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The Politics of Everybody

Feminism, Queer Theory, and Marxism at the Intersection

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Introduction

I. The politics of everybody

The word everybody is politically unsettling. It evokes harmony and erasure, connectedness and enchainment; everybody is everywhere but nowhere in particular; the fact of everybody is inconceivable yet certain; everybody is an ever-changing limit. Everybody is both the us and the them. These days, the idea of everybody is most often used to mystify social relations. Phrases such as 'we're all in this together', 'one big happy family' and 'be a team player' reflect this. But the idea can also inspire us to demand 'our' inclusion in 'their' world; it reminds us that 'we' are the ones who make 'their' world possible – which of course means the world was always 'all of ours' all along. (Of course, most of 'them' find this sort of thinking threatening.) This book doesn't claim that there is a political philosophy or practice called 'the politics of everybody', let alone that I am some sort of visionary here to impart the one true version of that politics. The title simply makes the point that the word 'everybody' is politically provocative. It is particularly provocative because we live in an age where the way we produce things – the mode of production called capitalism – requires ideological individualism. One term for trying to think beyond individualism has been, historically speaking, the idea of the totality. But totality has many
connotations that the word ‘everybody’ does not. Totality connotes stasis, structure, permanence, and closure. Totality is difficult to reconcile with movement and historical change. The word ‘everybody’, on the other hand, is a little less ambitious, a little more material, and it makes a little more room for the interpersonal.

After the Copernican revolution, humans have had to accept that we’re not the center of the universe; we’re just a contingent collective floating in space, stuck together on the same planet. Economic expansion reduces the experience of distance; technologies developed to facilitate the circulation of commodities bring us closer to one another — whether we like it or not. In the age of global warming and digital satellites, it is no longer reasonable to imagine the world as a collection of territories with distinct boundaries. However, neither is it reasonable to envision the world as an unbounded multitude that has shed all borders, states, and limits: along with the unprecedented movement of bodies and goods, migrant labor, families fleeing war, prisoners, and former felons, perhaps more than ever, are at once adrift and stuck in place.

The cataclysmic ecological threat posed by the capitalist mode of production (the mindless pace it requires, the inevitable waste created in its boom and bust cycles) threatens everyone and requires real solutions. But genuine solutions require the interruption of profit extraction and must be applied at the point of production. For the few who benefit from this system of production — the industrial capitalists, and the financial capitalists who help them spin their profits into wild fictions — protecting the system from criticism is itself a matter of survival. The capitalist mode of production cannot be faulted. When climate change is not denied outright, at least the blame can be shifted. Environmental devastation becomes everybody’s fault, and the critical eye is turned toward the consumer. Suddenly, the problem is no longer political; now it is ethical. The word ‘everybody’ here operates as a diversionary tactic so that capitalist processes don’t come under scrutiny.

Personal awareness campaigns — the solution to all liberal pluralism’s problems — displace calls for system change. Ethics is the final frontier of social change within the liberal pluralist world because the market is, by nature, blameless. The market is imagined to operate principally at the microeconomic level. It is a manifestation of and a servant to our desires. Thus, the desiring consumer subject is the root of the world’s problems. For this reason, mindfulness is the key to global harmony — each of us must be made aware of how thoughtless we are toward one another and Mother Earth, but most of all how we harm ourselves. Yet liberal environmental awareness campaigns all hinge on one hidden truth: that social relations are conditioned by the imperatives of capitalist production. Therefore, such awareness campaigns are actually often their opposite: mystifications. This particular mystification, in part, comes via another cornerstone of liberal ideology: the notion that debate and discussion are inherently valuable. Now, this mystification doesn’t occur because discussion is actually encouraged. It occurs because those who own the means of production under capitalism also own the means of communication as well as the land where ordinary people would gather to discuss and debate. What comes over the airwaves and fills online news feeds masquerades as debate, but in reality it is nothing more than a wall of noise. That wall of noise serves a number of functions. One of those functions is to assure the public that the interests of the market are also their interests, that the market functions perfectly so long as the people it impoverishes don’t trouble it, and that capitalist production is way too complex for the average mind to comprehend. In fact, even great minds shouldn’t be able to understand it; the only reason to understand it is in order to know how to wring short-term profits from it. So, under capitalism, the term everybody is a political euphemism used by capitalists (and those who believe them) to deflect responsibility for systemic processes onto consumers who cannot control them. But beneath the gloss, there is a deep hatred of ‘the everybody’ (the
faceless masses, other people's kids, other people's nations, other people's religions) combined with a sense of collective ownership of other people's achievements (multiculturalism). Everybody exists to sacrifice for the few.

Still, there are other illiberal ways of imagining the problem of everybody. For fascist politics, the word 'everybody' means everybody in their place. Fascist politics demands a well-ordered world where every group is a whole, where every body acts as one body. So long as they keep within their boundaries, fascists may recognize other similarly purified bodies, other homogeneous nations — good fences make good neighbors. Of course, there is always a danger that one purified nation-body may come to see other purified nation-bodies (or all of them) as pollutants and barriers to the unified body of the world. Either way, fascism involves the cleansing of bodies, if not their eradication. But this doesn't necessarily mean that fascist politics acknowledges antagonism. Fascist politics can destroy bodies and claim to be doing so for the good of everybody. All it need do is pronounce that some bodies are nobodies; then it can eradicate the nobodies until everybody is a somebody. In the fascist schema, the nobodies are easy to spot: they're the ones without an identity, the ones without a home, the ones without a specific place to be — the internationalists, the immigrants, the 'street' people, the ones whose land has been stolen, the ones stolen from their lands, the ones who never had a land to begin with, the ones who live in the in-between. The fulcrum of the fascist approach to the political question of everybody is the ecstasy of communal harmony made possible only by expelling foreign bodies. The mid-twentieth-century American consensus, still popular, is that the structural core of fascism is the desire to conform, the impulse to give up one's will to orthodoxy. Ascribing causal agency to orthodoxy and uniformity is not without benefit to liberal ideology. If uniformity is the root cause of violent extermination, the solution to such violence is clearly the heterogeneity of the global marketplace, where creative individuals can construct themselves through a mosaic of international products and novelties.

While, to the fascist imaginary, international markets erase the purity of the collective, for colonial and decolonial subjects the international market is a different sort of erasure. This mix of global cultural material is not a pollution of the fatherland, but a final hollowing out of what has not already been erased by imperial conquest. The chaos of the market blurs the lines between cultural imperialism and appreciative sharing, between appropriation and symbolic support. Because the material legacy of colonialism and imperialism is conceptually obscured within the academy, the liberal pluralist solution to colonial erasure is a matter of respecting the hurt feelings of the other, whose hurt feelings are an indictment of the liberal pluralist's own political failure to be inclusive. In order to defend against liberal multiculturalism, the decolonial activist is deeply suspect of any use of the word 'everybody'. Her language, culture, and identity have been usurped by this 'everybody'. Western depictions either hollow her out into a nobody, or treat her as a hallowed object, which is, in the end, just another way of being treated as a nobody. But there is a maddening contradiction at work here: capitalist accumulation was the material engine of colonization, and cultural reclamation is not a sufficient condition for ending it, because capitalist expansion is not threatened by anticolonial struggle alone (Fanon 1963), the anticolonial activist must work alongside others who are also struggling against capitalism. And those 'struggling others' could be anybody — and what is an anybody if not an emissary from the everybody?

Socialists have a different illiberal relationship to the word 'everybody'. For Marxists, the liberation of all groups depends on the self-emancipation of one group — one international group — the proletariat. Unfortunately, under neoliberalism Marx's ideas have fallen prey to the wall of noise. Marxism and the proletariat operate as caricatures; they are treated more as punctuation marks
people, nor is Marxism a moral argument that proletarians are an honorable and valiant people, morally superior to the middle and upper classes. The proletarian is the pivotal political subject because productive labor is the strategic point from which capitalism is dismantled. This is not the same as saying that only employed people have agency or political value. Workers, the unemployed, their dependents, and allies routinely find creative ways to collude against capital. Anti-capitalist struggle is not a matter of making people aware of how bad life is under capitalism. It is not a matter of guilt by the rich into making concessions. The only awareness campaign capable of making a difference in capitalist accumulation is the one that explains to working people what the liberal awareness campaign intentionally ignores: how the capitalist mode of production actually works. But even awareness about the capitalist mode of production will not change it. You actually have to change it to change it. And changing it is a collective action that requires more than awareness. But it is an action that anybody can join.

The Marxist understanding of ‘everybody’ is the reverse of fascist ideology. Marxism requires a group from everywhere—which is also to say from nowhere in particular—to end a foundational historical injustice. In Marxist terms, everybody is a somebody and everybody belongs everywhere. Marxists do not seek to eradicate a people or even a group of individual persons named capitalists. Marxism seeks to eradicate a social relationship: the relation between the forces who create and sustain the world, and those who expropriate that creativity—be it for personal gain, familial gain, the gain of their particular social stratum, or the gain of a culture or nation. State apparatuses are necessary to maintain this social relationship. But the uneven development of states and the inconsistency of legal practices are not barriers to capital; rather, such disparities afford capital a wider playing field. The history of liberal thought likes to use the language of universalism, but the truth is that it thrives on leveraging difference.
Like the fear-inducing term 'totality', universal politics is also generally characterized as more threatening than emancipatory. Instead of evoking the possibility of human connection, universal inclusivity evokes the destruction of the self, the destruction of history, and the spread of cultural dominance: in short, universalism and totalitarianism are twins in the modern political imaginary. Universalism seems to mean its opposite: that sovereign cultures are absorbed into a dominant culture that arrogates itself as the entire universe. In response to the violence of this brand of universal politics, a paranoid individualism has emerged in which family, community, and culture—plurals of the self—are imagined to form the only bulwark against absorption into the everybody that is a cover for nothingness. Such paranoid individualism is a response to real historical turns under the conditions of capitalist development: colonization, consumerist multiculturalism, imperialism, factory discipline, failed revolutions, and the never-ending rhetoric informing us that there are too many people for the world to handle. But a contradiction is at work here as well. Although the current social and economic system seems to destroy the community and the individual through war and mass production, it ironically produces communities (i.e. nations, 'coalitions of the willing', 'our democracies', cultural markets, and so on) and sovereign individuals (by insisting that we are unique, that we must stand out from the crowd, that one has a duty to express oneself through commodities) through mass production.

