices and traditions that can then be used to justify imperialist interventions and colonial conquests conducted by those societies that are thought to have reached higher stages of development against those peoples who are thought to be further behind. In fact, Marx even went so far as to justify the imposition of capitalism on non-capitalist societies on the grounds that he believed these Indigenous societies to be at a lower stage of historical development than were the capitalist nations of Europe. He believed that these "unchanging" indigenous societies
would inevitably have to progress through capitalism in order to achieve socialism in any case, and that it was thus the duty of Europe to help them get there. Hardt and Negri were then shown to adopt many of these very same tropes, leading them to very similar problematic conclusions.

Consequently, I suggest that anti-capitalist theory must consider ways in which critiques of capitalism can be developed without relying on Kantian universalism or dialectical theories of world-historical development. The Foucauldian approach that I have outlined above does just that. Rather than employing a high-powered normative theory of moral universalism with which to critique capitalism, Foucault’s approach of “problematisation” seeks to take such claims to universality and turn them back into a problem. It attempts to confuse these universal projects by demonstrating that the taken for granted limits of such projects are actually contingent and circumstantial. To illustrate the limits and arbitrary character of that which is claimed to be universal is, at one and the same time, to demonstrate that these limits could be seen in a new light and could be transgressed. In other words, rather than starting from that which is known to be the absolute truth, political resistance can begin from the problematisation of one’s own limits and with the experimentation with other ontological possibilities. It can then proceed by developing certain ethico-political practices that open up new possibilities for individuals to act differently, and which refuse the established modes of subjectivity according to which one is governed.

Like Marx, Foucault believed that turning to history could provide one with useful tools with which to critique the present. However, Foucault’s method of critique differs from that of Marx because, instead of constructing teleological narratives which
demonstrate why things must have unfolded as they did, Foucault seeks to do precisely the opposite – he seeks to demonstrate that, far from being rational or determinant, history’s trajectory is random, arbitrary, and unpredictable. His genealogical studies resurrect the voices and traditions of those peoples and civilizations that the grand narratives of history have excluded and forgotten. The relations of capitalist modernity to which we are presently subjected rose up on the backs of all those historical alternatives that were displaced, eradicated, or assimilated in countless different ways. By recovering and excavating these histories, Foucault reminds us that the present could have been much different than it is, and that the future is yet to be written. Looking to the subjugated and forgotten ontologies, practices, and forms of thought from the past does not mean that we have to embrace these alternatives uncritically, but it does cast new light on the social and political relations characteristic of the present age, and permits us to question and to problematise aspects of these relations that we may have otherwise taken for granted. Drawing on history’s diverse alternatives thus helps to shake us out of those forms of thought with which we have become familiar – to “desubjectify” our subjectivities, thereby allowing us to think differently about the limits on our present ontological condition that we might otherwise fail to recognise or acknowledge.

This method of approaching critique as problematisation allows for greater plurality within anti-capitalist thought than do those critiques that are grounded in Kantian universalism or Hegelian dialectics. First, we have already seen that Foucault’s historical ontologies draw on the plurality of silenced voices, traditions, and knowledge found throughout history so as to demonstrate that there are ways of thinking and acting other than those to which we have become accustomed. More importantly however, the
purpose of reviving these forgotten histories is to encourage each subject or collectivity to problematise capitalism on the basis of their own experience and in light of their own prescribed limits. The objective of this genealogical problematisation is, thus, not to discover the reason why people should oppose capitalist relations, nor is it to advocate a return to past historical formations. Rather than generating answers, the problematisation approach to critique encourages each collectivity to ask how it is that they are being limited by the relations of capitalist modernity. Perhaps none has captured this vision more powerfully and succinctly than has Subcomandante Marcos. In a 1998 interview, Marcos described the political philosophy of Zapatismo as follows:

Zapatismo is not an ideology, it is not a bought and paid for doctrine. It is an intuition. Something so open and flexible that really it occurs in all places. Zapatismo poses the question: “What is it that has excluded me? What is it that has isolated me?” And the response is different for Mexican Indians than it is for North American Indians or the immigrants in Europe or the resistance movements in Asia or for blacks in Africa. In each place the response is different. Zapatismo simply states the question and stipulates that the response is plural, that the response is inclusive and must be tolerant.³³

By posing questions rather than imposing answers in the manner described by Marcos above, the problematisation approach to critique permits each subject to critique capitalism in light of the particular manner in which it operates on them in their particular locality. A multiplicity of different critiques of capitalism is thus permitted to emerge.

To be absolutely clear, this is not to say that each distinct collectivity must identify as a particular type of anti-capitalist subject as Marx or Hardt and Negri demand. Rather, as each collectivity problematises the types of power relations to which it finds itself subjected, each will formulate a critique of capitalist power based on the manner in which it intersects with other technologies of power so as to govern individuals as certain types of subjects. Each unique struggle — feminist, environmental, anarcho-indigenous, etc. — holds the potential to undermine, modify, or transform capitalist relations in their
own way in the course of engaging their own uniquely situated struggles and affirming their own alternatives. By building affinities between these different collectivities, each can act in solidarity with each other while still engaging in their own struggle against the particular forms of oppression that operates on them. By cultivating such solidarity between diverse actors, capitalist relations can be radically transformed in such a way that allows each collectivity to maintain their own distinct identities.

