# Off

Focus on linguistics rather than material reality isolates Marxist politics in intellectual ivory towers and precludes the possibility of action because we are constantly searching for endless lines of casuality – probably isolates your perm too.

Poitevin 1 ( Rene Francisco Poitevin, PhD Cand Sociol @ UC-Davis and big time “on the ground” marxist 2001“The end of anti-capitalism as we knew it: Reflections on postmodern Marxism”, The Socialist Review)

The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It) begs another question: Who are they going after? Is it capitalism or is it Marx? Their book spends so much time on what is supposedly wrong with Marxism that at times it reads more like The End of Marxism As We Knew It. This approach is typical of a pattern that, to quote Wendy Brown, "responds less to the antidemocratic forces of our time than to a ghostly philosophical standoff between historically abstracted formulations of Marxism and liberalism. In other words, this effort seeks to resolve a problem in a (certain) history of ideas rather than a problem in history."19 Simply put, postmodern Marxist politics has more to do with the micropolitics of the ivory tower than with the plight of the workers who clean their campuses. However, once it becomes clear that a necessary condition for the primacy of postmodern theory and politics is that Marxism has to go (otherwise you do not have to become a postmodern to address their concerns), J.K. Gibson-Graham's anti-Marxist hostility, while actively embracing the Marxist label in order to render it useless, makes a lot of sense. And once again, all this is done with impeccable logic: Given that Marxism is still the only doctrine that calls for the systematic overthrow of capitalism, getting rid of Marx(ism) is also to get rid of the need for revolution with a big "R."20 One of the problems with trying to make the case for postmodern Marxism is that in order to get rid of Marxism and declare its tradition obsolete, you have to distort its legacy by constructing a straw man. This straw man-reading of Marx is predicated upon the double maneuver of collapsing Marxist history into Stalinism, on the one hand, and reducing Marxist theory to "essentialism," "totality," and "teleology," on the other. As J.K. Gibson-Graham themselves acknowledge, without any regrets, "Indeed, as many of our critics sometimes charge, we have constructed a 'straw man.'"21 What is left out of their quasi-humorous dismissal of Marxism is the complicity of such a straw man in the long history of red-baiting and anti-Marxist repression in this country and around the world. Also left out is the rich Marxist scholarship that was addressing their concerns long before there was a postmodern Marxist school. The fact is that postmodern Marxist's "contributions" are not as original nor as profound as they might have us believe. For example, what about the bulk of the Western Marxist tradition since the Frankfurt School? Has it not been predicated on a rejection of the economic reductionism embedded in the passage from the Preface to the Introduction to A Critique of Political Economy in which the (in)famous base/superstructure metaphor of society gets set in stone as the "official" definition of historical materialism? Or what about Horkheimer and Adorno's relentless critique of instrumental rationality? Marxism, in spite of what the postmodern Marxists want us to believe, has long been making the case for the centrality of culture and its irreducibility to economic laws, as anybody who has read Walter Benjamin or Antonio Gramsci can certify. Furthermore, postcolonial Marxism and critical theory have also been theorizing at more concrete levels of analyses the irreducibility of subjectivity to class.22 And despite the postmodern Marxist excitement when talking about class as a relational process, in fact it is impossible to tell that they are not the first ones to talk about class as a relational process, lots of Marxists before the Amherst School have been theorizing and clarifying the relational mechanisms embedded in class politics.23 Postmodern Marxism also ignores Lefebvre's urban Marxist contribution: his emphasis on the importance of experience and the everyday in accounting for social processes.24 And Marxist feminist contributions on the intersection of agency and gender with race, class, and sexuality are conveniently erased from J.K. Gibson-Graham's reduction of Marxism to a straw man.25 The fact is that when one looks at Marxism not as a distorted "straw man" but on its own terms, taking into account its richness and complexity, Marxist theory starts to appear all of a sudden less "totalizing," "essentializing," and "reductionist" and instead as more rich in possibilities and more enabling. A third feature of J.K. Gibson-Graham's work, in particular, and of the whole radical democracy tradition, in general, is its post-structuralist extremism.26 For postmodern Marxists it is not enough to point out that, as both Foucault and Habermas argue, we inhabit an intellectual regime characterized by a paradigm shift from the "philosophy of consciousness" to the "philosophy of language."27 Nor is it good enough for postmodern/post-Marxists to recognize the pitfalls embedded in Hegelian epistemology and argue instead, as Spivak does, for strategic-- uses-of-essentialism as a corrective to the excesses of teleological thinking and fixed notions of class.28 No way. As far as postmodern Marxism is concerned, the only way to compensate for constructions of capitalism that are too totalizing is through the unconditional surrender of the Marxist project. As J.K. Gibson-Graham themselves make clear, "to even conceive of 'capitalism' as 'capitalisms' is still taking 'capitalism' for granted."29 And to try to redistribute the heavy theoretical and political burden placed upon the proletariat by reconfiguring political agency through "race-class-gender," as opposed to just class, is still a futile endeavor: essentialism is still essentialism whether one essentializes around one or three categories. This strand of post-structuralism, one that once again, can be directly traced back to Laclau and Mouffe's Hegemony and Socialist Strategy,30 is predicated on the faulty epistemological premise that what really matters is "discourse." As Laclau and Mouffe clarify, "our analysis rejects the distinction between discursive and nondiscursive practices. It offirms that every object is constituted as an object of discourse."31 The problem with this approach is that once we enter this world of epistemological foundationalism predicated on the claim that there is "nothing but discourse," we enter a world of relativism in which all we can do is "create discursive fixings," as J.K. Gibson-Graham themselves prescribe, that will guarantee that "any particular analysis will never find the ultimate cause of events."32 It is this ideological postmodern insistence on reducing all of social reality to discourse that ultimately overloads its theoretical apparatus and causes it to buckle beneath them. The Amherst School's "provisional ontology" is incapable of escaping the performative trap of trying to get rid of essentialism by essentializing all of reality as "discursive." The postmodern Marxist approach to ontology boils down to substituting in political practice every occurrence of "continuity" with "discontinuity" as a way to get rid of essentialism and macro-narratives. Even Foucault, the great master of discontinuity, distances himself from such mirror-reversal solutions when theorizing the limits of discourse and accounting for the "divergence, the distances, the oppositions, the differences" that constitute the episteme of a period.33

#### Believing the discursive is co extensive of the social is flawed-it dematerializes power by decoupling domination from exploitation and viewing power as a diffuse practice. The call to focus on symbols places consumption as a method of resistance-it is how we consume and understand symbols that is the key. This ignores that every capitalist transgression has been rooted from production, not consumption.

Zavarzadeh in 95 (Mas’ud, prolific writer and expert on class ideology, post-ality: Marxism and postmodernism, post-ality the (dis)simulations of cybercapitalism)