II. Communitarian ideals and culture wars

Although Western—particularly American—progressives and conservatives are locked in a culture war, both sides are structured by a buried anxiety about the destruction of the self and its plurals. On the progressive side, this concern is expressed through affirmations of diversity. Let’s call this form of liberalism progressive communitarianism. Liberalism’s other face is conservative and marked by a negative freedom: individuality is expressed by the freedom to exclude, to preserve oneself and one’s cultural history. The highest law is that individuals should not be forced to interact with those they disdain. We can call this conservative communitarianism. Although progressive communitarianism rejects the idea of cultural domination, it is absolutely distinct from anticolonial movements of national liberation. Progressive communitarianism holds a commitment to a vague pacifism predicated on a respect for human difference and cultural diversity; it sees cultural dominance at the root of alienation, often ignoring the material dominance that situates the cultural. Conservative communitarianism is a commitment to one’s own distinct community and no other; it is a campaign against intergroup transformation; the progressive communitarian respect for cultural diversity is viewed as a threat to the communitarian conservative’s own cultural specialness. These are the basic commitments in what are called the culture wars. The two positions clash on issues of national sovereignty but do so on the same common ground. When a nation is colonized by another, progressive communitarians attribute attempts to erase difference as the core motivation of the aggressor nation; conservative communitarians stand on the argument: ‘We erase because they threaten to erase us.’ Where progressive communitarians see a paranoid fear of those who are different, conservative communitarians see a genuine threat. Still, both arguments are cultural explanations for global unrest. As soon as colonized people resist under terms that are anything other than utter pacifism, the progressive communitarians line up behind conservatives because now the fears of the right-wing communitarians are justified—now the difference really is a threat. In other words, liberal pluralism is committed to difference so long as difference isn't antagonistic, so long as it has no substance, so long as it stays in the realm of pure theory—so long as it isn't really different.
Neoliberal political thought, whether progressive or conservative, acknowledges two great classes in the world: not capitalists and proletarians, but producers and consumers. In the United States, Americans of all political persuasions bemoan our mindless consumption; the complaint is even heard among those who struggle to make ends meet. Social change is generally imagined in terms of boycotting big box stores, buying from companies that support your cultural values, and voting with your dollar. Work is not a location for politics; it is the place where your sins begin, where you get the money to become a good consumer. But consumerism and commodification are not causes of exploitation but consequences. There is no categorical split between producers and consumers. All producers must consume. The irony of capitalism is that the more energy you give to it, the less you receive from it. The irony of the anti-consumerist response to capitalism is that consumption-based solutions position the poorest workers and the unemployed as the staunchest proponents of the system; the unwashed masses are treated like accomplices of the megacorporations because they can’t afford to buy local, organic, sustainable goods. But what never seems to be local are the steel mills, the tin mines, the factories where gadgets are assembled, and the silica-processing plants. The steel beams holding up the natural foods store are not organic. Proponents of consumer politics forget Adam Smith’s insight that the commodity is not just one ‘thing’, traceable to one person or set of people. It is concretized through invisible processes.

Ethical consumption can’t touch the core of these invisible processes. Each of us has a network of invisible caretakers scattered across the globe, fulfilling tasks once performed within the community. People we don’t know stitch together our underwear, mine the metals used to make the machines that make our bicycles and pots, harvest our grain, grind the sand to make our drinking glasses. Sometimes our invisible caretakers live in town: lifting boxes from pallets, grading our term papers, preparing food in the backs of restaurants, cleaning our shit off public toilets. But this is not merely a parasitic relation of consumers to workers. One of the fundamental conditions of the capitalist epoch is that workers, who have nothing but their labor to sell, are also forced to live off other people working in the system. It’s not just the wealthy consuming manufactured goods; we’re all subsumed into the capitalist economy. The only way to mount a challenge against a global system—a global militarized system—is through a politics that addresses global subjects and asserts that there is commensurability between them. In other words, the only way to confront the system is to develop solidarity between those who must labor—including those who are unable to labor—in this enormous network of mines, mills, factories, schools, stores, and transport centers: solidarity between the visible and the invisible, the waged and the unwaged.

Solidarity among such a large subset of people is bound to be a fluid, internally shifting collective political subject. Anti-capitalist solidarity implies interrupting the expropriation of surplus value with the end goal of system change. That requires a principle of minimal connection between political actors. Minimal connection simply means that grounds for solidarity are possible. I would like to advance the case that pointless suffering might be such a point of commonality. We might suffer for love, for art, for political or religious truths, or, sadly, because we think we deserve to suffer. But pointless suffering is tragic by definition. The statement that experiencing pointless suffering is universally undesired might seem banal, but the assertion that there is even one commonality among people is surprisingly contentious. This contention is based on the position that if you dip your toe into the waters of universality, soon you’ll be swimming in European male dominance. But all gestures toward common human feeling are not alike. So let’s call the universalism of market forces and the streamlining of human life into a conduit for the enrichment of the few by the
name universalism from above, and let’s call the solidarity necessary to oppose universalism from above by the name universalism from below. Or, alternatively, we could think of it as a political commitment to everybody—not a toothless humanism, but a militant commitment to inclusion that doesn’t deny antagonisms.

III. How is every body sorted?

The ideology of immutable sexual difference is an enormous barrier in trying to imagine ‘everybody.’ The world is generally understood to be split into two ontological categories—male and female—and nobody becomes a ‘nobody’ faster than those who don’t fit into one of these two groups. In addition to the fact that there are antagonisms between the two categories, there are also antagonisms between those within the categories and those outside them. But sex categorization changes according to time and place; it is conditioned by a given society’s material organization and the divisions resulting from that particular organization.

In the patriarchal mode from settled civilization to feudal relations, sex was understood as a natural relationship based on hierarchy and complementarity. Woman completed man and served to perpetuate his and his son’s existence. This patriarchal model, alien to human existence for hundreds of thousands of years before sedentarization, began to fissure as industrialization changed the physical and historical landscape. As women and children moved into factory work, a renewed nervousness about the ontological power of sex difference developed. Delicacy was enforced upon the women of the upper classes. Women of the lower classes were expected to be maternal, to be sexually available to rich men, and to be masculine enough to be able to shovel dung—sometimes all at once. Class divisions and racial divisions troubled the idea that the maleness and femaleness of the body unfolded from a spiritual essence.

Introduction

In the twentieth century—especially in urban, industrial regions—gender began to appear as something contingent. There was the truth of sex and then there was gender, those sets of social norms layered on top of the real body. Body was nature; gender was culture. And culture implied contingency. The women’s movement was galvanized: women’s bodies and lives should not have to conform to gender expectations. But many people were left out of this political formula: in particular, those whose bodies didn’t conform to gender expectations, who faced brutal exclusion for their nonconformity. The excluded weren’t necessarily genderless—in fact, often quite the opposite—rather, their genders and their bodies didn’t match: their natural gender didn’t seem to fit with the way their culture thought their bodies should look or act. An antagonism developed. There were some who felt that their bodies were true, and that gender was a political imposition shaping people within their ‘biological’ sex category. Others maintained that a given social gender felt right, except it didn’t match cultural expectations of how their bodies were sexed. Then, towards the end of the century, it was discovered that many individuals—intersex people—had been and were being surgically altered by doctors to fit into one of the two ‘true’ biological sexes; what’s more, in different cultures they would be put into different ‘true’ boxes where they would grow up with different expectations of their social gender. On top of all this, there were people who were amorous toward people of the same sex, while others were amorous toward people who didn’t fit into any expected sexual category.

People are not merely carved up into nations and cultures within capitalist social relations, they also inhabit complex bodies that are collectively coded into different functions, functions that operate within the context of nation, culture, and class. Scientific research inspired by the critique of sexual dimorphism is increasingly showing that sex exists on a continuum, with a substantial number of people at a distance from the two extremes. Liberal
pluralist politics has easily solved this problem by reconciling the various opinions about sex and gender into a permanent dialogue: there is money to be made by those who support queer rights, and there is money to be made by those who oppose them. Of course, illiberal conservative politics has a clear gender policy and this policy is that gender must be clear. Postcolonial work on sexual diversity has revealed that diverse sexuality was yet another casualty of colonial violence. But how does the Marxist paradigm reconcile its understanding of inclusivity together with gender and sexual alterity? What are the material conditions that shape the politics of sex and gender, and how do they relate to capitalism and anti-capitalism? These questions are what this book hopes to begin to resolve.

It is not a question irrelevant to all but those affected by anti-queer and anti-trans violence. There are forces of purification at work – those who see the world not as a profitable unity of producers and consumers, not as an antagonism between capitalists and workers, not even as an antagonism between colonizers and colonized. They see the world as a battle between 'traditional people' and 'homosexuals' – homosexual being a symbol for all sexual and gender diversity and all struggles against sexism. The 'homosexual' is the nobody who needs to become nothing. These forces are quietly conducting their purifying project among the poor and working classes in Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Solidarity with queer, trans, and intersex people is non-negotiable when it comes to the international solidarity of the working class.