Critical Resistance – Inside, Outside, or Interstices?
The plurality of different critical subject positions which problematize the limits of their own subjectivity within relations of power leads, in turn, to a proliferation of diverse forms of resistance. In Chapter One I argued that liberal democratic institutions silence, constrain, and assimilate certain people’s voices, perspectives, and concerns. Reformist programs that confine resistance to such institutions thereby devalue and marginalise these voices within their movement, while elevating the concerns of others. Oblivious to the fact that technologies of inclusion and exclusion operate in every institutionalised political setting, liberal democratic reformers such as Bernstein and Habermas simply proceed as though these exclusions either do not exist, or are of very minimal relevance. Imperial relations between those who belong to certain privileged civilizational traditions and those who belong to other marginalized traditions are thus left intact and are actually reinscribed within the anti-capitalist movement itself. The lesson that I draw from this observation is that anti-capitalist struggles must develop an awareness that power and technologies of exclusion exist in every relational context and in every site of political contestation. To privilege any one site of politics over others is, consequently, always to privilege certain voices over others as well. Anti-capitalist politics must therefore seek
ways to permit a diversity of standpoints of critique to inform a diversity of forms of resistance in the diverse sites of power’s operation.

Marx was well aware of the limitations posed by liberal democratic institutions and sought to smash these institutions in a revolutionary uprising. However, Marx’s Jacobin vision of a revolutionary upheaval that would unite humanity in its properly universal condition remained fraught with its own problems. Marx’s attempt to achieve *total inclusion* within the revolutionary project required that all differences be smoothed over and, consequently, that one particular subject position be elevated as the properly revolutionary identity, destined to assimilate the diversity of other groups into its ranks. Marx believed that all the classes and peoples of the nineteenth century were gradually being conflated into two great camps that would eventually confront each other in a final revolutionary showdown, from which only one class – the proletarian class – would emerge victorious. All other classes or groups of people who opposed capitalism from any standpoint other than that of the proletariat could only be explained by Marx as vestiges of a past historical formation which were simply reacting against the inevitable march of progress, and which were about to disappear in any case.

While remaining sceptical of reformist programs that confine resistance to established institutions then, there are reasons to remain equally uncomfortable with revolutionary imaginaries that seek to bring about an end to human antagonism. Indeed, Foucault has taught us that the revolutionary attempt to dispose of all our limits merely substitutes new limits in the place of the old. These false promises of revolution have not only tended to stifle critical politics, but they have generally led to disastrous results. Foucault makes his aversion to revolutionary politics clear, stating that, “[t]he historical
ontology of ourselves must turn away from all projects that claim to be global or radical. In fact we know from experience that the claim to escape from the system of contemporary reality so as to produce the overall programs of another society, of another way of thinking, another culture, another vision of the world, has led to the return of the most dangerous traditions.\textsuperscript{85} On these grounds contemporary anti-capitalist theory must consider how to theorise resistance in ways that break free of the traditional reformist/revolutionary dichotomies of the “inside” or the “outside.”

One way to do this is to begin to think about all of those non-capitalist practices and relational alternatives that already actually do exist in practice and which exist both within capitalism but also despite capitalism. Although these relations are still embedded in a larger capitalist society, their non-capitalist quality place them neither entirely inside nor outside, but rather in the interstices of capitalism. Once we begin to look for them, these alternatives can be found everywhere. Underground economies, gift economies, guerrilla gardening, squats, dumpster-divers, workers co-operatives, collectives, permacultural experiments, the traditional practices of indigenous peoples – in each of these examples can be found practices or relational forms that permit subjects to opt out of capitalist relations to a limited degree within the broader context of capitalist modernity. By making use of their limited freedom and by practising the “arts of agonistics”\textsuperscript{86} in this way, capitalist subjects are able to “turn sideways” from the hegemonic imperial forms of power, to a limited extent, and to cultivate different ways of relating to one another in co-operation and mutual aid within the cracks and crevices of imperial and capitalist power.
However, there is nothing inherently anti-capitalist about any of these interstitial practices. In other words, these practices may allow us to escape from capitalism to a limited extent, but only within the broader context of a capitalist and imperialist society. Indeed, if there is one lesson that Foucault has taught us, then it is that power relations actually thrive by granting subjects a certain limited space with which the subject is free to govern themselves within the prevailing relational arrangement or mode of gouvernementalité. To merely bring these non-capitalist alternatives into the world without transforming the broader forms of political and economic relations in which they remain embedded is not adequate. Only by experimenting, cultivating, and proliferating these practices in a way that refuses capitalism and its modes of subjectification do these practices have the potential to instigate much broader systemic transformations. If strengthened and gradually expanded, the practices that exist today within the limited confines of the interstices of capitalist modernity might one day be permitted to blossom forth into an entirely new way of living and relating in the contemporary world that stands in parallel, and in direct opposition, to those forms of relations to which we presently find ourselves subjected.