The matterist theories of consumptionism are all founded upon the ludic .assumptions of the Foucauldian social theory in which "the discursive" is not simply a separate level or an isolated dimension of the social but, as Laclau puts it, "co-extensive with the social as such" ("Populist Rupture and Discourse" 87). This is another way of saying that "every social practice is production of meaning" (Laclau 87). Consequently, in the post-al dogma, the social is constituted not by forces of production and the social relations that they make possible, but by meaning. In other words, as Fiske puts it, "All the commodities of late capitalism are 'goods to speak with" (Understanding Popular Culture 34). What matters for ending capitalist domination, in other words, is not control of the means of production but the control of the means of signification. The substitution of "consumption" for "production" then is really not an epistemological move: it is done not because such a displacement (as it is claimed) will provide a more accurate understanding of radical structural changes in capitalism but because such a reversal erases "revolution" from the map of social struggle and puts in its place a discursive difference that can be negotiated. Politics, in the "consumption paradigm," is a matter of changing representations and meanings—discourses—which are post-al nodes of power. This view of politics dematerializes power by decoupling "domination" from "exploitation" and retheorizing power as a diffuse and discursive practice. The post-al theory of power goes beyond Foucault and is based on the notion that the structures of postal capitalism have become so layered, complex and abstract that one cannot locate a single fixed center from which power issues—moreover power is not even "real." Power in the post-al moment has become so abstract, it is believed, that not even such classic postmodern theories of power (as diffused discourse) put forth by Foucault can account for it. In Forget Foucault, one of Baudrillard's main critiques of Foucault is that although Foucault responded to newer forms of power in his critique of the Marxist notion of power, Foucault's own idea of power has become irrelevant in the post-al moment since power, for Foucault, is still an actuality: lines of force in his institutional analysis are treated as realities. However, in the "consumer society," there are, according to Baudrillard, no "real" lines of force but simply simulations of power: signs that parody power (61). This ludic power is available to all users of signs. The political conclusion is that not only is capitalism not growing more powerful, but it has, in fact, become a source of power-assimulation for the people. Power in the post-al moment is simulational, and every instance of power is said to give rise to "resistance" which leads to a new form of empowerment within the existing relations of exploitation. Women, people of color, and the queer, in post-al theory, can be empowered without the need to overthrow the system of exploitation that deploys socially produced differences (gender, sexuality, race ... ) to legitimate higher and higher ratios of extraction of surplus labor. The displacing of "exploitation" by "domination" is justified because, as Fiske puts it "The productivity of consumption is detached from wealth or class" (35). In fact, the post-al knowledge industry has "invented" a whole new interdiscipline called "cultural studies" that provides a new alibi for the regime of profit by shifting social analytics from "production" to "consumption" on the grounds that as de Certeau puts it consumption is simply a "different kind of production" (The Practice of Everyday Life 31). Consumption of goods as the deployment of textwares whose "speech potential is not affected by economics" (Fiske 34) is a "festive energizing of the body" (Baudrillard, Mirror 44). Post-al "Cultural Studies" has increasingly become the mapping of these festivals of the body (Elizabeth Grosz, Volatile Bodies; Angela McRobbie, Postmodernism and Popular Culture; bell hooks, Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations especially her text "Power to the Pussy"). To prove its "progressiveness," post-al theory devotes most of its energies to demonstrating how "Every act of consumption is an act of cultural production, for consumption is always the production of meaning" (Fiske 35; see the writings of Constance Penley, Michael Berube, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., John Fiske, Andrew Ross, Stuart Hall, Fredric Jameson, Kobena Mercer and Rachel Bowlby among many others). In post-al cultural studies, the politics of production is suppressed through various "reading" moves in favor of a poetics of consumption or what de Certeau calls poiesis, which is the trope of the post-al for "invention." Matterist theories, as I have critiqued in detail in Theory and its Other, take consumption as poiesis to be an act of resistance to capitalism. Briefly, the consumer is placed in a scenario of resistance in which he turns consumption into a practice of "poaching" (de Certeau 31). The consumer, like "indigenous Indians" who diverted the "spectacular victory of Spanish colonization," by the "uses" they made of it "even when they were subjected" (32), can subvert the system of production and power "from within" and "divert" it "without leaving it" (32). Shoplifting and "moving the price tag from a lower-to a higher-priced item before taking to the cashier" (Fiske 39) are among the tactics of resistance as is the practice of "two secretaries spending their lunch hour browsing through stores with no intention to buy. They try on clothes, consume their stolen images in the store mirror and in each other's eyes, turn the place of boutique into their lunch time space, and make tactical raids upon its strategically placed racks of clothes, shoes, accessories" (Fiske 39). But the repertoire of resistance is not exhausted by such acts of transgression. Another "inventive" form of consuming as producing is to intervene into the very existence of the commodities. Since "whole" jeans are connoted with powers that one opposes, "disfiguring them" becomes a way of resisting those powers (Fiske 4). The shift from "production" to "consumption" is a shift then from "labor" as the constitutive practice of human societies to "pleasure" (of using what is produced) as the post-al shaping force of history. It is done in the name of foregrounding the agency of the subject (who freely chooses and thus resists a monolithic system), but it is in actuality an alibi to divert the subject away from "making" and taking control of the means of making toward what de Certeau posits (29-42) as the ultimate form of post-al resistance, "making do": working within the system and with what the system provides rather than attempting to transform it. It is an ethics of adjustment rather than revolution; it focuses on ways of making do with the world as it exists. All post-al theories of "consumption" as the axis of "social analysis" and "political rallying" and as a marker of what is "most free" and "most truly" ourselves (Robbins, Secular Vocations 39), are apparatuses of solving the contradictions of the free-market. In their ruthless competition against their rivals for profit, capitalists produce in an unplanned way. The cycles of crisis (recessions, for example) are the effects of this unplanned "overproduction." Theories of consumption legitimate a subject who is always consuming—regardless of need—and in doing so provides a safety net for the capitalist. Consumptionist theories, in short, are devices to reduce overproduction and in doing so help to realize the capitalist's profit. Theories of post-industrialism, post-capitalism, post-Fordism, are theories that use the alibi of radical structural change within capitalism in order to put forth an argument for the outdatedness of the class-struggle and revolution and instead advocate a consensus for a permanent bourgeois democracy. <19-22>

#### The naturalizing process of capitalism masks its role in ensuring subjugation on a global scale. Our primary ethico-political responsibility is to challenge the organizing principles which found this system

Zizek and Daly in 4(Slavoj and Glyn, Conversations with Zizek pg. 14-16)

For Zizek it is imperative that we cut through this Gordian knot of postmodern protocol and recognize that our ethico-political responsibility is to confront the constitutive violence of today's global capitalism and its obscene naturalization/ anonymization of the millions who are subjugated by it throughout the world. Against the standardized positions of postmodern culture – with all its pieties concerning 'multiculturalist' etiquette – Zizek is arguing for a politics that might be called 'radically incorrect' in the sense that it breaks with these types of positions' and focuses instead on the very organizing principles of today's social reality: the principles of global liberal capitalism. This requires some care and subtlety. For far too long, Marxism has been bedevilled by an almost fetishistic economism that has tended towards political morbidity. With the likes of Hilferding and Gramsci, and more recently Laclau and Mouffe, crucial theoretical advances have been made that enable the transcendence of all forms of economism. In this new context, however, Zizek argues that the problem that now presents itself is almost that of the opposite fetish. That is to say, the prohibitive anxieties surrounding the taboo of economism can function as a way of not engaging with economic reality and as a way of implicitly accepting the latter as a basic horizon of existence. In an ironic Freudian-Lacanian twist, the fear of economism can end up reinforcing a de facto economic necessity in respect of contemporary capitalism (i.e. the initial prohibition conjures up the very thing it fears). This is not to endorse any kind of retrograde return to economism. Zizek's point is rather that in rejecting economism we should not lose sight of the systemic power of capital in shaping the lives and destinies of humanity and our very sense of the possible. In particular we should not overlook Marx's central insight that in order to create a universal global system the forces of capitalism seek to conceal the politico-discursive violence of its construction through a kind of gentrification of that system. What is persistently denied by neo-liberals such as Rorty (1989) and Fukuyama (1992) is that the gentrification of global liberal capitalism is one whose 'universalism' fundamentally reproduces and depends upon a disavowed violence that excludes vast sectors of the world's population. In this way, neo-liberal ideology attempts to naturalize capitalism by presenting its outcomes of winning and losing as if they were simply a matter of chance and sound judgement in a neutral marketplace. Capitalism does indeed create a space for a certain diversity, at least for the central capitalist regions, but it is neither neutral nor ideal and its price in terms of social exclusion is exorbitant. That is to say, the human cost in terms of inherent global poverty and degraded 'life-chances' cannot be calculated within the existing economic rationale and, in consequence, social exclusion remains mystified and nameless (viz. the patronizing reference to the 'developing world'). And Zizek's point is that this mystification is magnified through capitalism's profound capacity to ingest its own excesses and negativity: to redirect (or misdirect) social antagonisms and to absorb them within a culture of differential affirmation. Instead of Bolshevism, the tendency today is towards a kind of political boutiquism that is readily sustained by postmodern forms of consumerism and lifestyle. Against this Zizek argues for a new universalism whose primary ethical directive is to confront the fact that our forms of social existence are founded on exclusion on a global scale. While it is perfectly true that universalism can never become Universal (it will always require a hegemonic-particular embodiment in order to have any meaning), what is novel about Zizek's universalism is that it would not attempt to conceal this fact or to reduce the status of the abject Other to that of a 'glitch' in an otherwise sound matrix.

#### The alternative is to reject the affirmative for an unconditional fidelity to a Universal struggle for political economic emancipation. Arguments about the ability of the alternative to succeed or the possibility for authoritarianism to occur are irrelevant – it is this prioritization of the new social order’s construction that caused Maoist violence and guarantees failure. We must take a leap of faith.