I write this in the hope of bringing four groups into dialogue: Marxist theorists who are trying to understand where gender fits into the schema of Marxist practice; feminist theorists who wish to incorporate Marxist analysis in their work; Marxist practitioners unfamiliar with the politics and origins of third-wave feminist, queer, and trans politics; and, finally, queer and trans feminist activists unfamiliar with Marxist political economy. There are readers who will belong to overlapping sets and, of course, those who find themselves outside these groups altogether.

Because I hope to bring distinct groups into dialogue, the first chapter defines the terms necessary to ground the book's argument and the debates that inform it. The second chapter contains a history of Marxist-feminism, its internal and external critiques, and an inquiry into the materialist roots of queer and trans oppression from a Marxist-feminist perspective. The third chapter discusses the relationship between ideology and queer theory, questions current popular approaches to queer anti-capitalism, and discusses the barriers to a queer Marxist internationalism. The final chapter includes recommendations for action.
try to use terms that reflect the expressions most common at this particular moment (in the Anglophone world). I will try to use the most general pronouns whenever possible, including the singular 'they', 'them' and 'their' as both a pronoun for gender queer persons and a universal pronoun; however, when I am using the work of feminists who are referring to women, I will use the pronoun 'she'; when I am referring to historical individuals identified as men, I will use the pronoun 'he'. There will be times, however, when I intentionally use feminine pronouns to underscore the existence of women and gender non-conforming people within domains commonly associated with masculinity. The term 'cisgendered' is widely used for non-trans people who move through life with a body that matches their gender presentation. 'Cissexism' will be used to describe the systematic exclusion and erasure of trans people. However, even among trans allies, the term cisgender does not avoid contention. As mentioned earlier, some intersex people feel that the cis/trans binary reinforces the two-sex model and that intersex people are hence written out of language. The term also fails to describe (or is used unevenly to describe) many queer people who face discrimination and violence for transgressing gender assumptions, regardless of whether or not they are trans.

The word 'queer' itself also contains a number of meanings. When queer is an umbrella term with a meaning roughly synonymous to LGBT, I will call this queer in the 'queer umbrella' sense. However, queer has always had another referent: those who are not heterosexual nor cisgendered but who do not fit neatly within the LGBT classification. I will call this queer in the LGBTQ sense. The concept of homonormativity created another sense of queer—queer as a transgressive anti-identity in opposition to gay and lesbian identity. Because one of the symbols of this movement is a transformation of the equal sign into a greater-than symbol, I will call this radical queer because it sees queerness as both a defining political problem and a moral-political solution.

The explication of these terms is not a detour away from 'real politics' into 'identity politics' but a clarification of meaning and an attempt to affirm the right to self-determination. Marxists are no strangers to paying attention to language. We have spent generations debating whether or not the Soviet Union was a degenerated workers' state or a deformed workers' state, or whether it was 'really existing socialism', and even longer debating the term 'proletarian' itself. In the chaos of struggle, it is standard practice to map the terrain of the battlefield and locate its borders and edges. When people's lives do not make sense within the hegemonic order, words will be invented. It is not a concession to some phantom of identity politics to embrace the language of the oppressed. It is not a concession to postmodernism or linguistic constructivism (the theory that language creates the material world) to use words that arise from worldly experience. In fact, doing so reflects a materialist approach to language.

II. What is capitalism?

One of my biggest challenges here is to describe the Marxist critique of political economy in a way that is clear without being reductive. My strategy is to outline the skeletal points of the Marxian view of capitalism as a system of social relations. There is considerable debate about what Marx intended (exacerbated by the fact that Capital was intended to be six volumes long but Marx died during the writing process), what Marx got wrong, what is a legitimate method to prove Marx right or wrong, and at what point abandoning or adding to Marx's ideas subverts Marx altogether.

This book rests on a number of propositions about capitalism, all derived from some of the least contentious elements of Marx's thought among Marxists:

1. capitalism is not a plutocratic conspiracy but an impersonal system—as a functioning whole, it is not immoral but rather
amoral or beyond morality since it is not a conscious entity and, because we are dealing with a process and not persons, moral fist-shaking and appeals to capitalism for mercy have been and will continue to be fruitless;

2. capitalism is not a broken system – on the contrary, it generally functions in accordance with its own laws;

3. capitalism's optimal functioning entails the rational extraction of profit from commodities – particularly commodified labor – despite irrational consequences;

4. capitalist production processes are a threat to the global ecosystem and they immiserate the world's majority; 20

5. crises are a general feature of capitalism but the presence of crises never directly suggests that capitalism is collapsing or coming to an end through purely mechanistic contradictions (see Henning 2014: 17–42; Kautsky 1910; Bernstein 1961); capitalism can end only through intentional political intervention; 22

6. capitalism should be supplanted via such an intentional political intervention.

The following is a brief sketch of the development of capitalism out of feudalmism, followed by the rudimentary tenets of Marxian economics. Almost every statement that follows is subject to scholarly debate, and references to these debates will appear in the footnotes.

The origins of capitalism

Marx's Capital outlines the system of capitalist social relations, showing that such a system is an entity that emerges dialectically from European feudalism 23 and through its colonial expansion to the so-called New World. 24 European colonization was, in part, inspired by the hopes of finding precious metals (i.e. gold and silver) that were already valuable on the existing world market (Bozorgnia 1998) as well as locating a swifter route to Asia to facilitate trade. As with Columbus, whose original goal was to reach India, European colonizers were looking for a shortcut to reach economically developed Asian territories (Anieves and Nisancioglu 2013) in order to bypass the intercontinental network of trade routes over land that emerged after the Mongol invasion (see Abu-Lughod 1989: 352–72; for the impact on the theory of uneven and combined, see Anieves and Nisancioglu 2013). Several reasons have been argued for England's leap from relative underdevelopment to becoming a fruitful location for the expansion of capitalism. The most commonly cited reason is the enclosure movement, whereby emerging capitalists usurped land from the serfs (Marx 1978a; Vol. I, Chapter 27; Marx and Engels 1996) and created a class of landless people – proletarians – who were forced to survive by selling their labor. It has also been argued that England was ripe for capitalism to develop not because it was so developmentally forward, but because it was isolated as a result of the Habsburg Empire's preoccupation with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire (Anieves and Nisancioglu 2013: 92–7). Another reason proffered is that Europe was able to develop before Asia because more advanced regions, such as China (ibid.: 88), had been gutted in the Mongol invasion. So, it was not so much the specialness of the British themselves that led to the development of industry in Manchester, but rather a confluence of conditions born out of the effects of intercontinental relationships. 25

The texture of life was transformed in the move from feudalism to capitalism. As we will see in the following chapters, this change in the mode of production transformed gender and sexual relations. Feudal society typically consisted of a patchwork of agricultural domains, each one controlled by a local lord and by a local church parish. Serfs – themselves divided into freemen, villeins (origin of villain), and cottagers – lived on and farmed their own land and also depended upon their access to the commons. Serfdom
obvious when we look at the search for a third sex in England, where scientists considered the possibility that prostitutes were really women after all.\(^3\)

A merger between Butler's explanation of gender as grounded through iterability and Fields' explanation of ideology as repetition is distinct from Pierre Bourdieu's idea of \textit{habitus} (defined as the dispositions created by a subject engaging with a particular field). What Fields is getting at is not how people learn to play different games within their social milieu, ending in different affects and values. Fields is not approaching epistemology from the perspective of class culture, but as a conceptual and social process developing out of material and economic processes. For this reason, Bourdieu's post-Marxist equivocal concept of 'cultural capital' falls flat. It transforms the term 'capital' into a synonym for wealth or riches; however, capital is a point in a process, a particular use of profits to yield more profit. One cannot invest one's cultural capital (education, for example) on the market in the hope of doubling one's cultural capital, but then instead lose all your cultural capital in a bearish cultural market.\(^5\)

Although we may repeatedly perform our assigned social gender until it feels like nature (if we are not trans) or until every moment of our life's performance reminds us that our assigned gender is completely at odds with who we are (if we are trans), the fact that we are disciplined into a social gender is no more the origin of gender oppression than the sexual division of labor is the origin of misogyny. Vogel's explanation shows that we are disciplined into a social gender according to the mode of production under which we live; its expectations of who we are are based on its best guesses about what our bodies can do for it. Working women, queer people, trans people, and intersex people have conflicting use values for the ruling classes under the current mode of production. What they demand of us is a knot of contradictions and impossibilities. Therefore, the political goal cannot be to resist being the way they want us to be. The political goal must be to take back what has been materially taken from us so that we can build the lives we choose.