One benefit of this approach is that it is not premised on the direct negation of power, but instead builds upwards and outwards through an affirmation of alternative modes of existence and ways of being-in-the-world. By experimenting with the transgression of the limits that we have long taken for granted, we come to constitute ourselves anew and affirm a new ethos. This coalesces into a negation of the hegemonic forms of power, or into an anti-capitalist approach, only indirectly since these self-affirming and self-transformative practices require us to refuse that which we are and the
mode of subjectification through which we are governed. Our work on the limits of our self allows us to withdraw from the types of actions, attitudes, and patterns of thought that capitalist relations induce us to embrace, and they thus allow one to turn one’s back or withdraw from capitalism by so doing. One relation at a time, capitalism might thereby dissolve into a plurality of localized non-capitalist practices and relations.

This focus on the positive affirmation of subjugated practices offers a promising escape from the dialectic of enlightenment with its emphasis on negation and the unfolding of contradiction into a higher unity. Anti-capitalist politics must rid itself of the idea that it will reach its full strength and potential only once such unity is achieved. Rather than seeking to eradicate difference or seeing difference as an impediment, this focus on the affirmation of all the diverse interstitial practices offers a vision of anti-capitalist politics that proves far more accommodating to plurality. To recognise that power operates differently in each unique relational context is equally to recognise that there are innumerable subject positions and perspectives from which this power can be contested. Indeed, there are countless manners in which to oppose capitalism in the world today. Contemporary anti-capitalist theory will be stronger if it abandons the effort to determine which of these ways is the singular best mode of contestation, and considers instead how to carefully craft a radically decentralized movement – or “movement of movements” – grounded in the perspectives of each diverse locality and tradition, thereby allowing the plurality of differences to thrive. We must recognise the fact that the world is a brilliantly diverse place, and that we can never eliminate all of its diversity – but nor should we need to or want to do so! We must encourage and harnesses the power of the world’s diverse alternatives and traditions, allowing us to forge alliances of solidarity and
"multilogues"\textsuperscript{87} between all those who actively contest their unique capitalist present and who affirm their own diverse alternatives. Only by cautiously and strategically articulating each local struggle together as a loose-knit network of solidarity can a truly global anti-capitalist movement be permitted to emerge.

Unlike Marx, who misread and misunderstood much of the world’s resistance to capitalism as a confirmation of the backwardness and primitiveness of “pre-capitalist” peoples, the approach developed here seeks to take these localised and situated forms of resistance seriously. It was Marx’s reliance on Hegelian categories of world-historical development that blinded him to the radical potential of all those non-capitalist practices that always already exist within the interstices of capitalist society. Focusing on the affirmation of these practices forces us to begin with the actual ways capitalist relations and its effects are already being contested in the context of each particular circumstance and locality. This spirit of beginning from the resistance that is already underway is captured wonderfully by James Ferguson, who remarks that:

There is not one question – “what is to be done” – but hundreds: what should the mineworkers do, what should the abandoned old women do, what should the unemployed do, and on and on. It seems, at the least, presumptuous to offer prescriptions here. The toiling miners and the abandoned old women know the tactics proper to their situations far better than any expert does. Indeed, the only general answer to the question, ‘What should they do?’ is: ‘They are doing it!’\textsuperscript{88}

So, as Tully argues, although it may be true that “another world is possible,” it is also true that other worlds are \textit{actual}.	extsuperscript{89} We must experiment and find ways that permit these other worlds to flourish and thrive.

Rather than creating alternatives that are based on ideal models for a future society for which we are constrained to wait, this experimental strategy can begin immediately. We can set off to explore different institutional and relational forms without a set program for a future society that can be determined prior to commencement.
of political struggle itself. This offers a genuinely non-imperial approach to resistance so far as it privileges emergent forms of relations that are subject to the shared authority of the people who are actually engaged in these relations themselves, rather than seeking to impose a predetermined and fixed structure of relations on such subjects (as the imperialist approaches of Bernstein, Habermas, Marx, and Hardt and Negri would have us do). In a republican spirit, we can bring to life new emergent forms of politics through the creative experimentation of the struggle itself and by the people actually engaged in the resistance.

"Without a program does not mean blindness," Foucault affirmed; "Being without a program can be very useful and creative, if it does not mean without proper reflection about what is going on." What it does imply is that one must embrace the epistemological humility of not knowing what is possible before one even begins to engage politically. This requires one to cultivate a tremendous ability to adapt one's politics to new circumstances as they arise, and to foster their spirit of "political innovation, political creation, and political experimentation outside the great political parties." 