Zizek in 8 (Slavoj; senior researcher @ U of Ljubjlana; In Defense of Lost Causes; p. 202-210)

This capitalist reappropriation of revolutionary dynamics is not without its comic side effects. It was recently made public that, in order to conceptualize the Israeli Defense Forces' urban warfare against the Palestinians, the IDF military academics systematically refer to Deleuze and Guattari, especially to Thousand Plateaus, using it as "operational theory"—the catchwords used are "Formless Rival Entities," "Fractal Maneuver," "Velocity vs. Rhythms," "The Wahabi War Machine," "Postmodern Anarchists," "Nomadic Terrorists." One of the key distinctions they rely on is the one between "smooth" and "striated" space, which reflect the organizational concepts of the "war machine" and the "state apparatus." The IDF now often uses the term "to smooth out space" when they want to refer to operation in a space as if it had no borders. Palestinian areas are thought of as "striated" in the sense that they are enclosed by fences, walls, ditches, roadblocks, and so on; The attack conducted by units of the IDF on the city of Nablus in April 2002 was described by its commander, Brigadier-General Aviv Kokhavi, as "inverse geometry", which he explained as "the reorganization of the urban syntax by means of a series of micro-tactical actions". During the battle soldiers moved within the city across hundreds of meters of overground tunnels carved out through a dense and contiguous urban structure. Although several thousand soldiers and Palestinian guerrillas were maneuvering simultaneously in the city, they were so "saturated" into the urban fabric that very few would have been visible from the air. Furthermore, they used none of the city's streets, roads, alleys or courtyards, or any of the external doors, internal stairwells and windows, but moved horizontally through walls and vertically through holes blasted in ceilings and floors. This form of movement, described by the military as "infestation", seeks to redefine inside as outside, and domestic interiors as thoroughfares. The IDF's strategy of "walking through walls" involves a conception of the city as not just the site but also the very medium of warfare, "a flexible, almost liquid medium that is forever contingent and in flux".72 So what follows from all this? Not, of course, the nonsensical accusation that Deleuze and Guattari are theorists of militaristic colonization — but the conclusion that the conceptual machinery articulated by Deleuze and Guattari, far from being simply "subversive," also fits the (military, economic, and ideologico-political) operational mode of contemporary capitalism. How, then, are we to revolutionize an order whose very principle is constant self-revolutionizing? Although a failure, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) was unique in attacking the key point: not just the takeover of state power, but the new economic organization and reorganization of daily life. Its failure was precisely the failure to create a new form of everyday life: it remained a carnivalesque excess, with the state apparatus (under Zhou Enlai's control) guaranteeing the reproduction and maintenance of everyday life, of production. At the level of social reality, there is obviously some truth to the claim that the Cultural Revolution was triggered by Mao in order to re-establish his power (which had been seriously curtailed in the early 1960s, in the aftermath of the spectacular failure of the Great Leap Forward, when the majority of nomenklatura staged a silent inner-party coup against him); it is true that the Cultural Revolution brought incalculable suffering, that it cut deep wounds in the social fabric, that its story can be told as the story of fanatical crowds chanting slogans—however, this is simply not the entire story. In spite of (or, rather, because of) all its horrors, the Cultural Revolution undoubtedly did contain elements of an enacted Utopia. At its very end, before the agitation was blocked by Mao himself (since he had by then achieved his goal of re-establishing his influence and getting rid of the top nomenklatura competitors), there was the "Shanghai Commune": one million workers who simply took the official slogans seriously, demanding the abolition of the state and even the party itself, and the direct communal organization of society. It is significant that it was at this very point that Mao ordered the army to intervene and to restore order. The paradox is that of a leader who triggers an uncontrolled upheaval, while trying to exert full personal power—the overlapping of extreme dictatorship and extreme emancipation of the masses. The argument that the GPCR was triggered by Mao in order to get rid of rivals in the inner-party struggle and reassert his authority, and that it was tamed by the intervention of the army the moment it threatened to spiral out of control, is irrelevant here, even if true: it simply confirms that the events acquired a dynamic of their own. This genuinely revolutionary aspect of the Cultural Revolution is sometimes admitted even by conservative critics compelled to take note of the "paradox" of the "totalitarian" leader teaching people to "think and act for themselves," to rebel and destroy the very apparatus of "totalitarian domination" — here is what Gordon Chang recently wrote in the conservative journal Commentary. Paradoxically, it was Mao himself, the great enslaver, who in his own way taught the Chinese people to think and act for themselves. In the Cultural Revolution, he urged tens of millions of radical youths [. . .] to go to every corner of the country to tear down ancient temples, destroy cultural relics, and denounce their elders, including not only mothers and fathers but also government officials and Communist-parry members. [, . .] The Cultural Revolution may have been Mao's idea of ruining his enemies, but it became a frenzy that destroyed the fabric of society. As government broke down, its functions taken over by revolutionary committees and "people's communes," the strict restraints and repressive mechanisms of the state dissolved. People no longer had to wait for someone to instruct them what to do—Mao had told them they had "the right to rebel," For the radical young, this was a time of essentially unrestrained passion. In one magnificent stroke, the Great Helmsman had delegitimized almost all forms of authority.7'' What this means is that we can read the Cultural Revolution at two different levels. If we read zxit as a part of historical reality (being), we can easily submit it to a "dialectical" analysis which perceives the final outcome of a historical process as its "truth": the ultimate failure of the Cultural Revolution bears witness to the inherent inconsistency of the very project ("notion") of cultural revolution, it is the explication-deployment—actualization of these inconsistencies (in the same way that, for Marx, the vulgar, non-heroic, capitalist daily reality of profit-seeking is the "truth" of noble Jacobin revolutionary heroism). If, however, we analyze it as an Event, as an enactment of the eternal Idea of egalitarian justice, then the ultimate factual result of the Cultural Revolution, its catastrophic failure and reversal into the recent capitalist transformation, does not exhaust the real of the Cultural Revolution: the eternal Idea of the Cultural Revolution survives its defeat in socio-historical reality, it continues to lead an underground spectral life of the ghosts of failed Utopias which haunt the future generations, patiently awaiting their next resurrection. This brings us back to Robespierre who expressed in a touching way the simple faith in the eternal Idea of freedom which persists through all defeats, without which, as was clear to Robespierre, a revolution "is just a noisy crime that destroys another crime," the laith most poignantly expressed in Robespierre's very last speech on 8 Thermidor 1794, the day before his arrest and execution: But there do exist, I can assure you, souls that are feeling and pure; it exists, that tender, imperious and irresistible passion, the torment and delight of magnanimous hearts; that deep horror of tyranny, that compassionate zeal for the oppressed, that sacred love for the homeland, that even more sublime and holy love for humanity, without which a great revolution is just a noisy crime that destroys another crime; it does exist, that generous ambition to establish here on earth the world's first Republic.74 Does the same not hold even more so for the last big installment in the life of this Idea, the Maoist Cultural Revolution—without this Idea which sustained revolutionary enthusiasm, the Cultural Revolution was to an even greater degree "just a noisy crime that destroys another crime"? One should recall here Hegel's sublime words on the French Revolution from his Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: It has been said that the French revolution resulted from philosophy, and it is not without reason that philosophy has been called Well welshed [world wisdom]; for it is not only truth in and for itself, as the pure essence of things, but also truth in its living form as exhibited in the affairs of the world. We should not, therefore, contradict the assertion that the revolution received its first impulse from philosophy. [. , .] Never since the sun had stood in the firmament and the planets revolved around him had it been perceived that man's existence centers in his head, i.e. in thought, inspired by which he builds up the world of reality. [. . .] not until now had man advanced to the recognition of the principle that thought ought to govern spiritual reality. This was accordingly a glorious mental dawn. All thinking being shared in the jubilation of this epoch. Emotions of a lofty character stirred men's minds at that time; a spiritual enthusiasm thrilled through the world, as if the reconciliation between the divine and the secular was now first accomplished/'1 This, of course, did not prevent Hegel from coldly analyzing the inner necessity of this explosion of abstract freedom in turning into its opposite, self-destructive revolutionary terror; however, one should never forget that Hegel's critique is immanent, accepting the basic principles of the French Revolution (and its key supplement, the Haitian Revolution). And one should proceed in exactly the same way apropos the October Revolution (and, later, the Chinese Revolution): it was, as Badiou pointed out, the first case in the entire history of humanity of the successful revolt of the exploited poor—they were the zero-level members of the new society, they set the standards. The revolution stabilized itself into a new social order, a new world was created and miraculously survived for decades, amid unthinkable economic and military pressure and isolation. This was effectively "a glorious mental dawn. All thinking being shared in the jubilation of this epoch." Against all hierarchical orders, egalitarian universality directly came to power. There is a basic philosophical dilemma which underlies this alternative: it may seem that the only consistent Hegelian standpoint is the one which measures the Notion by the success or failure of its actualization, so that, in the perspective of the total mediation of the Essence by its Appearance, any transcendence of the Idea over its actualization is discredited. The consequence of this is that, if we insist on the eternal Idea which survives its historical defeat, this necessarily entails —in Hegelese—a regression from the level of the Notion as the fully actualized unity of Essence and Appearance, to the level of the Essence supposed to transcend its Appearance. Is it really so, however? One can also claim that the excess of the Utopian Idea that survives its historical defeat does not contradict the total mediation of Idea and its Appearance: the basic Hegelian insight according to which the failure of reality to fully actualize an Idea is simultaneously the failure (limitation) of this Idea itself continues to hold. What one should simply add is that the gap that separates the Idea from its actualization signals a gap within this Idea itself. This is why the spectral Idea that continues to haunt historical reality signals the falsity of the new historical reality itself its inadequacy to its own Notion— the failure of the Jacobin Utopia, its actualization in utilitarian bourgeois reality, is simultaneously the limitation of this reality itself. Consequently, one should invert the commonplace reading of Lacan’s "Kant avec Sade" according to which Sadean perversion is the "truth" of Kant, more "radical" than Kant, that it draws out the consequences Kant himself did not have the courage to confront. But we would claim (he contrary: Sadean perversion emerges as the result of the Kantian compromise, of Kant's avoidance of the consequences of his breakthrough. Sade is the symptom of Kant; while it is true that Kant retreated from drawing all the consequences of his ethical revolution, the space for the figure of Sade is opened up by this Kantian compromise, by his unwillingness to push through to the end, to retain full fidelity to his philosophical breakthrough. Far from being simply and directly "the truth of Kant," Sade is the symptom of Kant's betrayal of the truth of his own discovery— the obscene Sadean puisseur is a stigma bearing witness to Kant's ethical compromise; the apparent "radically" of this figure (the willingness of the Sadean hero to go to the end in his Wilhto-Enjoy) is a mask of its exact opposite. In other words, the true horror is not a Sadean orgy, but the real core of the Kantean ethic itself—if we can be forgiven para¬phrasing Brecht yet again, what is the miserable Evil of a Sadean group orgy in comparison with the "diabolical Evil" that pertains to a pure ethical act? And, mutatis mutandis, the same applies to the relationship between the Chinese Cultural Revolution and today's explosion of capitalist development as its "truth": this explosion is also a sign that Mao retreated from drawing all the consequences of the Cultural Revolution, that is, the space for the capitalist explosion was opened up by this compromise, by Mao's unwillingness to push through to the end, to retain full fidelity to the idea of the Cultural Revolution. And the lesson is, in both cases, that of Kant as well that of Mao, the same, namely that we take from Beckett's Worstwarc) Ho: "Try again. Fail again. Fail better,"76