\textbf{IV. Class is not a moral category}

Class is the category that is most difficult to reconcile within the vector system for a number of reasons. First of all, in American culture — the real birthplace of the vector system — class is not and has never been anything resembling caste; it is not fixed, it is something one can fall in and out of. Workers can win the lottery; small capitalists can 'lose it all' through poor investments. Because of the slipperiness of class as conceived by American academic models of oppression, class appears as more of a temporary bad situation than a real oppression. This way of thinking is covertly shaped by ideology: where there are no other oppressions, a person is poor because they aren't as smart or hardworking — in short, not as good — as their more successful counterparts. While Black and brown people are held back through discrimination, and all women are held back through sexism and some by the burden of childrearing, and disabled people are held back by their exclusion from the world's expectations and its architecture, if straight white cisgendered men are poor it is because they are of limited talent, intelligence, and moral character. Equating the exploitation of straight white working-class cisgendered men with the violence levied against trans women or immigrants sounds about as misguided as comparing discrimination against hippies with Jim Crow segregation. This tendency to be suspicious about class reveals the liberal inflection of the vector model. When neoliberalism is invoked, it is generally spoken about as if it were a mechanism by which all First World consumers perpetuate violence against all Third World peoples. The majority of the world proletariat may be outside the wealthy regions of the global North; still, the vast majority of people even in the global North own no means of production and have nothing to trade for survival but their own labor.
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technology – are concentrated in private hands. The vast majority of people must either sell their labor power to survive or beg or hunt for scraps to sustain themselves. When working people become pregnant, their wages are too low to properly care for themselves or their future children. The gendering and racializing of bodies on the labor market assigns roles and values to those bodies in new ways. Disability is understood in terms of the inability to compete on the labor market, the inability to support oneself, and the ‘demand’ that employers make accommodations. Sexual orientation is a problem for capital insofar as it disrupts the oppositional sexism that helps regulate the labor force at work and at home. Intolerance is a mixed bag in the workplace – fights on the shop floor have the potential to disrupt efficiency, but also the potential to prevent solidarity and strike activity. So what is the politics of class? It starts with understanding that the world is organized in such a way that a subset of people extract a surplus from others, that they purchase influence from the state with that surplus, that they devise fictitious investment schemes and own and maintain systems of social control to maintain their dominance, and then they create a situation of dependence upon the goods and services they hire other people to develop. The centrality of class in the struggle against capitalism does not mean that the working class suffers more than peasants, or that class position is more of a barrier to individual achievement than color or gender or trans status or nationality. It is simply political activity based on the idea that serious challenges to capital are contingent upon collaboration between the diverse people who produce and maintain the profitable circulation of goods.

V. The rise of queer politics

Queer theory, born from a mixture of Foucauldian analysis and conflicts within second-wave feminism, rightly challenged the mythologies of heterosexual universalism. Scholars in diverse
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Classical Marxism, held back by its usual knee-jerk suspicion of cultural politics, failed to keep up with much of the argument. Long into the twenty-first century, the term 'queer' was still emblematic of postmodern contamination. Ironically, for all the Marxist complaints about the corrosive elements of identity politics, it was precisely an identity politics that early critics of Marxist queer theory were demanding. The identity of not having an identity was not readily seen as a possible opening towards a genuine internationalism, nor was it viewed as a struggle between all those unnamed by the current system and those who wished to categorize them for their own benefit. Much of the classical Marxist tradition constructed a false choice between three political modalities: reactionary protection of the family from erosion by capitalism, liberal pluralism, and a vision of liberation connected to the good old days of yesteryear's material conditions. Thankfully, a new generation of queer and trans Marxists are beginning to think through gender within the current challenges posed by the neoliberal age.

VII. Beyond homonormativity and homonationalism

Emblematic of the acceptance of the radical potential of queerness is the influential queer postcolonial critique of twenty-first-century gay and lesbian social movements levied by Jasbir Puar. Her groundbreaking book *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Puar 2007) undermined nostalgia for pre-postmodern gay militancy in two ways: first, such a political subject would need a stable gay political identity, which, she noted, depends on a Western construct of homosexuality and gay liberation, one attached to the Christian confessional ‘coming out’ narrative; second, against Morton’s and Ebert’s critique of the queer as an expression of late capitalist bricolage, Puar queered the concept of terrorism through the poststructuralist notion of assemblages. Puar raises concerns about the Eurocentrism of the

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Western gay and lesbian movement, with its focus on marriage, military service, and the language of citizenship. While gays ride under the cover of assumed progressivism, gay rights have cynically been used as a wedge by conservative politicians against Muslims. Pinkwashing — the use of LGBT rights to obscure political violence — has been used to justify Israeli occupation, and — after exploiting homophobia for their benefit in the 2004 elections — American conservatives had the audacity to use gay rights in their fight against allowing a mosque to be built in the vicinity of the Twin Towers. Acceptance of gays and lesbians has now become a litmus test to show whether Muslims can ‘belong’ in a Western democracy. The mainstreaming of gay culture has even prompted portions of the American right into accepting gay marriage as part and parcel of family values. Pinkwashing has become such a boon when fanning the flames of racism and anti-Muslim hatred in France that even ultranationalist Marine Le Pen briefly resorted to championing gay rights.

This is not simple right-wing hypocrisy; it is a strategy to dominate the political field. Conservatives can leverage the use of gay rights for racist propaganda at the same time as they fund the extermination of gays in Uganda and promote anti-gay violence in Eastern Europe and South America, while ignoring and minimizing the seriousness of forced feminization of detainees at Guantanamo Bay. Such feminization is a weaponization of queerness against those perceived to be queer, and detainees are perceived to be queer because they have been feminized by violence, because victimhood belongs to women. Puar is right to note the complexity at work, how homophobia, misogyny, racism, and imperialism don’t just intersect but blend into a grotesque malevolence.

In the face of such madness, the American gay and lesbian movement has not had much to say. Puar points out that the gay and lesbian rights movement is skewed towards reforms that will benefit wealthy, white, cisgendered gays and lesbians of the
global North. While some queers disdain marriage equality as an affront to the supposed radicalism of queer sexual ethics, Puur, along with Lisa Duggan and the Against Equality movement, argues that the funds going to secure equal marriage would be better spent fighting the immiseration of people who fall along the trans spectrum, who face enormous obstacles in securing work, housing, bathroom access, and basic healthcare, and who face suicide and violence at astronomical rates. In the United States, trans people of color, especially Black and Latina trans women, face violence from police, courts, and the prison system. Ending such violence and granting basic needs is grossly under-funded, while the securing of property rights for wealthy white couples seems to garner all the attention of mainstream gay and lesbian organizations. Puur and Duggan note that reforms such as same-sex marriage will do little to help poor women of color, who would lose state benefits if they married.

This focus on marriage and integration into mainstream white, heterosexual Euro-American life is what Lisa Duggan calls homonormativity (Duggan 2002: 175–94). Homonormativity refers to the pressure to conform to heterosexist society or to provide a narrative of the self that will be recognizable to the heterosexual world. The concept has now been extended into transnormativity – the pressure put upon trans people to conform to traditional, oppositional sexist understandings of gender. Whereas homonormativity tends to explain the pressures gay people put on one another, Puur’s idea of homonationalism extends its reach from the domestic to the international. Blending into ‘mainstream society’ is not only color-coded white, it is coded in terms of citizenship and nationalism as well as imperialism and empire building. As Puur and others have noted, homosexuality is not always a political identity within nations of the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia; rather, it is considered a behavior or practice. ‘Coming out’ is not a relevant political experience in this context. Moreover, the goal of marriage (as others have noted) is not in tune with the less couple-centered and more communally focused childrearing practices developed by African American women.

Opposition to homonationalism means that goals of marriage and military service in American and European nations cannot be divorced from the ongoing legacy of imperialism. When gays and lesbians demand the right to be included in military service, they are demanding the right to participate in the destruction of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen, the right to partake in racist, ethnic-cleansing. More than just marriage and military service, when gay rights discourse centers on the language of citizenship, it is automatically a homonationalist appeal to the state for acceptance and legitimation. The demand for naturalization rights for gay and lesbian immigrant couples also reinforces such appeals, as does accepting ‘legitimate’ appeals from immigrants fleeing violence and discrimination in the Middle East, which is then easily used as racist interventionist propaganda.

Similarly, gay culture has been commodified into a market, and gay politics has become a form of advertisement. Corporations cynically brand themselves as advocates of certain political demographics in order to pose as concerned corporate members of the community. Social values become the ruse of surplus value. The fast-food chain Chick-fil-A markets itself to the anti-gay demographic; Apple uses its support of gay rights as part of its brand experience, appealing to an urban progressive demographic. In this way, Apple isn’t just a company that extracts profit from factory workers in China who are so unhappy with labor conditions that they resort to suicide as a protest tactic; no, Apple is a champion of human rights. Beyond the corporate infiltration of gay and lesbian culture, same-sex marriage has been celebrated for its capacity to generate revenue for the petit bourgeoisie; just think of the expansion of bridal boutiques, florists, and banquet halls. Moreover, as we know from The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and
that same-sex marriages in themselves are political anathema because same-sex married couples collaborate with and amplify the neoliberal policy of privatization. This is true in the smallest sense possible, in the same way that each heterosexual family amplifies privatization. Of course, as an ideological practice in the sense used by Barbara Fields, of ideology as repetition, engaging in or supporting same-sex marriage concretizes and normalizes the project. However, these repetitive gestures are not born from a desire to abandon world-changing radicalness in order to win pats on the head from heterosexuals or an elite club of gays. This field of activities and ideas is conditioned by the socio-material situations of ordinary people. Worrying about whether or not individuals desire assimilation swaps a concern about normative affects with actual anti-capitalist struggle. It assumes that queer people maintain dignity by communal separation. But separation from whom?

The concept of heteronormativity is concrete. Dress code laws and/or expectations require certain persons with certain physical characteristics to wear certain articles of clothing or else face state and interpersonal violence. Indeed, a presumption of heterosexuality is still culturally ingrained. Lesbians, even after repeat visits to the same doctor, may be asked if it is possible that tests will show that they are pregnant without their knowledge. It is still uncommon in most of the world to say to young children: ‘When you grow up, you may or may not fall in love with someone somewhere along the gender spectrum ...’ On-screen romantic dramas are generally heterosexual unless a movie is trying to make a heavy-handed sociopolitical point. When the working class is invoked, or the Black family, or refugee crises, or an international conflagration, it is generally imagined as a crisis of heterosexual people or a movement of heterosexual people. Gay people exist within the bubble of the gay problematic. They do not suffer economic crises, play video games, care for aging parents, or fight for the rights of fellow immigrants. Heterosexuality is the false generic.
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So what then is homonormativity? Is homonormativity a matter of being aligned with non-queer people? Is it the demand for access to certain activities made popular by the straight middle class? Is there a systematic, state-sponsored oppression of Kinsey fours by Kinsey sixes? Does this mean, then, that the oppression of gays in Iran could be characterized as transnormative because homosexuality is imagined as latent transsexuality? One example of homonormativity commonly discussed is the attempt of older, white, wealthy gays in Greenwich Village to expel poor and working-class Black queer and trans youth congregating near their property — even naming their community patrol after a drugstore product that removes lice. But I find it difficult to imagine that these upper-class gays and the gay city officials who support them would be less likely to push Black youth off their property if their presentation conformed to gender norms. I see no evidence that this is a case of a gay elite patrolling queer identity. Instead, I see business owners expelling non-customers. I see landlords concerned with property value. I see the racist assumption that Black youth are dangerous. Part of the shock at the behavior of these propertied gays is based on a prior assumption of community harmony. Certainly, wouldn't the white, propertied gays be supportive of queer youth of color? We're all in one community, aren't we? From a Marxist perspective, it would have been clear from the beginning that a cabal of property owners worried about the bottom line would conspire against the poor regardless of gender presentation. To be intelligible to the logic of queer nationalism, class dynamics are rewritten as a problem of affect resulting in intra-community betrayal.