Radically Transformative or "Ad Hoc Adventurism"?
Still, some would remain highly sceptical of the idea that such localised resistance centered on practices of the self, refusal, or radical experimentation, could threaten the capitalist order in any serious manner at all. Some would claim that, even if this "ethico-political" approach could be construed as vaguely political to some degree, then still it fails to provide an effective or coherent strategy with which radical political change could ever be achieved. According to this objection, the types of self-transformative practices discussed above are portrayed as being of "merely cultural" significance, and it is
charged that they actually divide and derail the anti-capitalist movement, inhibiting it from securing any real gains. Although these practices of cultural resistance may lead individuals to believe that their lifestyle subverts and undermines power in some obscure way, it is claimed by detractors that these practices actually do not comprise anything more than fanciful acts of juvenile rebellion which ultimately fail to stop the onslaught of capitalism’s military industrial complex as it incessantly reaps havoc and destruction throughout the world. Further, it is claimed that even if these situated practices actually did achieve any concrete political gains, these gains would remain confined to that particular locality in which this resistance occurred, and would thus have a negligible effect on the macro-level structures that are thought to constitute the real source of the problem at hand.

Murray Bookchin is one such critic who has juxtaposed the ethico-political approach that he labels “lifestyle anarchism,” with what he considers to be the far more serious political program of “social anarchism”. Bookchin derides those who approach anarchism as a way of life rather than as a political schema for a just society. He characterises this so-called “lifestyle anarchism” as nothing but “Ad hoc adventurism, personal bravura, an aversion to theory oddly akin to postmodernism, celebrations of theoretical incoherence (pluralism), a basically apolitical and anti-organizational commitment to imagination, desire, and ecstasy, and an intensely self-oriented enchantment of everyday life”. Bookchin claims that, whether they know it or not, adherents of this “lifestyle” politics “articulate Michel Foucault’s approach of ‘personal insurrection’ rather than social revolution, premised as it is on an ambiguous and cosmic critique of power as such”, and that their “self-indulgent aesthetic vagaries [..]
significantly erode the core of a left-libertarian ideology that once could claim social relevance and weight precisely for its uncompromising commitment to emancipation."^{95}

In response to such charges, it is first important to acknowledge that Foucault’s ethico-political approach grounded in practices of self-transformation may not be an appropriate strategy with which to engage in resistance at all times in all places. In fact, Foucault was fully willing to concede this point, which is why he was very careful to distinguish the *power relations* described above (wherein subjects retain a limited degree of freedom), from *relations of domination* (where this freedom to experiment with one’s limits does not exist). “Where the determining factors are exhaustive, there is no relationship of power,” he states.\(^{96}\) A state of domination thus exists when fixed and stabilized mechanisms of governance replace “the freplay of antagonistic reactions” and thereby ensure certain predicable behaviours and outcomes. Whereas *power relations* can potentially be countered with ethical practices that seeks to alter the dynamic of the relationship, the only strategy that could ever counter a *relation of domination* would be to employ acts of direct confrontation that seek to liberate the subject by completely shattering the governing relation.

Thus, Foucault did recognise the importance of employing direct confrontation in order to defeat structures in certain circumstances. Indeed, certain structures of domination, such as the military, remain on-call and in the background of most every power relation, and could consequently be called upon at any moment to step in and crush any experimental, or interstitial practice that grows too threatening to the established order. When faced with a military onslaught as such, it would seem somewhat misguided and inappropriate to contend that what one ought to do is to
consider one’s predicament genealogically, recognise the contingency of their situation at hand, and to then quickly begin to think and act differently.

So, it may be the case that in certain situations, ethical practices may not prove to be the most appropriate response to capitalist power. However, the reverse is equally true – direct confrontation can be equally as much of a dangerous and ineffective course of action when not employed strategically and appropriately. In fact, Foucault’s entire objective in stressing the relational dimension of power was to emphasise that, as the subjects of power, we can actually succeed a great deal at modifying, and even transforming power structures by using our freedom ethically and strategically. It does not suffice to claim that our only option is to violently overthrow the existing structures. In fact, even if one were to achieve liberation by doing so, this liberation can never be complete without a subsequent modification of one’s ethical practices. As Foucault notes:

The Practice of Liberation is not in itself sufficient to define the practices of freedom that will still be needed if this people, this society, and these individuals are to be able to define admissible and acceptable forms of existence or political society. This is why I emphasize practices of freedom over processes of liberation; again, the latter indeed have their place, but they do not seem to me to be capable by themselves of defining all the practical forms of freedom.97

One might think of the Soviet Union as an example wherein a people succeeded to liberate themselves from many of the institutions that we tend to associate with capitalism, but ultimately failed to problematise many of the same patterns of thought that we recognise to be characteristic of capitalist relations (such as those related to material acquisition, productivity, and development, for instance). Indeed, to quote from Hannah Arendt’s brilliant insights on revolution: “So great is the fear of men, even the most radical and least conventional among them, of things never seen, of thoughts never thought of”.98
Further, claims that ethical practices are an ineffective tool of anti-capitalist resistance are rather ironic given that, for the most part, they have tended to come from the ranks of those same old political traditions that, for over a century and a half now, have proven largely incapable of effectively transforming capitalism or creating inspiring alternatives. In fact, those domains of struggle in which improvements have arguably been made over the last fifty years – such as in case of struggles against gender and racial oppression in certain parts of the world, for instance – have generally employed tactics that were relatively less focused on capturing or smashing state power. Anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist movements, by contrast, have remained far more preoccupied with state power, and yet the forms of oppression that these movements have targeted are arguably much worse now than they were a century ago. Nevertheless, I will briefly respond to the charge that ethico-political practices have no transformative thrust by offering three reasons as to why the experimental approach is actually more radical and more effective at creating systemic change than are the more standard approaches with which we are familiar.