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#### Identity is constructed by the ego—we must see through the human self to discover the fictitious nature of existence

Loy, 3

(David Robert Loy is a professor, writer, and Zen teacher in the Sanbo Kyodan tradition of Japanese Zen Buddhism. “The Great Awakening” pg. 10-11) Henge

The earliest ethnographers in the South Paciﬁc—many of them Christian missionaries—encountered non-Western cultures they were unable to understand. This forced them to become more aware of the conceptual categories that they themselves had been taking for granted. The contrast had radical implications. They and their successors could not help but become more self-conscious about the constructed nature of their own cultures—and therefore about the constructed nature of their own selves. Without quite understanding what they were doing, they became engaged in a collective project “amounting to the invention of a new subjectivity, the basis of which appears to be an impulse to experience a state of radical instability of value—or even the instability of selfhood itself.”2 Edmund Leach began his inﬂuential Rethinking Anthropology by emphasizing the necessity for the cultural anthropologist to undergo “an extremely personal traumatic kind of experience” in order to escape the prejudices of his or her own culture and be able to enter into another.3 Roy Wagner’s version of this reproduces what countless Buddhist teachers have said about realizing the Buddhist teachings: “The anthropologist cannot simply ‘learn’ the new culture, but must rather ‘take it on’ so as to experience a transformation of ~~his~~ (their) own world.”4 What does this ability to take on another world tell us about our own? The cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker focused on this issue, but his writings have not received the attention they deserve, perhaps because his insights make us too uncomfortable: The world of human aspiration is largely ﬁctitious, and if we do not understand this we understand nothing about ~~man~~ (humankind). It is a largely symbolic creation by an ego-controlled animal that permits action in a psychological world, a symbolic-behavioral world removed from the boundaries of the present moment, from the immediate stimuli which enslave all lower organisms. ~~Man’s~~ (humankind’s) freedom is a fabricated freedom, and ~~he~~ (they) pays a price for it. ~~He~~ (They) must at all times defend the utter fragility of ~~his~~ (their) delicately constituted fiction, deny its artificiality. That’s why we can speak of “joint theatrical staging,” “ritual formulas for social ceremonial,” and “enhancing of cultural meaning,” with utmost seriousness.... The most astonishing thing of all, about ~~man’s~~ (human’s) ﬁctions, is not that they have from prehistoric times hung like a ﬂimsy canopy over ~~his~~ (their) social world, but that ~~he~~ (they) should have come to discover them at all. It is one of the most remarkable achievements of thought, of self-scrutiny, that the most anxiety-prone animal of all could come to see through ~~himself~~ (itself) and discover the ﬁctional nature of ~~his~~ (it’s) action world. Future historians will probably record it as one of the great, liberating breakthroughs of all time, and it happened in ours.5

#### **This anxious egoism makes violence inevitable**

Ikeda 07 (Daisaku Ikeda President, Soka Gakkai International January 26, 2007 “Restoring the Human Connection: The First Step to Global Peace” http://www.sgi-usa.org/newsandevents/docs/peace2007.pdf) Dabo

The challenge of preventing any further proliferation of nuclear weapons is just such a trial in the quest for world peace, one that cannot be achieved if we are defeated by a sense of helplessness. The crucial element is to ensure that any struggle against evil is rooted firmly in a consciousness of the unity of the human family, something only gained through the mastery of our own inner contradictions. It is this kind of reconfiguration of our thinking that will make possible a skilled and restrained approach to the options of dialogue and pressure. The stronger our sense of connection as members of the human family, the more effectively we can reduce to an absolute minimum any application of the hard power of pressure, while making the greatest possible use of the soft power of dialogue. Tragically, the weighting in the case of Iraq has been exactly the reverse. The need for such a shift has been confirmed by many of the concerned thinkers I have met. Norman Cousins (1915–90), the writer known as the “conscience of America” with whom I published a dialogue, stated with dismay in his work Human Options: “The great failure of education—not just in the United States but throughout most of the world—is that it has made people tribe-conscious rather than species-conscious.” Similarly, when I met with Mohamed ElBaradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in November of last year, he declared powerfully: “… we continue to emphasize our differences instead of what we have in common. We continue to talk about ‘us’ versus ‘them.’ Only when we can start to talk about ‘us’ as including all of humanity will we truly be at peace….” In our correspondence, Joseph Rotblat posed the question, “Can we master the necessary arts of global security and loyalty to the human race?”9 Three months after writing these words to me, Dr. Rotblat passed away. I believe his choice to leave this most crucial matter in the form of an open question was an expression of his optimism and his faith in humanity. When our thinking is reconfigured around loyalty to the human race—our sense of human solidarity—even the most implacable difficulties will not cause us to lapse into despair or condone the panicked use of force. It will be possible to escape the snares of such shortsighted thinking. We will be empowered to engage in the kind of persistent exertion that Max Weber viewed as the ideal of political action, and the door will be open to the formation of consensus and persuasion through dialogue. The function of anger When my mentor Josei Toda used the words “a devil incarnate, a fiend, a monster,” he was referring to a destructiveness inherent in human life. It is a function of this destructiveness to shred our sense of human solidarity, sowing the seeds of mistrust and suspicion, conflict and hatred. Those who would use nuclear weapons capable of instantaneously killing tens of millions of people exhibit the most desperate symptoms of this pathology. They have lost all sense of the dignity of life, having fallen prey to their own inner demons. Buddhism classifies the underlying destructive impulses that give rise to such behavior as “the three poisons” (Jpn: san-doku) of greed, anger and ignorance. “The world of anger” can be thought of as the state of life of those in whom these forces have been directed outward toward others. Buddhism analyzes the inner state of human life in terms of the following ten categories, or “worlds”: Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity, Rapture, Learning, Realization, Bodhisattva and Buddhahood. Together these worlds constitute an interpenetrating functional whole, referred to as the inherent ten worlds. It is the wisdom and compassion of the world of Buddhahood that bring out the most positive aspect of each of the other worlds. In the Buddhist scriptures we find the statement “anger can function for both good and evil,”10 indicating that just and righteous anger, the kind essential for countering evil, is the form of the world of anger that creates positive value. The anger that we must be on guard against is that which is undirected and unrestrained relative to the other nine worlds. In this case, anger is a rogue and renegade force, disrupting and destroying all in its path. In this form, the world of anger is a condition of “always seeking to surpass, unable to countenance inferiority, disparaging others and overvaluing oneself.” When in the world of anger, we are always engaged in invidious comparisons with others, always seeking to excel over them. The resulting distortions prevent us from perceiving the world accurately; we fall easily into conflict, locking horns with others at the slightest provocation. Under the sway of such anger, people can commit unimaginable acts of violence and bloodshed. Another Buddhist text portrays one in the world of anger as “84,000 yojanas tall, the waters of the four oceans coming only up to his knees.”12 A yojana was a measure of distance used in ancient India; there are various explanations as to what the specific distance may be, but “84,000 yojanas” represents an immeasurable enormity. This metaphor indicates how the self-perception of people in the life-state of anger expands and swells until the ocean deeps would only lap their knees. The inner distortions twisting the heart of someone in this state prevent them from seeing things in their true aspect or making correct judgments. Everything appears as a means or a tool to the fulfillment of egotistical desires and impulses. In inverse proportion to the scale of this inflated arrogance, the existence of others—people, cultures, nature—appears infinitely small and insignificant. It becomes a matter of no concern to harm or even kill others trivialized in this way. It is this state of mind that would countenance the use of nuclear weapons; it can equally be seen in the psychology of those who would advocate the use of such hideously cruel weapons as napalm, or, more recently, depleted uranium and cluster bombs. People in such a state of life are blinded, not only to the horrific suffering their actions wreak but also to the value of human life itself. For the sake of human dignity, we must never succumb to the numbing dehumanization of the rampant world of anger. When the atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima, not only military personnel but also many scientists were thrilled by the “success” of this new weapon. However, the consciences of genuinely great scientists were filled with anguish. Einstein greeted this news with an agonized cry of woe, while Rotblat told me he was completely overcome with hopelessness. Their feelings were no doubt intensely resonant with the sentiments that motivated Josei Toda to denounce nuclear weapons. When Toda spoke of “declawing” the demonic nature of nuclear weapons, he had in mind the struggle to prevent the inner forces of anger from disrupting the ten worlds and going on an unrestrained rampage. He was calling for the steady and painstaking work of correctly repositioning and reconfiguring the function of anger in an inner world where wisdom and harmony prevail. This is the true meaning of “declawing.” For SGI members in particular it is thus vital we remember that not only our specific activities for peace and culture but the movement for “human revolution” based on the daily endeavor to transform our lives from within is a consistent and essential aspect of the historic challenge of nuclear disarmament and abolition. Unless we focus on this inner, personal dimension, we will find ourselves overwhelmed by the structural momentum of a technological civilization, which in a certain sense makes inevitable the birth of such demonic progeny as nuclear weapons.