The content of homonormativity is an aggregate of assumptions about how gay people live according to its most vocal (which generally means most wealthy) figures: lobbying organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, images of white professional gay characters on television. Radical queer criticism bristles with disdain for lesbian soccer moms with their babies in tow and gay men who own tastefully decorated houses. But the real inequality here is not the pressure of the normative on free spirits. This is just business as usual. The wealthy and professional classes are expressing themselves and assuming that the rest of the world aspires to be like them. These expressions are a melding of their interests: being worthy of receiving their inheritance, the right to pursue a high-level career, the desire to see reflections of themselves on television. Just as it is a cultural effect of capital that bourgeoisie heterosexuals dominate screen dramas (working-class and poor heterosexuals are always comic or tragic), it is also an effect of capital that screens reflect bourgeoisie gays. The prevailing ideas are generally the ideas of the ruling class. The people who own the means of production create the world in their own image.

Recasting class as normativity is unhelpful in a number of ways. The most basic is that railing against normativity in itself is, frankly, bizarre. The human capacity to share and reflect one another's behavior is the basis of culture. The expectation that a subjugated nation conform to the language and customs of a colonizer is not a pressure to be normal; it is a pressure to forget one's own history. It is an outright act of political and material domination to prevent insurgency, not an attempt to mold a group of people to an abstract norm. What is a fight against normativity if not a fight for the Enlightenment individual's self-expression or the creation of an isolated, elitist subculture? Even anti-homonormative, self-styled radical communities in the West are also constructed by norms: consensus voting, veganism, sharing music, norms of 'subversive' dress. The rejection of normativity has little to do with rejecting capitalism or even ending generalized social pressure; it is a demand that one be allowed to participate in a subculture that rejects the lifestyle of the professional or capitalist classes (but a subculture that also admits individuals from the professional and capitalist classes who wish to live more creatively). However, as discussed in Chapter 2,
sometimes normativity is as much a form of protest against capitalist or racist domination as it is a concession to it. Moreover, replacing class with normativity is not a class-neutral activity. Not only does it put self-expression and symbolic resistance above the solidarity that would be necessary to abolish the capitalist mode of production, it gives upper-class queers a way to frame themselves as more radical and anti-capitalist than the working classes: if oppression and resistance are ranked according to normativity, then the banker’s child who resists homonormativity is more anti-capitalist than a working-class lesbian mother who shops at a big box store could ever be. It makes the urban queer more politically anti-capitalist than the small-town ‘basic’ gay by virtue of lifestyle alone.31

The fight against normativity is not an opposition to neoliberalism but its mirror inverse: the product of a generally (upper) middle-class and ruling class movement of academics and students from elite universities who are angry at the pressure to conform and (very rightfully) angry at the violence of imperialism and the racist violence against Black and brown queers in the West. This is not to say that oppositional sexism and transmisogyny does not affect queer people in the ruling class. Nor is it to say that queer people of color and working-class queers are necessarily normative. It is only to say that swapping economic analysis for categorizing people by affect can be an effective sleight of hand that directs attention away from the issues of working-class and poor gender-diverse and sexually diverse people. Normativity expresses the problem of economic and social injustice in the declasse language of academics.

 VIII. The spinning compass of American queer politics

The problem of marriage and family

For queer academics, homonormativity is now the defining political problem of the movement. The term helps make sense of modern queer politics’ aimlessness amid the palpable misery of the neoliberal period. Whereas the twentieth-century gay rights movement struggled against the fact that the modern world was structured to accept only heterosexual coupling (heteronormativity), the new movement is concerned with the disciplinary pressures people impose on one another inside the movement itself (homonormativity and transnormativity).32 The question, then, is what does queer politics demand today? Is it about militant visibility and expressing that we are different from cisgendered heterosexuals? Is it about creating concentric circles of safe space for intersectionally marginalized queers? Is it about fighting for broad social justice reforms alongside the heteronormal masses? Or is it about fighting for such reforms but at a skeptical distance from the mainstream? Are individual queer people within movements representatives of queer politics, or does the presence of queer politics necessitate an identifiable queer contingent within the whole? Or, is queer politics simply an internal critique of the failures of the gay rights movement – in other words, are gay rights themselves the antagonist for political queers? I would argue that queer politics is amorphous enough to be any or even none of these things. It makes sense that a sexual politics based on the idea of fluidity would resist pinning itself down to a particular task. The movement’s creativity and spontaneity are why many gravitate towards it. However, the flip side of fluidity is conceptual nebulousness: a lack of clarity and a lack of precision. And it is a short distance from lacking precision to completely lacking a point.33

Queer political identity started as a Western phenomenon. Let me be absolutely clear: queerness, same-sex desire, being trans, two-spirit, and intersex are not phenomena specific to or originating in the West. Industrialization transformed queer identities and queer bodies into reified, politicized objects, but sex and gender diversity is a fact of life that predates capitalism. However, the reification of queer politics in the West provokes questions about
II. Ten axioms towards a queer Marxist future

1. The politics of the fragment should be replaced by an inclusive politics of everybody

The affirmation of an inclusive politics is simply a counter to the late twentieth-century 'dictatorship of the fragments' (Best 1989: 361). The dictatorship of the fragments was, in part, a response to two very real political problems of the mid-twentieth century: the concept of an ossified totality projected by the leading sects of Soviet Marxism, and, in some ways related, the failure of Marxists to fully incorporate a challenge to traditional and oppositional sexism, which made sexed and raced populations appear as fragments, as sections of the public with issues only tangentially related to political economy. As a response to having their situations bracketed by Marxist politics, feminists assumed that their situations were motivated by another, external vector of oppression. The intellectual product of this engagement developed the ultimately untenable idea of two systems at work: arguing that the problem was, on the one hand, a concrete political economy called capitalism, and, on the other, a generalized 'patriarchy' still lingering as a sort of spiritual holdover from feudalism. The logic of dual-systems theory drove it towards a model where there would have to be an infinite number of systems that could make intersecting cuts through the individual person, but that were not necessarily phenomena generated from the same system. To suggest that such phenomena were generated from the same system was considered reductionist, but, at the same time, no proper explanation was given for how such social phenomena were generated. Two explanations became popular: one based in free will, the other in structure. In the former, phenomena such as racism and sexism came from the individual will to power; the incorporation of groups to consolidate power was the systematization of this power. In this Hobbesian war of all against all, it is up to conscientious individuals in each power group to speak truth to power and make others aware of the injustices they are committing. In the latter configuration of power, individuals have little significant agency, since all are born into language that structures consciousness. The subject in this model, despite structuralist attempts to break from Cartesianism, remains a ghost in the machine. In poststructuralist variants of this model, the best one can do is be aware of how language is operating within you and construct yourself as a challenge to the structures and stuctures of discourse: instead of the prefigurative utopian slogan 'be the change you want to see', this model of political consciousness suggests 'be the resistance you wish could exist but cannot exist because we are always already internalized into language and, by extension, the state'. The dictatorship of the fragments is also promoted by the free-market attitude in its masquerade as anti-totalitarian empiricist skepticism: one can never know if there is a thing called everybody because no one mind can experience the existence of everybody. By extension, there is no such thing as capitalism, just individuals trading freely and equally. No one experiences all of capitalism! As the great philosopher Margaret Thatcher once put it: there is no society, only individuals and families. To the free-marker, structures are irrelevant so long as the market's invisible hands aren't tied.

Thus, including everybody is not about a feeling of unity or a group's commitment to tolerance or a hatred of the concepts of closure and finitude. An inclusive political understanding of 'everybody' is a simple affirmation that we can logically deduce that the world is a whole - a flickering, pulsating movement of birth and death, of appearance and disappearance, of social relations that are at once real and mutable. Once we accept such a politics, we can either fall on the side that says this universe needs to be purified, segregated, and ordered, or the side that says that beings are equal in their infinite complexity. The only question that remains after that is: 'Which side are you on'?
2. Analyses of political economy should be concrete, dialectical, and gender/sex inclusive

In order for Marxist political economy to be both concrete and dialectical, it cannot separate social phenomena from political analysis. Including analyses of reproduction into analyses of economic production can only further complete our understanding of the political conditions of a given locale. It is not just that, in order to understand the position of women, one needs to understand economics, but if one wants to understand economics, one needs to analyze the position of women. Except for very specific abstract questions about production (for example, is financialization a response to the law of the tendency of the rate of profits to fall?), a fuller understanding of the dynamics of gender relations within a society can only help assess the dynamics of capitalist social relations. What this means is that Marxist materialism should not just 'make space' for the analysis of racism and oppositional sexism in an international and transnational context; it should analyze how the development and maintenance of racial and gendered social relations affect the outcome of production processes. To put it bluntly, if the construction and maintenance of bullied population sets do not factor into debates about political economy, then either aspects of economic conditions are not being factored in out of epistemological ignorance, or else the anti-Marxists are correct: Marxism has nothing to say about oppression. The majority of the world's factory work is racialized and gendered for a reason; suffice to say that analyzing those reasons would complement any economic analysis. The study of gender and sexuality is integral to economic analyses, and the inverse is also true: economic analyses are integral to understanding gender and sexuality. Economics is not a subject that should be separated from its social and philosophical context, nor should we allow it to be presented as inscrutable to ordinary people, or treated as the intellectual property of straight, cisgendered men.