The first reason why we could say that this approach to resistance is more radical is because it opposes not only capitalism, but also the Eurocentric patterns of thought that have provided the theoretical basis of European imperialism over the past 500 years. Rather than contending that capitalism must be contested by using one particular set of institutions, or by adopting one universal mode of subjectivity, the ethico-political approach embraces radical plurality in its struggle by permitting each community of people to resist capitalism on their own terms, in their own context, and from the basis of their own perspectives while in solidarity with others, as discussed above.
Secondly, by embracing radical plurality as such, this approach permits far more of a global movement to emerge than do contending anti-capitalist approaches. As we have seen in previous chapters of this paper, a careful examination of other self-proclaimed global movements (such as that of Hardt and Negri’s multitude) often reveals that they are little more than Western political struggles disguised as “global” struggles. Grounding resistance in local and situated practices permits far more of a genuinely global movement to emerge because it draws on diverse perspectives and worldviews from all over the globe without privileging one over all the rest in its efforts to build something new.

Some might counter by arguing that any such radically decentralized and pluralistic movement as this would have to remain limited to very specific sites of contestation and would thus not be very “global” at all. However, the fact that practices of resistance take place in the localized context of a specific community or site of social contestation does not mean that these practices cannot result in wide-ranging systemic effects which transcend the boundaries of the local context in which they are situated. Any political action that creates new forms of social and political relations in one specific location contributes to the much larger transformative effort to undermine the monopoly of relational forms claimed by capitalism and the state on a larger scale. The creation of social and political autonomy in one locality opens the door for the creation of social and political autonomy in other localities. The reciprocal effects of struggles manifest themselves beyond the particular community in which they are situated for at least two reasons.
First, local victories can provide an example and a source of inspiration for ethico-political actions in other contexts. Landauer foresaw radical social change as transpiring in precisely this manner. He believed that once a few non-capitalist experiments succeeded to create new ways of organising and of living together, each “with their own cultures […] scattered everywhere in the land, north, south east and west, in all provinces amid the baseness of the profit-economy,” then other communities would see “their joy in life, in this inexpressible though quite manner,” and would follow suit with the knowledge that they too are capable of building alternatives. Small-scale transformations of power relations in one locality would thereby pave the way for political transformation and experimentation in other contexts, he argued. As these autonomous experiments begin to multiply, each creating a localized version of a Great Schism by introducing an element of confusion into the logic of authority, they create a single perforation in the capitalist state’s supposed monopoly of power and its claims to sovereign authority. Collectively, a multiplicity of perforations – or a plurality of autonomous experiments – scattered in a wide range of different localities holds the potential to gradually deteriorate and strip sovereign authority from the state one site at a time. “Our spirit must ignite, illuminate, entice and attract”, he reasoned; “Talk along never does this […] [o]nly example can do it. We must give the example and lead the way.” Leading by example, localised experimentation holds the potential to lead to far more sweeping transformation.

But, even if the transformation of relations in one locality is not embraced as an example by others, the repercussions of social change can still never be entirely contained within the bounds of one single locality. If we are to understand power as operating
through a complex and overlapping ensemble of interactive social relations, then changes in one set of relations must necessarily affect the interactions of social actors in other relations. In other words, if power cannot be understood as a totalizing system as we have seen, then nor can its effects ever be securely fixed and bounded. The capillary effects of power have an ability to seep from one set of power relations into others in completely unexpected ways. Power operates not just “vertically” but also “horizontally” through relations between individuals. The diverse forms of relations in which power operates intersect and intertwine like nodal points in a web. Consequently, the extent to which our practices are embedded and enmeshed in power relations is possibly far greater than we can immediately comprehend. As Theodore Schatzki argues, “[t]he conception of the social field as a heterogeneous and modulating weave of practices likewise implicates this wider sociality, for interconnections among practices ensure that individuals coexist not only with those who participate in practices connected with theirs.” The lives of a Swedish financier and a Singaporean baker “hang together” through the practices which intersect Swedish banking and Singaporean baking, Schatzki explains. Naturally then, whenever one nodal point on this web of power is untwined and then reconfigured, the structure of the entire web can consequently change. Each nodal point is affected by a change in each other nodal point to a greater or lesser extent depending on one’s relative location in the web. Another way to conceive of this effect is to think of the relation between relations as akin to a kaleidoscope, whereby the alteration of one point in any kaleidoscopic pattern resonates throughout all of the other points, altering them in unforeseen ways.
All of this implies that we can never be entirely sure how our acts of resistance are going to affect people in all the different relations in which we “hang together” with others; but we can be sure that the effects will not be limited to the local context in which we are immediately situated, and that our actions are capable of creating the conditions for changes in other localities as well. Indeed, capitalism itself emerged in precisely this manner – not according to any pre-planned schema, and not by way of a revolutionary uprising, but as a gradual consequence of complex and completely unpredictable changes in social relations caused by the experimentation with new practices in which certain merchants, who lived very much on the periphery and within the uncolonized interstices of power, engaged. It would thus be quite fitting to imagine that capitalism might come to an end in a similar manner as that in which it began.