#### Vote negative to shed the ego

#### This is a path of self-transformation that recognizes the interpermeation of all beings—we must assimilate the postmodern insight of the fictive self

Loy, 3

(David Robert Loy is a professor, writer, and Zen teacher in the Sanbo Kyodan tradition of Japanese Zen Buddhism. “The Great Awakening” pg. 4-6) Henge

In contrast, the early Buddhist teachings focus almost exclusively on the path of self-transformation, with a minimum of dogma or metaphysics—in other words, with a rather ﬂimsy canopy, at best, to shelter beneath. These original teachings not only deny a creator God and the salviﬁc value of rituals such as sacriﬁces, they also emphasize the constructed nature of both the self and the world. For Buddhism there are no self-existing things, since everything, including you and me, ~~interpenetrates~~ (interpermeates) everything else, arising and passing away according to causes and conditions. This interconnectedness—not just an intellectual insight but an experience—was an essential aspect of the Buddha’s awakening, and it is congruent with the essential postmodern realization. Even more radical then than now, the original Buddhist teachings, not surprisingly, eventually became elaborated into another sacred canopy, focused on a transcendental liberation from this world. What is more surprising is that early Buddhism should have had such deconstructive insights and that they have been preserved in recognizable form for two and a half millennia. This perspective on the Buddha’s awakening deserves our attention because no other religious tradition foregrounds so clearly this crucial insight into our constructedness. There are some parallels with the philosophical realization in ancient Greece that society is a construct that can and should be reconstructed (e.g., Plato’s Republic). The history of the West since then has incorporated and developed the Greek concern for social transformation. Yet none of the important Greek philosophers proposed what Shakyamuni Buddha taught— the deconstruction and reconstruction of the ﬁctive sense of self. These resonances between postmodern theory and Buddhist teachings provide the basis for a comparison that is more than merely interesting. Today the postmodern realization about the constructed nature of our canopies, sacred and otherwise, contributes to global crises that we are far from resolving. Indeed, Nietzsche’s prescient prediction of a coming age of nihilism suggests that the world’s destabilization may be far from over. Some people and perhaps a few institutions are beginning to assimilate the postmodern insight, but although we are becoming more aware of its implications and dangers, we do not yet have a good grasp of the possibilities it opens up. For the West, the postmodern perspective grows out of, and depends upon, a secular modernity that privileges empirical rationalism over religious superstition. In this regard, too, our attitude derives from the Greeks, whose philosophy originated as a critique of the Olympian deities and the rites associated with them. The Indian situation was quite different. According to one’s sympathies, one can see that Indian (including Buddhist) philosophy never quite escaped the orbit of religious concerns or, more sympathetically, that Indian thought never felt the Western need to differentiate between them.

# Case

#### . decades of counter cultural movements proves your aff fails to create change – institutional engagement is the only way to alter social structure.

Heath & Potter 4 (Joseph Heath philosophy professor at the University of Toronto and Andrew Potter visiting fellow at the Centre de Recherche en Éthique at the Université de Montréal 2004 Nation of rebels: why counterculture became consumer culture Pg 5-60)

In the '60s, the baby boomers declared their implacable opposition to "the system." They renounced materialism and greed, rejected the discipline and uniformity of the McCarthy era, and set out to build a new world based on individual freedom. Wnat ever happened to this project? Forty years later, "the system" does not appear to have changed very much. If anything, consumer capitalism has emerged from decades of countercultural rebellion much stronger than it was before. If Debord thought that the world was saturated with advertising and media in the early '60s, what would he have made of the 21st century? In this book, we argue that decades of countercultural rebellion have failed to change anything because the theory of society on which the countercultural idea rests is false. We do not live in the Matrix, nor do we live in the spectacle. The world that we live in is in fact much more prosaic. It consists of billions of human beings, each pursuing some more or less plausible conception of the good, trying to cooperate with one another, and doing so with varying degrees of success. There is no single, overarching system that integrates it all. The culture cannot be jammed because there is no such thing as "the culture" or "the system." There is only a hodgepodge of social institutions, most tentatively thrown together, which distribute the benefits and burdens of social cooperation in ways that sometimes we recognize to be just, but that are usually manifestly inequitable. In a world of this type, countercultural rebellion is not just unhelpful, it is positively counterproductive. Not only does it distract energy and effort away from the sort of initiatives that lead to concrete improvements in people's lives, but it encourages wholesale contempt for such incremental changes. According to the countercultural theory, "the system" achieves order only through the repression of the individual. Pleasure is inherently anarchic, unruly, wild. To keep the workers under control, the system must instill manufactured needs and mass-produced desires, which can in turn be satisfied within the framework of the technocratic order. Order is achieved, but at the expense of promoting widespread unhappiness, alienation and neurosis. The solution must therefore lie in reclaiming our capacity for spontaneous pleasure—through polymorphous perversity, or performance art, or modern primitivism, or mind-expanding drugs, or Whatever else turns your crank. In the countercultural analysis, simply having fun comes to be seen as the ultimate subversive act. Hedonism is transformed into a revolutionary doctrine. Is it any wonder then that this sort of countercultural rebellion has reinvigorated consumer capitalism? It's time for a reality check. Having fun is not subversive, and it doesn't undermine any system. In fact, widespread hedonism makes it more difficult to organize social movements, and much more difficult to persuade anyone to make a sacrifice in the name of social justice. In our view, what the progressive left needs to do is disentangle the concern over questions of social justice from the countercultural critique—and to jettison the latter, while continuing to pursue the former. From the standpoint of social justice, the big gains that have been achieved in our society over the past half-century have all come from measured reform within the system. The civil rights movement and the feminist movement have both achieved tangible gains in the welfare of disadvantaged groups, while the social safety net provided by the welfare state has vastly improved the condition of all citizens. But these gains have not been achieved by "unplugging" people from the web of illusions that governs their lives. They have been achieved through the laborious process of democratic political action—through people making arguments, conducting studies, assembling coalitions and legislating change. We would like to see more of this. Less fun perhaps, but potentially much more useful.