Conclusions

3. The intersectional model of oppression should be replaced with a unitary, relational model

Intersectional feminism has been a critical corrective to the feminism of the Universal Womanhood, whether that universality be cultural feminism, radical feminism, or imperialist feminism. All of these have served as a megaphone for white, upper-class women in the developed world who sometimes spoke for their poor brown sisters instead of listening to what they were actually saying about themselves. Intersectional feminism called these feminisms to task for their failure to account for the social discrepancies in the lives of women in terms of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, or social mobility (the latter often unhelpfully referred to as 'class'). It is for good reason that the maxim 'my feminism will be intersectional, or it will be bullshit' was adopted.

Intersectional feminism was not the first attempt to develop an understanding of the obstacles faced by those whose gender struggles were conditioned by racism and homophobia. The Black lesbian feminist tradition and the Marxist-feminist traditions of the second wave used terms such as 'double and triple oppression' or being a 'double or triple threat'. It makes sense that, as more immunizations were openly discussed, numerical assignations — being a sextuple threat — would have been unwieldy. *Intersecting oppressions* was a clearer way to discuss collective problems.

But the model of intersecting oppressions is an expansion of dual-systems theory. While intersectionality is an immense improvement on a dysfunctional set theory that naturalizes the experience of 'woman', it is a weak and confusing metaphor. The model of intersecting oppressions assumes that each oppression is a vector with a nebulous origin intersecting with the individual subject: race, gender, class, sexuality, appearance, ability, and so on through the subject at various angles. However, this reifies race and strictures on social gender instead of understanding these terms
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as the outcome of processes called racism and sexism, processes that condition one another. Racism and sexism don’t just hit the body out of the blue: racism and sexism are social processes developed within a material matrix. Disconnected from material life, oppression seems as if it were born from ill will and bad ideas.

What’s more, a Marxian understanding of class cannot be understood as an additional vector of oppression. Material social organization is the matrix of social injustice. In the intersectional model, class is calculated into the sum of an individual’s hardships. Class is not understood as a situation, as a position within a regime of production, but as a static identity. From this perspective, in the West, the demand that class be included comes across as a demand for white men to have their ‘hardships’ recognized and is therefore thought to be an attempt to evade responsibility for the racism and sexism that they perpetuate. From this perspective, it sounds reactionary to insist upon the centrality of class. However, class is not another vector of oppression; it is the mystification of all social relations in service of the production of surplus value. Oppression is oppression because it is felt — the point that it is felt. Exploitation is characterized by the mathematical discrepancy between the value labor adds to a commodity and the surplus value handed over to those who purchase labor power. The point of exploitation is that it is easily mystified. Gender relations can be mystified as well (to accelerate exploitation), but there is an additional subtractive element to exploitation. If biological essentialism were true and all women truly loved the roles assigned to them, it could not be considered oppression. But even if all workers were happy as elves, the mathematical core of expropriation — of the flow of value from the producers to the owners — would remain, the boom and bust economy would continue, as would the systemic need for surplus populations and the environmental destruction caused by crises and overproduction. Class is primary — not in the sense of more important, but in the sense of being the limit, the foundation, the

point where profit is extracted and the point where it can be challenged. The centrality of class is tactical, not moral.

4. Being queer/trans is neither reactionary nor revolutionary

Much of the debate surrounding queer radicalism involves assessing whether demands are normativizing or radically queer. Life is normativized when one acts like heterosexuals do, wants what heterosexuals want, and participates in capitalist economic relations as a consumer or as a laborer, with capitalism often defined as a network of monolithic, homogeneous, and homogenizing corporations — the small capitalists often get a pass.

The argument that capitalism thrives off normativity ignores the fact that it also thrives off diversity, pluralism, fashion, and market segments. While the heteronormative family is productive for capital, queer urban individualists and drop-out counter-culturalists are also productive for capital — the former as ‘creatives’ in the labor market, the latter as a surplus population (or, in the US, low-cost service industry labor). Queers without children are also not entirely outside the family matrix in that unmarried and childless family members are often taxed with eldercare. It is romantic to think that you can change the world through diverse sexuality, creative self-expression, and communal bonding. But you can’t.

Also, trans and intersexed people should not be used as a flag of radical possibility for a new, postgendered future. First of all, trans and intersexed people are, more often than not, gendered. Second, trans bodies have enough pressures without being required to have to intentionally position their bodies as political objects. However, if queerness is not progressive, it is also not reactionary or a product of bourgeois deviation, as it was sometimes caricatured by mid-century Marxist and Third Worldist movements. Nor is it a Eurocentric import external to precolonial peoples. It is also
useful to conflate queerness with class, including the portrayal of queerness as a hedonistic property of the elite.

Thus, those who are gender non-conforming are not necessarily poor; those who are gay and lesbian are not necessarily middle class. Opposing normativity is a politically empty gesture. Queer culture is not anti-capitalist. And so neither is queering culture.

5. The binary is not the problem and non-binary thinking is not the solution

Since the poststructuralist turn, the West has been enamored with the death of the binary. All ills can be attributed to it: us and them, Black and white, straight and gay, man and woman, rich and poor, ones and zeros. Such a world does not account for diversity, let alone poetry. Or so the story goes.

It is true that false dichotomies are fallacious and present us with a rigid and unchanging map of the universe. Between us and them there is all, there are multiple sexualities, ethnicities, religions, and so on. But, paradoxically, struggles against dichotomies present new dichotomies: binary versus multiple, heteronormative versus queer, trans versus cis. Moreover, there are important political dichotomies that this language evades: there is racism and antiracism, there is the picket line and there is crossing it, there is the murder of queer/trans people and there is the absence of those murders, there is welcoming immigrants who land on your shores and there is letting them drown. Of course, these antagonisms need to be understood dialectically – racism and antiracism aren’t just abstract conceptual objects but relational processes in a material world. Strikebreakers can be brought into the fold, and strikers can betray solidarity. Moving from violence against queer people to the absence of violence is a process that involves transforming those who would harm queer and trans people into those who won’t. However, this procedural complexity does not mean that the antagonisms aren’t real.

6. Marxists must stand against trans-exclusionary radical feminism

While Marxists have little compatible ground with radical feminist views, especially on patriarchy being the origin of all class oppression, sometimes Marxist-feminists have operated from a second-wave framework, turned off by the shortcomings of third-wave feminism’s failure to fully deal with issues such as commercial surrogacy in South Asia, the economic contributions of household and reproductive labor, and femicide.

However, the liberation of women is not threatened by the liberation of men who are able to bear children or women who aren’t. Trans-exclusionary radical feminism’s paranoid vision of trans women as rapists and bathroom predators – reminiscent not only of right-wing conservative opinions, but also of earlier panics about lesbians in bathrooms and locker rooms – has no place in Marxist theory. Neither does the moralistic blaming-women hysteria over ‘female chauvinist pigs’ or ‘female collaborators’, which always upholds sex workers as sex-selling enemies instead of treating them as workers, as subjects operating in an economic system. Historically, along with cisgendered straight women, working-class trans women and female lesbians have taken the brunt of this misogyny. Marxism is a politics based on solidarity and action within an economic context, not wild accusations and gender panics. Nor should Marxists bow to the claim that trans people are trying to erase the word ‘woman’ at a time when women are under attack. Capitalism is not
simply misogynistic, it is intent on upholding the traditional and oppositional sexism that secures the system. An injury to one is an injury to all.

7. Queer communitarianism should be replaced with queer political demands

The need for queer safe spaces is not an eternal political good: it is evidence of a sad state of affairs. All communitarianism provokes questions of boundaries and exclusions. Why be a community, if there is no outside to it? Queer people, insofar as they are excluded from the general public, isolated, and immiserated, have a right to self-determination; but the goal must not be striving towards a permanent sense of queerness or separatism – particularly because the existential nature of queerness is a cross-border and cross-cultural phenomenon. Could a queer Palestinian group be expected to form a nation of queerness that excluded heterosexual Palestinians? Instead of queer nationalism, the goal should be queering internationalism – not in the sense of a Universal Queerness, but in the sense of creating a section of the queer movement aligned with the working class to expand its solidarities to other oppressed, immiserated, and exploited people, whether or not they accept queer people.

What’s more, as Lise Vogel’s work shows, queer and trans liberation depends on the liberation of heterosexual cis working women’s reproductive rights and health. Oppositional sexism is wedded to traditional sexism, and much traditional sexism comes from the political economy of pregnancy and motherhood under capitalism. For queer people’s own liberation, queer people have cause to support demands for straight, cisgendered women, globally, whether or not they accept queer people.

8. Queer Marxism is not the analysis of queer consumption habits

Of late, much of the Marxist analysis of queer oppression has been the analysis of queer co-optation into the market economy (see point 4 above). It is curious for Marxists to approach queer politics through criticizing the consumption habits of middle-class and status-conscious queers. Marxist-feminists are not transfixed by the consumer habits of women in households, but by concrete issues such as social reproduction, sexual assault, and reproductive freedom. Marxists examining Black oppression do not focus on how the Black middle class buys into a petit bourgeois vision of itself, but rather on concrete issues such as police violence and housing discrimination. Standing in solidarity with immigrants does not involve contemplating their consumer purchases or criticizing them for being assimilationist when they choose to adopt the customs of their new community.