A third reason why this experimental approach has more promising transformative potential than contending approaches is because it offers us a way of thinking about radical political contestation that can be put into practise immediately. Anti-capitalist politics is not a vision that we must hope for while continuing on with our lives in the capitalist present. This approach does not require us to await capitalism’s inevitable collapse, or to push the historical stage of capitalism forward to its completion so that we can progress “through” capitalism and “out the other side”. Rather, the experimental self-transformative approach understands anti-capitalist politics as a way of living in the present despite capitalism. Grounded in the ethico-political practices of refusal and experimental creation, a radical anti-capitalist movement can begin to build alternative ways of living and relating immediately that can potentially grow and prosper on their own and exist in parallel with the hegemonic relational forms. Indeed, one need
not wait any longer for capitalism's long anticipated moment of crisis because, as Landauer powerfully declared, "Socialism will not grow out of capitalism but away from it".  

Still, none of these arguments can guarantee that the ethico-political approach that I have outlined will definitely lead to the type of systemic transformation that one might desire. Indeed, to make such a guarantee would be to reintroduce a teleological logical back into the picture. Nevertheless, if Foucault's conceptualization of power is accurate, then we can guarantee that it is possible for us to try to bring such a transformation about, and that it is also possible that we might succeed to transform capitalism without falling into the perils that have stifled past struggles.

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**Introduction**


**Chapter One**


2 Ibid., p. 166.

3 Ibid., p. 168.

4 Eduard Bernstein, 'The Social and Political Significance of Space and Numbers,' in Marxism and Social Democracy, p. 93. These remarks foreshadow Bernstein's later comments in Evolutionary Socialism, where he writes: 'What abundance of judgement, practical knowledge, talent for administration, must a government or a national assembly have at its disposal to be even equal to the supreme management or managing control of such a gigantic organism!' Eduard Bernstein, 'The Tasks and Possibilities of Social Democracy,' Chapter Three in Evolutionary Socialism. [1899]. Online at: [http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bernstein/works/1899/evsoc/index.htm](http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bernstein/works/1899/evsoc/index.htm).


6 Ibid., p. 169.

7 Alexander Parvus, 'Bernstein's Statement,' in Marxism and Social Democracy, p. 194. Also see 'Introduction,' p. 22.

8 Bernstein writes, 'If I did not fear that what I write should be misunderstood (I am, of course, prepared for its being misconstrued), I would translate Back to Kant by Back to Lange. For, just as the philosophers and investigators who stand by that motto are not concerned with going back to the letter of what the Königsberg philosopher wrote, but are only concerned with the fundamental principles of his criticism, so social democracy would just as little think of going back to all the social-political views of Frederick Albert Lange.' 'Conclusion: Ultimate Aim and Tendency – Kant against Cant,' in Evolutionary Socialism.