#### a.Music isn’t revolutionary

Heath & Potter 4 (Joseph Heath philosophy professor at the University of Toronto and Andrew Potter visiting fellow at the Centre de Recherche en Éthique at the Université de Montréal 2004 Nation of rebels: why counterculture became consumer culture Pg 5-6)

By the beginning of the '80s, rock and roll had been transformed into a bloated, pale imitation of its former self. It had become arena rock. Rolling Stone magazine had become a complacent cor¬porate sales rag, dedicated to flogging crappy albums. Given his attitude, one can only imagine Cobain's embarrassment when he was asked to appear on the cover of Rolling Stone. His compromise: to do the shoot in a T-shirt that read "Corporate rock magazines still suck." Cobain persuaded himself that, in so doing, he was not selling out, he was simply going undercover: "We can pose as the enemy to infiltrate the mechanics of the system to start its rot from the inside. Sabotage the empire by pretending to play their game, compromise just enough to call their bluff. And the hairy, sweaty, macho, sexist dickheads will soon drown in a pool of razor-blades and semen, stemmed from the uprising of their children, the armed and deprogrammed crusade, littering the floors of Wall Street with revolutionary debris." One can see here quite clearly that, while Cobain and the rest of us punks may have rejected most of the ideas that came out of the hippie counterculture, there is one element of the movement that we swallowed hook, line and sinker. This was the idea of counter¬culture itself. In other words, we saw ourselves as doing exactly the same thing that the hippies saw themselves doing. The difference, we assumed, is that, unlike them, we would never sell out. We would do it right. Some myths die hard. One can see the same cycle repeating itself in hip-hop. The countercultural idea here takes the form of a romantic view of ghetto life and gang culture. Successful rappers must fight hard to retain their street cred, to "keep it real." They'll pack guns, do time, even get shot up, just to prove that they're not just "studio gangstas." So instead of just dead punks and hippies, we now also have a steadily growing pantheon of dead rappers. People talk about the "assassination" of Tupac Shakur, as though he actually posed a threat to the system. Eminem claims his arrest for possession of a concealed weapon was "all political," designed to get him off the streets. It's the same thing all over again. This wouldn't be so important if it were confined to the world of music. Unfortunately, the idea of counterculture has become so deeply embedded in our understanding of society that it influences every aspect of social and political life. Most importantly, it has become the conceptual template for all contemporary leftist politics. Counterculture has almost completely replaced socialism as the basis of radical political thought. So if counterculture is a myth, then it is one that has misled an enormous number of people, with-untold political consequences.

#### 3. You should be highly skeptical of any cooptation argument – countercultural movements invented this rhetorical strategy as a nonfalsifiable response to calls for institutional reform in order to insulate their politics from criticism.

Heath & Potter 4 (Joseph Heath philosophy professor at the University of Toronto and Andrew Potter visiting fellow at the Centre de Recherche en Éthique at the Université de Montréal 2004 Nation of rebels: why counterculture became consumer culture Pg 35-7)

The sneaking suspicion that the public might be genuinely satisfied by capitalism is reinforced by the observation that counter-cultural rebellion didn't seem to do anything. Unlike Pleasantville, where the transformation of society is instantaneous, radical and highly visible, in the real world "freeing the imagination" doesn't seem to galvanize the proletariat, much less cure injustice, eliminate poverty or stop war. Furthermore, the ideological system that sustains capitalism did not seem to be too troubled by acts of countercultural rebellion. The sort of conformist mass culture caricatured in Pleasantville is supposed to be very rigid—such that the slightest display of individuality represents a mortal threat. Nonconformity must be stamped out, we were told, or it would destabilize the entire system. So the first-generation hippies did everything they could violate the dress code of '50s society: men grew their hair Ion-wore beards, refused to wear suits and ties; women ad-miniskirts, threw away their bras, stopped wearing makeup^ so on. But it wasn't long before these items and clothing started showing up in advertisements and on mannequins in j windows. Soon department stores were selling peace medallions and love beads. In other words, "the system" seemed to regard hippies less as a threat to the established order than as a marked opportunity. Punk rock was received in exactly the same w Designer safety pins were on sale in fancy London shops Io before the Sex Pistols even broke up. How to explain this? The countercultural rebels believed that what they were doing was genuinely radical, that it represented profound challenge to society. Their rebellion was felt to be a especially potent threat to capitalism, which relied upon an army t of docile, pacified workers, willing to submit themselves to the soul-destroying discipline of the machine. And yet "the system" seemed to take this form of rebellion in stride. This lack of discernible impact presented a serious threat to the countercultural idea. After all, according to the countercultural rebels, the problem with traditional leftist politics was that it was superficial. It aimed at "merely" institutional change. Countercultural rebels, on the other hand, were supposedly attacking oppression at a deeper level. Yet despite the radicalism of their interventions, it was difficult to see any concrete effects. At this point the countercultural idea might have been in serious trouble had it not been for a singular stroke of genius: the theory of "co-optation." According to this idea, the "repression" imposed by the system turns out to be more subtle than, say, the Spanish Inquisition. At first, the system tries merely to assimilate resistance by appropriating its symbols, evacuating their "revolutionary" content and then selling them back to the masses as commodities. It thereby seeks to neutralize the counterculture by piling on substitute gratifications so high that people ignore the revolutionary new ideas. It is only when this initial attempt at cooptation that overt repression must be employed, and the violence inherent in the system is revealed. With this theory of co-optation in place, the counterculture itself becomes a “total ideology" a completely closed system of thought, immune to falsification, in which every apparent exception is simply grilled. For generations now, countercultural rebels have ' ping" out "subversive" music, "subversive" art, "subver-'ature. ''subversive" clothing, while universities have been packed full of professors disseminating "subversive" ideas to their students. So much subversion, and yet the system seems to tolerate it quite well. Does this suggest that the system is perhaps not so repressive after all? "On the contrary," says the countercultural rebel, 'It shows that the system is even more repressive than we thought - look at how skillfully it co opts all of this subversion!" Sikm1965, Herbert Marcuse coined a term to describe this ^ "ruliarsort of repression. He called it "repressive tolerance." It's ^§1 idea that makes about as much sense now as it did then. Stepping back for a moment, it should be obvious that there is something strange about this form of countercultural critique After all, the traditional objection to capitalism—certainly Marx"s primary objection—was that it exploited the working classes, creating poverty and suffering. In other words, the problem with capitalism was that it deprived workers of material goods. "The immiseration of the proletariat" was what Marx called it. In this context, it is somewhat odd to turn around and say that the workers have sold out and that the abundance of consumer goods is merely an opiate that pacifies them, preventing them from seeing where their true interests lie. It's like saying that when you give a child something to eat, it doesn't really feed him [sic], it merely "placates" him so that he forgets that he is hungry. It was precisely the failure of the capitalist system to provide the workers with goods that gave them the reason to overthrow the system in the first place. Thus the critique of consumerism comes perilously close to criticizing capitalism for satisfying the workers too much. They're so stuffed, they can't be bothered to go out and overthrow the system anymore. But this poses the question: why would they want to?

#### 4. Even if they win a risk of collective action, individual self interest means your alternative creates the prisoners dilemma where no one acts – at best, the 1960s commune movement proves you will just replicate mainstream structures in order to maintain support.

Heath & Potter 4 (Joseph Heath philosophy professor at the University of Toronto and Andrew Potter visiting fellow at the Centre de Recherche en Éthique at the Université de Montréal 2004 Nation of rebels: why counterculture became consumer culture)

What both sides in this debate fail to consider is that coercion may be necessary even in the absence of evil. Perfectly free and equal individuals often have an incentive to adopt coercively enforced rules of conduct to govern their interactions. So the essence of coercion in society is not always a sign of domination, of the need to control evil or of one group imposing its will upon another. Often everyone is better off when everyone is governed by a set of enforced rules. Indeed, when left to do as they please people will tend to generate their own rules and create a new social order, complete with its own system of punishment and reward. They do so because these types of systems are in their interest, both as individuals and as a group. This is the lesson that should have been learned from the commune experiments of the '60s. Nearly every one of these communes was founded with the goal of creating a harmonious living space based upon mutual sharing and cooperation. Naturally, it was assumed that with everyone committed to the project, there would be no reason for explicit rules and regulations. Everything could be organized informally; people would pitch in to do the necessary work and would take out no more than their fair shan Yet the reality proved to be much different. No matter how much goodwill went into creating these communes, a completely open system inevitably led to conflict. As a result, people who wanted to keep the group functioning smoothly had to start creating rules. And these rules, once created, had to be enforced. In other words, communal living arrangements tended either to fall apart or to start reproducing many of the features of mainstream society that they had been created in order to avoid. The central mistake they made was to assume that because a particular group of people have a collective interest in securing a certain outcome, each individual in that group will also have an individual interest in doing what is necessary to achieve that outcome. It is natural to assume that because we, as a community, need food and shelter, people will spontaneously do what is necessary to secure food and to keep the shelter in good repair. The problem with this assumption is that individual incentives are often not aligned in such a way as to promote the collective good. In particular, because everyone is a little bit lazy, there is a tendency to hang back a little bit before doing any work, in the hope that someone else will come along and do it. Everyone who has lived with roommates knows the pattern. Why do the dishes right away, when someone else may get fed up and do them first? Why replace the milk you drank, when someone might be going to the store? Why sweep the stairs, etc.? Of course, if everyone thinks this way, then the dishes will never get done, no milk will be bought and the stairs will never get swept. In fact, life among roommates often becomes something of a contest to see who will be the first to break down and clean up. The person with the highest tolerance for filth has the advantage and will usually be able to get away with doing the least work. Even then, the level of cleanliness in the house will usually be lower than anyone would like, including the most filth-tolerant. The problem is that, in the absence of rules, no one has an incentive to invest an optimal level of effort in the task. Situations of this type are known as "collective action problems"—cases where everyone would like to see a particular outcome but no one has the incentive to do what is necessary in order to bring it about. The most well-known example of such a situation is the now famous "prisoner's dilemma." The name refers to a story that is used to illustrate the situation: Imagine you and a friend rob a bank. The police know that you've done it, but they don't have enough evidence to convict you. They do, however, know about your little drug habit, and so they raid your apartment one day and find enough evidence to charge you and your friend with possession of narcotics. They wheel you both down to the station, put you in separate interrogation rooms. After a slight delay, a cop comes in and says, "You're looking at one year prison for the drug-possession charge. We are, however, reasonable men. If you are willing to testify against your accomplice for the bank robbery, we would be willing to let those charges drop. Think about it for a few minutes. I'll be back."