The only reason I can assume that there is so much hand-wringing about how queers fall to live up to the expectations of radical subjects is that Marxists are buying into the concept that there is something inherently radical about queer existence; that, in itself, it poses some sort of challenge to capitalism because it challenges the family – forgetting that capitalism does not actually care about the family; rather, it cares about the free maintenance of its future workforce and ensuring that the assembly line is not disrupted.

The complaint is generally that queers are ignoring the violence and immiseration of the poorest segments of the community. But a significant number of other oppressed populations also have no interest in violence done to their cohorts: women blame women for rape, middle-class women are too busy ‘partying and consuming’ to deal with the feminization of poverty. So why would the queer middle class not behave like any other middle class? Why would the queer professional and upper classes take care of poor
working-class queers? Once again, my only guess is that there is some stock taken in the notion that queerness is inherently radical. The other side of the coin is a belief that there is some sinister conservatism inherent to queerness. Not just that queerness is a ‘bourgeois deviation’ per se, but that queerness as a political identity emerges as a possibility only within capitalism: ergo, it must be a pro-capitalist politics. This reactionary paranoia is as dangerous as it is useless.

Queer Marxists must disengage with queer nationalism. The time spent denouncing upper echelon queers for behaving like upper echelon queers would be better spent fighting the battles it is wrongly assumed they will fight.

9. Queer politics must oppose ‘imperialism with a queer face’

In line with Jasbir Puar’s notion of homonationalism, American imperialism after Obama’s election moved from rampant homophobia to encouraging the integration of queers with the hope of selling liberal progressives on the project of endless war. But this contradiction is merely politicians trying to dominate the entire political field. The neoconservatives who engineered the ostracizing of gays at the turn of the millennium are now the self-same group that is pinkwashing Israel. In fact, the pinkwashing campaigns were simultaneous to their anti-gay campaigns in the ‘homeland’.

The protection of queers—like the protection of women—can become a modern, progressive cover for domination of the Middle East by establishing a narrative of ‘barbarians’ against the West. Queer imperialism would be another arm of this campaign. The way out of this impasse is solidarity with queer people of occupied countries. Instead of supporting a ‘civilizing’ mission in Iraq, we can support IrAQueer. Instead of supporting the occupation of Gaza, we can support Aswat and alQaws.

Conclusions

10. Wherever there is solidarity with the goal towards eradicating expropriation, there is queer Marxism

Just as ecossocialism is only something more than socialism insofar as countering ecological devastation isn’t seen to be a logical concern of socialists, and just as Black feminism (as Fields notes) is only needed if feminism means ignoring the concerns of Black women, the term ‘queer Marxism’ is only necessary insofar as Marxism does not automatically include trans, gender non-conforming, and sexually diverse people into its analyses of social relations. However, we can fight for a future in which there is no need for Marxist-feminism or queer Marxism, but only the international movement to expropriate the expropriators, a movement where traditional and oppositional sexism are addressed as a condition and consequence of exploitation. It is the only future worth fighting for.
Notes

Introduction

1 I am, of course, referring here to the arguments in Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2004).

2 The term 'liberal' here refers to economic liberalism, i.e., capitalism.

3 The Canadian psychiatrist Ewen Cameron's early self-help manifesto *Life is for Living* argues that psychological and sexual orthodoxy was the causal root of Nazi Germany. Cameron went on to conduct a number of experiments in the hope of finding ways to solve the problem of orthodoxy. His 'depatteranization' project, funded by the CIA, helped people become less orthodox through sensory deprivation, massive doses of psychedelic drugs, and being forced to listen to a repeated sentence for days on end (see Cameron 1948; Klein 2007).

4 This is not a reference to postcolonial theory. I mean postcolonial in the literal sense: the political subjects currently existing within colonized lands and those who struggle to cope with the complications that emerge after campaigns of national liberation.

5 In short, anticolonial campaigns can also empower the national capitalist class.

6 Lean manufacturing is a neoliberal precept that nothing must be wasted. This sounds good on the surface—capitalist processes create a ton of waste. But what is meant by waste reduction here is not the end of planned obsolescence or the banning of toxic processes. Efficiency and waste reduction mean squeezing the most possible labor out of wage workers for the least possible cost, using the ideological discipline of workers to replace management, and outsourcing as much as possible. Examples of
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this in action are: having employees do the work of finding their own last-minute replacements when they come down with food poisoning; using the surplus of PhD holders hoping to make it into the middle class to transform the professoriate into a contingent (adjunct) labor force; timing autoworkers so that they work 58 seconds per minute instead of 45 seconds per minute. For documentation of the latter, see Post and Slaughter (2000).

7 Afain Badou (Badou 2012) describes techniques for striking that involve the whole community. One traditional problem of the strike weapon is that workers endure financial hardship along with their bosses — and bosses have deeper pockets. However, if workplaces are occupied by the unemployed members of the community so that workers cannot do their jobs, then surplus value extraction is interrupted while paychecks continue to be issued — paychecks that can provide bail money and sustenance for occupants.

8 This is not to say that we should embrace victimhood. Precisely the opposite.

1. Terms of the debate

1 Some examples of class-reductionist models of anti-capitalism include variants of syndicalism and other workerist approaches. Marx, however, analyzed systemic subjugation outside the workplace: for example, land seizures, religious alienation, and the objectification of women.

2 Unlike liberal philosophers, Marx is averse to a priori theories of justice. Two clear examples of this are Marx's criticism of the idea of 'fair distribution' (see Marx 1978b; Marx's letter to Engels of 4 November 1864 regarding an address written to the Workingmen's International Association: 'I was, however, obliged to insert two sentences about "duty" and "right", and ditto about "truth, morality and justice" into the preamble to the rules, but these are placed in such a way that they can do no harm' in Marx and Engels 1987b; cf. Rawls 1971).

3 Although poststructuralist theory considers existentialism to be naïve in its attitude towards language and agency, queer theory's privileging of the queer subject as epistemological grounds for confronting 'the system' strongly reflects Sartre's ethical conception of bad faith: in other words, the heteronormative subject lives the unexamined life and has embraced heterosexual herd mentality (see Sartre 1993). For an overview of existentialism, see the section in Chapter 1 of this book 'From Western Marxism to poststructuralism'.

4 Victor Serge's writing models this, particularly Witness to the German Revolution (2011) and From Lenin to Stalin (1973).

5 The strategy of urban occupation was generalized during the Occupy Movement of 2011. The French tract The Coming Insurrection by The Invisible Committee was influential (see The Invisible Committee 2007).

6 A scathing letter to the editor of the Weekly Worker, the newspaper of the Communist Party of Great Britain, colorfully describes such out-of-touch revolutionary practice in response to the thirteenth anniversary of the British miners' strike: 'Thankfully, you [the CPGB] have lost some of that excruciating self-opinionated leadership arrogance you displayed at that time, telling battle-hardened, class-conscious coalminers where we were going wrong and how you'd worked this all out for us and here's what we should do' (see David Douglass, 'Fools', Weekly Worker: weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1044/letters).

7 For an analysis of the implications of Druker's contribution to queer Marxism, see 'The world is a very queer place' in Chapter 3.

8 Sworn virgin status was (and to a lesser extent still is) a practice in rural, patriarchal, and patrilocal Albania in which a girl child is designated to become a man at birth. Because this practice is involuntary, there are debates about the appropriateness of its inclusion in queer politics, since there is an assumption that 'the queer' is defined by free expression of an individual truth. However, sworn virgins can also choose to become men, and some do so, citing reasons similar to transgendered men in other parts of the world (see Magrini 2003; Littlewood and Young 2005). For work on the sworn population, see Mirandé (2013). See also Aleksand Isak's 2006 documentary Mozes: Authentic, Intrepid Seekers of Danger, distributed by Ethnoscope. For examples of Native American gender diversity, see Williams (1986). For an analysis of Asian/Pacific queer identities including koheyo, tôngbi (the word 'comrade' in Chinese, both a pun on the Chinese word for homosexuality and a term implying solidarity between sexual minorities), mak nyah, and falafânaa, see Martin et al. (2008). Numerous sources documenting the lives of hijras have been published in the past two decades, including autobiographies The Truth About Me (Revathi 2010) and Me Hijra, Me Laxmi (Laxmi et al. 2015).

9 See http://alqawas.org/siteEn/index.

10 For analyses of American butch/femme working-class culture, see the ethnography Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold (Kennedy and Davis 1993); the memoir Stone Butch Blues (Feinberg 1993); and Joan Nestle's classic anthology The Persistent Desire (Nestle 1992). Hollibaugh and Moraga (1981; reprinted in Snitow et al. 1983: 440–59) give an autobiographical perspective on the anti-gender hegemony of second-wave feminism. For

11 The Material Queer is subtitled ‘A LezBiGay reader’ (Morton 1996).

12 There is a long history of debates among trans people over the words ‘transgender’ and ‘transsexual’. For this reason, I will generally use the term ‘trans’ in place of these words.

13 Carol Queen describes the lesbian-feminist ‘uniform’ not as ungendered, but as ‘Butch Lite’ (Queen 1997: 154.). Judith Butler would famously demystify genderlessness as an impossibility on the grounds that one is always interpolated into the structure of language, one is always called to account for one’s body, one is always ‘read’ through discursive conditions. The very point of the denunciation of gender creates an essentialist gender/sex split (see Butler 1990; on the materiality of the body, see Butler 1993).