9 Eduard Bernstein, 'The Realistic and Ideological Movements in Socialism,' in Marxism and Social Democracy, pp. 229-43.

10 Eduard Bernstein, 'A Statement,' in Marxism and Social Democracy, p. 193. Rosa Luxembourg responded to Bernstein's remarks by stating that "In a word, what we have here is the construction of a
socialist program on the basis of ‘pure knowledge,’ which means, in simple terms, on an Idealist basis, while objective necessity, that is, the construction of socialism on the basis of the material development of society, falls by the wayside.” Rosa Luxemburg, ‘The Method,’ in Marxism and Social Democracy, p.194. Also see ‘Introduction,’ pp. 251-52.
11 Eduard Bernstein, ‘The Tasks and Possibilities of Social Democracy,’ Chapter Three in Evolutionary Socialism.
12 Bernstein states: “That it at first strictly maintained the form of bourgeois liberalism did not stop it from actually expressing a very much wider-reaching general principle of society whose completion will be socialism.” Evolutionary Socialism, Chapter 3.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
17 Ibid., pp. 51-6.
18 Ibid. See Chapter V and Chapter VI (pp. 141-235).
20 Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 120-26.
21 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 285; Jürgen Habermas, Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action, p. 58.
25 Ibid., p. 183.
26 Ibid., p. 154.
29 See ibid., pp. 96-107.
32 Ibid., pp. 306-07.
33 Jürgen Habermas, Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action, p. 67.
34 Ibid., p. 103.
35 Jürgen Habermas, Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics, Ciaran Cronin trans., (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), p. 32. Habermas offers a slightly different articulation of the (U) principle in Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action: “(U): All affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its general observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of everyone’s interests (and these consequences are preferred to those of known alternative possibilities for regulation).” p. 65.
36 Jürgen Habermas, Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action, p. 82.
37 Ibid., pp. 78-82.
38 Ibid., p. 89.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., p88-89.
42 Ibid., p453.
43 Ibid., pp118-31.
44 Vladimir Lenin. The State and Revolution. [1917]. Online at:
Ralph Miliband, ‘State Power and Class Interests,’ in *Class Power and State Power* (London: Verso, 1983),
pp. 63-78. For an excellent overview of this debate see Clyde W. Barrow, ‘The Miliband-Poulantzas
Reconsidered* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp. 3-52.
48 For helpful comparisons between Wittgenstein and Bourdieu’s work, see Charles Taylor ‘To Follow a
Rule...’ and Jacques Bouvetresse ‘Rules, Dispositions, and the *Habitus*,’ in Richard Shusterman ed.
49 This analogy is used by David Hoy in *Critical Resistance* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004) p. 110.
54 This argument is presented in Bourdieu’s detailed study of France’s elite educational institutions, *The
56 Pierre Bourdieu, ‘From the King’s House to the Reason of State: A Model of the Genesis of the
Bureaucratic Field,’ in Loic Wacquant eds. *Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics: The Mystery of
57 Bourdieu, ‘From the King’s House to the Reason of State: A Model of the Genesis of the Bureaucratic
Field,’ p. 51.
58 Ibid., p. 48.
60 Ibid., p. 41.
61 Ibid., pp. 25-26. Also see Taiaiake Alfred, ‘From Sovereignty to Freedom: Towards an Indigenous
Political Discourse.’
62 Ibid., p. 27.
63 Ibid., pp. 42-43.
65 See Pierre Bourdieu *Language and Symbolic Power* (London: Polity, 1991) and ‘The Economics of
66 Iris Marion Young, ‘Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy,’ in S. Benhabib
67 Ibid.
68 For an example of this approach see James Tully, *Strange Multiplicity* (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1995). Also, James Tully ‘Recognition and Dialogue: The Emergence of a New Field’
69 See James Tully, ‘To Think and Act Differently: Foucault’s Four Reciprocal Objections to Habermas’
Theory’ in Samantha Ashenden and David Owen eds. *Foucault Contra Habermas* (London: Sage
70 Ibid., p. 109.
71 Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus*, p. 79. Fraser describes Habermas’s conceptualisation of the public
sphere, but this description is equally applicable to his project of discourse ethics more broadly.
72 James Tully, ‘To Think and Act Differently,’ pp. 105-106, 111, 118-121
Chapter Two

2. Ibid., §135, pp. 162-63.
5. Ibid.
9. This was the distinguishing feature of Marx and Engels’ materialism that differentiated it from the materialism of Feuerbach.
11 Ibid., p. 112.
12 Ibid., p. 111.
15 Ibid., p. 142.
16 Ibid., p. 148.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
22 Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, ‘The German Ideology,’ in Lawrence H. Simon ed. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, p. 120.
28 Ibid., p. 187.
29 Ibid., p. 333; p. xii.
30 Ibid., p. 9.
31 Ibid., p. 43.
33 Ibid., p. 40.
34 Ibid., p. 14.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., p. 15.
37 Ibid., p. 62.
38 see Ibid., pp. 49-52; p. 394.
39 Ibid., p. 43.
40 Ibid., p. 413
43 Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, ‘The Communist Manifesto.’
44 Ibid.
46 Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, ‘The Communist Manifesto.’
50 Karl Marx, ‘The Future Results of the British Rule in India,’ p. 82, 87.
51 Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, ‘The Communist Manifesto.’
52 Karl Marx, ‘The British Rule in India,’ p. 41; Karl Marx, ‘The Future Results of the British Rule in India,’ p. 81.
55 Karl Marx, ‘The Future Results of the British Rule in India,’ p. 87.
56 See Karl Marx, ‘Grundrisse’; Karl Marx, Capital; Karl Marx and Freiderich Engels, ‘The German Ideology,’ etc.
57 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire, p. 47.
58 Ibid., p. 66; 395-96.
59 Ibid., p. xi.
60 Ibid., p. xiv.
61 Ibid., p. 206; xv.
62 Ibid., p. 42.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., p. 49.
65 Ibid., p. 50.
66 Ibid., p. 43-44.
67 Ibid., p. 237.
68 Ibid., p. 58.
69 Ibid., p. 56.
70 Ibid., p. 393.
71 Ibid., p. 206.
74 See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire, p. xiv.
76 Kevin C. Dunn, ‘Africa’s Ambiguous Relation,’ p. 144.
77 Ibid. p. 143; David Moore, ‘Africa: The Black Hole in the Middle of Empire.’
78 David Moore, ‘Africa: The Black Hole in the Middle of Empire,’ p. 104.
79 Ibid., p. 105.
82 Ibid., p. 54.
83 Ibid., p. 31.
85 Chantal Mouffe, On the Political, p. 16.
86 Albert Camus, The Rebel, p. 193.
90 Albert Camus, The Rebel, p. 107.
91 Ibid., p. 204.
92 Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, ‘The Communist Manifesto.’
93 Ibid.
95 Karl Marx, ‘The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte’ [1852] where Marx refers to the lumpen proletariat as the “scum, offal, refuse of all classes.” Online at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch05.htm
96 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, ‘The Communist Manifesto.’
97 Ibid.
98 Karl Marx, ‘The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.’
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100 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, ‘The Communist Manifesto.’
101 Albert Camus, The Rebel, p. 183.
103 Ibid., p. 167.
104 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire, p. 397.
105 Ibid., p. 362.
106 Ibid., p. 206.
107 Ibid., p. 207.
108 Ibid., p. 362.
109 Ibid., p. 206.
110 Ibid., p. 108.
111 Ibid., p. 44.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid., p. 45, 206.
114 Ibid., p. 206.
115 Ibid., p. 45.
116 Ibid., p. 49; also see p. 395 where they state that “The multitude is not formed simply by throwing together and mixing nations and peoples indifferently; it is the singular power of a new city.”
117 Ibid., p. 362.
118 Ibid., p. 207.
119 Ibid., p. 146.
120 Ibid., p. 138.
121 Ibid., p. 142.
122 Ibid., p. 52-53.
123 Ibid., p. 402-03.
124 Ibid., p. 53.
125 Ibid., p. 399-407.
128 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire, p. 164.
129 Ibid., p. 169.
131 Ibid., p. 102.
132 Ernesto Laclau, ‘Can Immanence Explain Social Struggles?’