#### a. institutional rules prove its reverse casual.

Heath & Potter 4 (Joseph Heath philosophy professor at the University of Toronto and Andrew Potter visiting fellow at the Centre de Recherche en Éthique at the Université de Montréal 2004 Nation of rebels: why counterculture became consumer culture)

When we examine the rules of everyday social interaction more closely, we can see that a surprising number of them have as their purpose the elimination of collective action problems. Having to wait in line, for example, is a source of constant annoyance, whether it is at the bank, at the supermarket or on the on-ramp to the expressway. The average American spends over thirty minutes a day waiting in line for one thing or another. Economists constantly condemn this as an unproductive use of time and energy. Yet the primary function of queues is to speed up the process of moving everyone through. Each individual has an incentive to rush to the front of the line and cut in ahead of the others. But if everyone does so, then the resulting crush slows everyone down, so that the entire group gets through more slowly. Single file is faster than "single pile." This becomes tragically apparent when there is a fire in a crowded building and those who are trying to escape fail to form an orderly queue at the exits. As a result, many more die than would otherwise have been necessary. This is a form of prisoner's dilemma. Rushing the front of the line is like testifying against your partner—it improves your situation, but only by creating greater costs for others. When the others turn around and do the same thing to you, the result is worse for everyone. The institution of queuing is thus in everyone's interest (even though it may not feel that way some days). The rules that govern turn-taking in a conversation have much the same structure (everyone wants to get a word in, but no one can hear if everyone talks at once). It's also why you're not supposed to talk during movies, not supposed to enter an intersection unless you're sure you can clear it, not supposed to lie, not supposed to urinate in public places, not supposed to litter in parks not supposed to play loud music at night, not supposed to burn leaves in the backyard, and so on and so forth. The examples could be multiplied indefinitely. The important point about these rules is that they all represent instances in which everyone benefits from the constraints the rules impose. Thus, far from repressing our fundamental needs and desires, these rules are precisely what enable us to satisfy them.

#### 5. People my join but not for the reasons you think – consumer culture proves that people will do it just to be different.

Heath & Potter 4 (Joseph Heath philosophy professor at the University of Toronto and Andrew Potter visiting fellow at the Centre de Recherche en Éthique at the Université de Montréal 2004 Nation of rebels: why counterculture became consumer culture)

And the thought that wearing Burberry might telegraph the message "I like reality TV and boob jobs," instead of "I prefer classic elegance," is enough to scare most members of the social elite off of the brand. Another way of formulating the problem is to say that Burben became too mainstream and thus ceased to serve as a source of distinction. And it is here that we can see the obvious point of contrast. between the critique of mass society and the problem of consumerism. The traditional critique of mass society suggests that most people are members of the herd, cogs in the machine, victims of mindless conformity They lead vacuous, hollowed-out lives ruled by shallow, materialistic values. They are manipulated to serve the functional requirements of the system, and so will never experience true creativity, freedom or even complete sexuih fulfillment. That having been said, who could possibly want to be member of mass society? If anything, people should be desperate to prove that they are not victims of conformity, that they are not merely cogs in the machine. And of course, as the critique of mass society became increasingly widespread, this is precisely what people tried to do. Thus countercultural rebellion—rejecting the norms of "mainstream" society—came to serve as a source of considerable distinction. In a society that prizes individualism and despises conformity, being "a rebel" becomes the new aspirational category "Dare to be different," we are constantly told. In the '60s, becorning a beat or a hippie was a way of showing that you were not one of the squares or the suits. In the '80s, dressing like a punk or a goth was a way showing mat you were not one of the preppies or the yuppies. It was a way of visibly demonstrating one's rejection of mainstream society, but it was also a tacit affirmation of one's own superiority. It was a way of telegraphing the message ' that "I, unlike you, have not been fooled by the system. I am not a ; 'mindless cog."

#### a. This creates a race to the bottom – counter culture is a status symbol that will cause more radicalism – this effort to remain exclusive will make future politics increasingly irrelevant while feeding the system.

Heath & Potter 4 (Joseph Heath philosophy professor at the University of Toronto and Andrew Potter visiting fellow at the Centre de Recherche en Éthique at the Université de Montréal 2004 Nation of rebels: why counterculture became consumer culture)

The problem, of course, is that not everyone can be a rebel, for the same reason that not everyone can have class and not everyone can have good taste. If everyone joins the counterculture, then the counterculture simply becomes the culture. Then the rebel has to invent a new counterculture, in order to reestablish distinction. -Countercultural style begins as a very exclusive thing. It starts out ."underground." Particular symbols—a love bead, a safety pin, a brand of shoes or cut of jeans, a Maori tattoo, a body piercing, an aftermarket muffler—will serve as points of communication among those who are "in the know." Yet as time passes, the circle of those who are "in the know" expands, and the symbol becomes increasingly common. This naturally erodes the distinction that these markers confer—in the same way that Nascimento cheapened the Burberry brand. "The club" becomes less and less elite. As a result, the rebel has to move on to something new. Thus the counterculture must constantly reinvent itself. This is why rebels adopt and discard styles as quickly as fashionistas move through brands. In this way, countercultural rebellion has become one of the Major forces driving competitive consumption. As Thomas Frank Writes, With the "alternative" facelift, "rebellion" continues to perform its traditional function of justifying the economy's ever accelerating -: cycles of obsolescence with admirable efficiency. Since our willingness to load up our closets with purchases depends upon an eternal shifting of the products paraded before us, upon our being endlessly convinced that the new stuff is better than the old, we must be persuaded over and over again that the "alternatives" are more valuable than the existing or the previous. Ever since the a; 1960s, hip has been the native tongue of advertising, "antiestablishment" the vocabulary by which we are taught to cast off our ?) old possessions and buy whatever they have decided to offer this year. And over the years the rebel has naturally become the central image of this culture of consumption, symbolizing endless, directionless change, and eternal restlessness with "the establishment"—or, more correctly, with the stuff "the establishment" convinced him to buy last year.

#### b. They will say that this drive for specialization means their movement is being coopted – they are wrong.

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Of course, in order to preserve the ideology that sustains this consumption, it is essential that the mass-marketing of rebellion be described as "co-optation." In this way the perpetual cycles obsolescence can be blamed upon the system rather than seen as consequence of competition for a positional good. The myth of co-optation thus serves to conceal the fact the "alternative" is, and always has been, good business. Casual inspection of any Urban Outfitters store should be enough to confirm the impression. Furthermore, because the critique of mass society treats the entire culture as a system of repression and conformitv the number of rebel styles is potentially infinite. Find anyone who is breaking any kind of rule and you have marketing potential.

#### 6. Their methodology is misguided – reliance on culture as a politically subversive tool outside the system plays into fetishization of diversity within the corporate university – your aff just becomes another tool for recruitment.