14 Janice Raymond’s The Transsexual Empire (1979) is the classic text for anti-trans feminism. In paranoid fashion, Raymond imagines a socially powerful ‘empire’ of transsexual women. Postmodern writer and media inventor Sandy Stone called her wry response to Raymond (Raymond’s work was a long personal attack on Stone) The ‘Empire’ Strikes Back (in Stryker and Whittle 2006).


16 There is now evidence that trans subjects are neurologically distinct from cis subjects and that aspects of trans brain patterning diverge from cis brain patterning; even without hormone replacement, the patterns of trans people are closer to the patterns of their cis counterparts on a spectrum (Kranz et al. 2014).

17 For an example of a re-emergence of criticism of butch/femme identity, see Erin Tatum ‘Who’s the Man: Heteronormativity and Queer Relationships’ at http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/04/whos-the-man/. Paradoxically, in challenging queer people to accept all forms of desire, Tatum warns: ‘You don’t need rigidly enforced gender roles to build a real connection… Internalizing the expectation for a gender dichotomy within your partnerships might also be subconsciously limiting your own sexual expression.’ The writer explains that they originally sought only masculine lovers because of their own inability to break away from heterosexual norms, which implies that, unlike other gendered desires, the butch/femme dyad could be a more heteronormative gesture. However, this personal narrative misses the larger phenomenon of actually heterosexual ‘bicurious’ women who almost exclusively seek our sexual relations with feminine women, often adding ‘no butches’ to their personal ads. Oddly enough, we are back in the terrain of second-wave anxiety over butch/femme relations, but with a third-wave requirement for absolute gender fluidity instead of absolute refutation of gender as a concept. The femme position is particularly difficult to reconcile with the idea of challenging ‘normativity’ because many women are indistinguishable from heterosexual women. Since queer culture is by definition inclusive of anyone who wants ‘in’ (i.e. anyone committed to the project of subverting gender), there has been a consensus in defense of cisgendered femmes, an explanation that femmes queer femininity in ways that heterosexual, non-queer women do not. But this is based on a very restrictive definition of heterosexual women’s gender. In reality, femmes are not truly distinguishable by gender markers, but by their relation to others within the queer world and the role they play in the overall sexual and emotional affirmation of other queer women.

18 There has also been a debate between those who think the term intersex is preferable to the term disorders of sexual development (DSD). Others have argued that DSD is more accurate or more pragmatic because it will reduce stigma and encourage parents to obtain treatment for their children. Of course, many of those who embrace the term ‘intersex’ maintain that their bodies are not disordered. The term behind the initials DSD has recently shifted to differences in sexual development to remove the sense of pathology.

19 This is a symbol of the Human Rights Campaign, a mainstream American lobbying group notorious for its poor record on trans inclusivity.

20 The majority of humans, that is. There has been no emotional censure of other life forms; however, pampered pets aside, animal life has not fared well since capitalism commodified it.

21 For Rosa Luxemburg’s critique of Bernstein’s reformism see ‘Reform or Revolution’ in Luxemburg (2007).

22 As Henning notes, the difficulty here for Marxists becomes avoiding a turn towards normative ethics which would render economic understanding a pedantic excursion to political action. Henning criticizes Lenin for accelerating this normative move in his argument that imperialism and monopoly capitalism are distinct from earlier capitalism. Henning is not convinced that imperialism and monopolization weren’t already features of capitalism as described by Marx (see Henning 2014; Chapter 2.2; Lenin 2010). For other readings of capitalism’s trajectory in early twentieth-century Europe, see Hilferding (2006). While I am symph-
29 Around a quarter of children in many American southern states live in poverty.
30 Case in point: from 2009 to 2014, Under the Hood Café, a few blocks from the entrance of the Fort Hood army base in Killeen, Texas, was one of two antiwar coffee houses in the United States. Some queer people were engaged in the coffee-house movement — not as emissaries from the LGBT community, but because they were involved in socialist organizations or organizations promoting religious pacifism. One of the most decisive moments of internal dissent within the military arose when twenty-four-year-old army specialist Victor Agosto decided to protest against the war while living on base by refusing to deploy to Afghanistan, not as a conscientious objector opposed to war in general but as a political militant opposed to imperialism. While others had resisted deployment to Iraq on grounds of political injustice, such as Camilo Mejía, no one had yet mounted a campaign against going to war in Afghanistan, which was a war effort that still had a fair amount of public support. Agosto’s logic was that, if he went AWOL, his protest would not be visible to other soldiers, but by refusing to deploy in front of his platoon, he might encourage the antiwar spirit. Engaging radical queer support for war resistance in the liberal city of Austin, Texas turned out to be a fairly useless endeavor. Few understood the rationale behind a potential queer movement to support a heterosexual who chose to enlist and changed his mind on political grounds, especially when they were skeptical about the value of even supporting ‘their own kind’ in the military. Once again, the antiwar rhetoric of radical queer politics was just that. As someone formerly involved in Agosto’s campaign, I am citing my own ‘lived experience’ here. (And, as a side note, even Agosto’s militant and public defiance of the commanding officers did not even warrant a dishonorable discharge.)
31 See note 30.
32 This statistic is from a talk given by Gopal at the 2009 Socialism Conference in Chicago.
33 The Hegel-inspired orientalist comments of Marx’s early work tend to be used to write off the whole of Marx’s political thought. A number of scholars have done work that counters the argument that Marx was a Eurocentric thinker (see Anderson 2010; Ahmad 2008).
34 Ahmad accuses Said of specifically setting himself up to be the agent of change. He argues that when Said makes Ranajit Guha an example of the new sort of postcolonial political agent specifically because of his move from the anticolonial upper classes to the university, he is actually referring to himself (see Ahmad 2008: 200–1).
35 ‘When the words of the master become the site of hybridity … then we may not only read between the lines, but even seek to change the often coercive reality that they so luckily contain’ (quoted in Larsen 1995: 6).
36 Many criticisms of Chibber argue from shaky ground. Chris Taylor’s scathing blog review of Chibber’s work, ‘Not even Marxist: On Vivek Chibber’s Polemic Against Postcolonial Theory’, is a case in point. Taylor writes: ‘Chibber then defines physical well-being as freedom from “dangerous working conditions, poverty-level wages, high mortality, ill health, environmental hazards, and so on …”’ (Chibber 2013: 205). One wonders what the “so on” covers. I’m willing to bet, though, that if we drew a portrait of this universal body of the worker, he might look a lot like me: a white male with the “normal” bodily capacities ascribed to human beings.’ Paul Heideman’s response on his Verso blog is apposite: ‘Here, we have Taylor, quite literally, attacking Vivek not for what he wrote, but for what Taylor imagines he might write … We have descended into the realm of the absurd here.’ What I find fascinating, however — even symptomatic here — is that Taylor imagines Chibber imagining his own (Taylor’s own) white body as the universal worker. That Chibber himself is not white and that he is writing about India and Indian workers, not white academics, does not seem to factor into the equation for Taylor. See ‘Not Even Marxist? Paul M. Heideman examines Chris Taylor’s critique of Vivek Chibber’ at www.versobooks.com/blogs/1297-not-even-marxist-paul-m-heideman-examines-chris-taylor-s-critique-of-vivek-chibber (accessed 10 June 2015).
37 The fact that China is scrambling for resources in Africa alongside American and European interests seems to undermine the theory that colonialism and imperialism are purely Western nationalist enterprises. Nineteenth-century Japanese imperialism also troubles the model.

4. Conclusions

1 Essential nationalisms would be the opposite of the strategic, ‘existential’ nationalisms of anticolonial struggle.
2 I am sticking to international instead of transnational for the simple reason that the fact that nations exist is still relevant within global capitalism. Transnational describes the crossing of or transcending of borders — a real activity. Transnationalism is ambivalent in that it implies the political movement to transcend or ’move beyond’ the nation-state, which could be either communist or capitalist. In other words, I use international in a non-prescriptive sense.
3 An idea developed throughout his work, especially in *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Badlou 2003).


5 The turn towards analyzing epistemologies of ignorance is valuable to political development, especially within the dialectic of political organizing – where the political collective confronts its own inability to build critical mass due to cultivated ignorance. Critical race theory’s criticisms of Marxist blind spots might be valuable in this one respect. While it is material social relations that set ideological forces in motion, discussions of consciousness are inevitable in political organizing. Reductive standpoint epistemologies that treat positions as essences or that see a direct causal link between location and knowledge are unhelpful for political organizing. In other words, a particular standpoint might make knowledge possible, but such knowledge is rarely inevitable (see Mills 1997).

6 ‘Birth spacing in gathering and hunting bands averages three or four years, as prolonged and vigorous nursing suppresses ovulation, thus permitting mothers to remain mobile as food-gatherers throughout their childbearing years ... only under sedentary conditions do birth intervals shorten’ (Secombe 1995: 17).

7 Lacan’s work is solidly opposed to biological determinism and goes to great lengths to acknowledge that the phallus/lack paradigm is not representative of genitals. However, I would argue that this break is not complete, but a social abstraction of existing assumptions (including biological assumptions) within the bourgeois nuclear family. The sticky problem with divorcing the conceptual from the anatomical is that when real people undergo psychoanalysis or when it is used to analyze a social whole, the pure logic of phallus/lack is used to explain the lives of people whose secondary sex characteristics have already caused them to be sorted into social genders.

8 We call gendered bodies on the market, and the labor we do has physical effects on bodily processes, so, in this sense, social gender shapes sexed bodies. One iconic example of labor gendering the body is when the protagonist, Jess, a self-identified butch unloading trucks on the docks, worries about how laboring on the docks in the winter injures and hardens the exposed parts of the bodies of the other workers (Feinberg 1993: 75).

9 Michelle Alexander notes that the maintenance of racism does not require racial hatred; it only requires that the injustices continue to be ignored.

10 This is also discussed at length in Floyd (2009).