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2 Barry Hindess, Discourses of Power, p. 25.
3 Ibid., p. 39.
5 Ibid., p. 12.
6 Ibid., p. 33-34.
7 Ibid., p. 18.
10 Ibid., p. 317.
12 Michel Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power,’ p. 326.
16 Michel Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power,’ p. 331.
18 Michel Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power,’ p. 342.
20 Michel Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power,’ p. 341.
22 Michel Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power,’ p. 327.
23 Michel Foucault, ‘Preface to The History of Sexuality, Volume Two’ p. 201.
24 Ibid.
26 Ibid., p. 344.
27 Michel Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power,’ p. 342.
28 Ibid., p. 341.
29 Ibid.
33 James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State, p. 310.
34 Ibid., p. 337.
35 Ibid., p. 130.
38 James Tully, ‘Two Meanings.’
39 Ibid., p. 21.
40 James Tully, ‘Imperial Dimensions,’ p. 3.
41 Ibid., p. 21.
42 Ibid., p. 23.

Chapter Four
1 Nancy Fraser, Unruly Practices: Power Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), pp. 31-33.
8 Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?' p. 315.
11 Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?' p. 315; For more of Foucault's distinctions between these two varieties of critique see *What is Critique?*, especially pp. 48-53.
15 Michel Foucault, 'Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom,' p. 282.
16 Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?' p. 312.
17 Michel Foucault, 'On the Genealogy of Ethics,' p. 261.
18 Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?' p. 312.
20 Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?' p. 316.
21 Ibid., p. 319.
23 Ibid., p. 160.
26 Ibid., p. 136.
27 Ibid., p. 132.
28 Gustav Landauer, 'Weak Statesmen, Weaker People,' p. 165.
30 Ibid., p. 160.
31 Gustav Landauer, 'Weak Statesmen, Weaker People,' p. 165. [Emphasis added].
33 Ibid., p. 139.
36 Ibid., pp. 136-137.
37 Ibid., p. 74.
38 Ibid., p. 125.
39 Ibid., p. 138, 44.
40 Ibid., p. 138.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., p. 63.
43 Ibid., p. 142.
46 Ibid., p. 77.
47 Ibid., p. 46.
48 Ibid., p. 52. [Emphasis added].
49 Ibid., p. 75.
50 Ibid., p. 65.
51 Ibid., p. 67.
52 Ibid., p. 60-61.
53 Ibid., p. 60, 64.
54 Michel Foucault, ‘What is Enlightenment?’ p. 315.
56 Ibid., p. 60.
57 Ibid., p. 65.
58 Ibid., p. 53.
59 Ibid., p. 50.
60 Ibid., p. 53.
61 Ibid., p. 51.
63 Ibid., p. 25.
64 Ibid., p. 58.
65 Ibid., p. 25.
66 Ibid., p. 20.
67 Ibid., p. 23.
68 Ibid.
70 Ibid., p. 58.
71 Ibid., p. 25.
72 Ibid., p. 32.
73 Ibid., p. 20.
74 Ibid., p. 27.
75 Ibid., pp. 23; 28.
76 Ibid., p. 34.
77 Ibid., p. 29.
78 Ibid., p. 28.
79 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
80 Ibid., p. 19.
81 Ibid., p. 22.
82 Ibid.
83 Quote taken from the documentary Zapatista! (Big Noise Films, 1998).
85 Michel Foucault, ‘What is Enlightenment?’ p. 316.
91 Ibid.
92 Judith Butler defends this style of politics against such charges in her article, ‘Merely Cultural’ [1998].
Online at: www.brynmawr.edu/Acad/GSSW/schram/butlermerelycultural.pdf
94 Ibid., p. 10.
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96 Michel Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power,’ p. 342.
97 Michel Foucault, ‘Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom,’ p. 283.
100 Ibid.
104 Gustav Landauer, *For Socialism*, p. 140.
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