Juffer 1 (Jane Juffer former director of the Latino/a Studies Initiative @ Penn State 2001 “The Limits of Culture Latino Studies, Diversity Management and the Corporate University” Nepantla: Views from South 2.2 [quals continued: Associate Professor of English @ Cornell)

A new set of possibilities—for some, an ominous set—confronts Latino cultural studies in the age of globalization, migration, and the corporatization of the university. Growing minority enrollments, led by Latinas/os,1 have prompted many colleges and universities to expand services and courses related to multiculturalism; administrators are reportedly worried they won’t be ready for the increasingly diverse student populations predicted for coming years. There are new commitments to expand access to higher education for Latinas/ os, often in conjunction with privxate monies. In June 2000, for example, President Bill Clinton announced the formation of the 2010 Alliance, a partnership of corporate, foundation, and community leaders that will seek to double the number of Latino students who graduate from college over the next ten years. In describing the program, Clinton was careful to not lay the blame for low retention rates on Latino students but rather on structural questions of access (Kiviat 2000, A39). In September 1999, Bill and Melinda Gates pledged to spend $1 billion over twenty years to send twenty thousand low-income minority students to college; the Hispanic Scholarship Fund will help administer the program. Unfortunately, these commitments come with an agenda that seems antithetical to the activist roots of Latino studies: the articulation At the summer 2000 meeting of the National Governors Association held at Pennsylvania State University, Alan Greenspan (2000), chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, credited the “free flow” of information between universities, business, and government for U.S. economic growth: If we are to remain pre-eminent in transforming knowledge into economic value, the U.S. system of higher education must remain the world’s leader in generating scientific and technological breakthroughs and in preparing workers to meet the evolving demands for skilled labor. . . . Ina global environment in which prospects for economic growth now depend importantly on a country’s capacity to develop and apply new technologies, our universities are envied around the world. The payoffs—in terms of the flow of expertise, new products and startup companies, for example—have been impressive. Perhaps the most frequently cited measures of our success have been the emergence of significant centers of commercial innovation and entrepreneurship where creative ideas flow freely between local academic scholars and those in industry. In the 11 July 2000 edition of the Penn StateNewswire, the university used the conference, held at its Research Park, to publicize its own status as the “number 2 university in the country in industry-sponsored research.” As Bill Readings argued in his 1996 The University in Ruins, the decline of the nation-state and the ascendancy of the transnational corporation have transformed the university’s mission from one of citizen production for the nation-state to worker production for the global economy. Indeed, we have reached the rather unusual historical moment when big business joins forces with universities to defend affirmative action in the interest of developing a diverse and well-trained workforce. Corporate support figured significantly in the University of Michigan’s recent court victory in a battle over its affirmative action admissions policies; a federal judge ruled in favor of the policies and cited, among other things, the evidence put forth by the university and corporations about the benefits of diversity programs. Twenty Fortune 500 companies signed a brief filed on the university’s behalf, and General Motors submitted a separate supporting brief. The brief by the twenty companies argues that “higher education is so vital to the companies’ efforts ‘to hire and maintain a diverse work force,’and to employ people ‘who have been educated in a diverse environment,’that the government has a compelling interest in allowing public colleges to continue using affirmative action in admissions” (Schmidt 2000c, A22). Multiculturalism, within which Latino studies now often finds its financial if not its philosophical legitimation, has become diversity management for a newly compliant university population.As the University of Indiana’s Department of Human Resources has said on its Website, “diversity” is “a customer service issue.” Critics including Readings (1996), Slavoj Žižek (1997), Masao Miyoshi (2000), Cary Nelson and Stephen Watt (1999),Wahneem aLubiano (1996),HenryGiroux (1999),andStanley Aronowitz (2000), among others, have documented the extent to which corporate management tactics and corporate contracts have come to dominate many universities; some of these critics have focused on the co-optation of multiculturalism within this corporate shift. Žižek (1997, 46), in one of the most virulent condemnations, proclaims that “the problematic of multiculturalism—the hybrid coexistence of diverse cultural life-worlds—which imposes itself today is the form of appearance of its opposite, of the massive presence of capitalism as universal world system.” In fact, it has perhaps become more common to see critiques of multiculturalism from the Left than from the Right (acknowledging the reductiveness but ongoing purchase of those categories).3

#### a. You should evaluate their resistance claims with a high degree of skepticism – asserting that you exist outside of the system you critique makes their advocacy blind to the forces that dictate it’s use.

Juffer 1 (Jane Juffer former director of the Latino/a Studies Initiative @ Penn State 2001 “The Limits of Culture Latino Studies, Diversity Management and the Corporate University” Nepantla: Views from South 2.2 [quals continued: Associate Professor of English @ Cornell)

It is tempting, in the face of the corporate shift, to simply retreat into the classroom and the scholarly journal where, it is easy to pretend, management does not exercise its influence. Yet it is this conception of culture as a space of opposition that is most effective when most “pure” that I wish to challenge. Many cultural critics have been reluctant to think through our necessary engagement with corporatization, choosing instead to posit culture as a site of freedom where one can imagine standing outside corporate influences, and hence suggesting that the critic speaks from a moral position outside market forces. For example, in a recent boundary 2 issue on the university, Masao Miyoshi (2000, 12) berates humanities scholars for their inadequate response to corporatization: “Although some minimal room is still left for serious inquiry and criticism in academia, such space is rapidly shrinking, and the ranks of independent eccentrics are fast thinning.” The question begged is why only “independent eccentrics” can engage in “serious criticism.” Although corporatization is a relatively new phenomenon, the practice of linking cultural criticism to resistance is not, and Miyoshi’s exhortation builds on a tradition of literary and cultural criticism that sees (noncommodified) culture as an alternative to power. Resistance through culture is an important practice in Latino cultural criticism; it performs a legitimating function within the academy even as it locates Latino culture (and hence the critique) seemingly outside co-opting forces. And it is here that I would like to intervene, in an attempt to define an effective political role for Latino cultural studies that is not predicated on clear boundaries of inside/outside the corporate university. Let us begin with the premise that nothing inherent to Latino culture guarantees its resistant status. Although cultural criticism, especially literary criticism, has importantly legitimated the study of Latino culture, we are at a moment in history when we don’t need more literary criticism claiming resistance through texts but rather more work that engages explicitly with institutional, policy, and other material issues—work that shows the routes culture travels in the global economy. In constituting its object of study as a body of cultural texts (most often literary texts) with both distinctive aesthetic and representational characteristics, Latino criticism has too often ignored culture’s material imbrication in routes of distribution and circulation as well as its very mundane place within the routines of everyday life, its very inability to comment on social conditions because it exists on the same plane (i.e., in the same marketplace) as those conditions. The corporate university is clearly one site shaping the uses of culture, and it does not enable cultural studies to try to position culture outside the corporation. As Nelson and Watt (1999, 94) argue, “Corporatization is here to stay. It cannot be stopped, but it can be shaped and, where appropriate, resisted.”6

#### b. Focusing our efforts on the material conditions that alter culture is critical to subverting power structures.

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3. Recognize that the study of culture may not focus on culture at all but rather that it may analyze the spaces in which culture is produced, circulated, and consumed; analysis must not deal exclusively with the text—although the text should not be ignored—but should also examine conditions of production, distribution, and reception. We don’t, for example, need another reading of Sandra Cisneros’s House on Mango Street (there are already about eighty listed in the MLA bibliography). Rather, we should examine Cisneros’s publishing history. What are the effects on distribution of the shift from the independent Latino press Arte Público, which published House in 1984, to Random House, which began publishing Cisneros’s work in 1991 (her contract with Random House is hailed as the first contract with a major house for a Chicana writer)? What are the politics of such mainstreaming of multiculturalism? This analysis should be extended to the politics of distribution at sites such as Barnes and Noble and Borders, which now, in some locations, have “Mexican-American” or “Hispanic” sections. Through these routes, we begin to answer questions of access and literacy, showing, for example, how Chicano fiction is labeled and categorized, and how that shapes access and consumption. In this fashion, we intersect with other public sites and practices rather than just commenting on them, locating ourselves within economic practices—advertising, marketing, distribution, publishing/production, retail—rather than outside. Consequently, we also begin asking questions about mobility and access: Who is buying and reading Chicano fiction, and under what conditions? Again, this approach mitigates against the belief that readings of Latino texts produce a mastery of the Other (even if the professor works against this reading); it shows, rather, that the reading of the text cannot be divorced from material questions of access and literacy, which prompt more questions about who is in the university community and who has been excluded. Pursuing these routes also lays the groundwork for a kind of interdisciplinarity that encompasses not only the humanities but also the social sciences; it will raise more job-related issues for students in marketing, health care, advertising, publishing, and even law enforcement, demonstrating the relevance of cultural studies as well as the particular questions it raises that other disciplines might not. This approach simultaneously breaks down the disciplinary structures that maintain the corporate university and acknowledges their ongoing power. As Readings (1996, 177) puts it, “The loosening of disciplinary structures has to be made the opportunity for the installation of disciplinarity as a permanent question.” In the practices of diversity, there are no pure spaces of radical political practices; all spaces “within” the university are defined by the global economic imperative, but that does not translate into “all spaces are equally in the service of the corporation.” Given this, Latino cultural studies must try to define and develop spaces where questions of community are constantly raised but never definitively answered, and where the role of culture in community and subject formation cannot be assumed to be central.