

A WORLD WITHOUT CAPITALISM?

Alternative Discourses, Spaces, and Imaginaries



CHRISTIAN W. CHUN



A WORLD WITHOUT CAPITALISM?

In this book, Christian W. Chun examines the ways in which identities, discourses, and topographies of both capitalist and anti-capitalist imaginaries and realities are embodied in the everyday practices of people. *A World without Capitalism?* is a sociolinguistic ethnography that explores the heretofore limited research in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics on the discursive and materialized representations and enactments of capitalism.

Engaging across disciplinary fields, including applied linguistics, ethnography, political economy, philosophy, and cultural studies, Chun investigates in ethnographic detail how capitalism does and does not pervade people's everyday experiences. This book aims to further contribute to a much-needed understanding of how discourses operate in the co-constructions of capitalist and anti-capitalist imaginaries and instantiated realities and practices as narrated, lived, and embodied by people and material artifacts.

This book is vital reading for students and researchers working in the fields of applied linguistics, discourse analysis, and cultural studies, as well as those interested in understanding capitalism and questioning how to live beyond it.

Christian W. Chun is Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Massachusetts Boston. He is the author of *Power and Meaning Making in an EAP Classroom: Engaging with the Everyday* (2015) and *The Discourses of Capitalism: Everyday Economists and the Production of Common Sense* (2017).



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

A WORLD WITHOUT CAPITALISM?

Alternative Discourses, Spaces, and
Imaginarities

Christian W. Chun



ROUTLEDGE

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

LONDON AND NEW YORK



An electronic version of this book is freely available, thanks to the support of libraries working with Knowledge Unlatched (KU). KU is a collaborative initiative designed to make high quality books Open Access for the public good. The Open Access ISBN for this book is 9781003241041. More information about the initiative and links to the Open Access version can be found at www.knowledgeunlatched.org.

First published 2022
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2022 Christian W. Chun

The right of Christian W. Chun to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

The Open Access version of this book, available at www.taylorfrancis.com, has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 license.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record has been requested for this book

ISBN: 978-1-138-60534-3 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-138-60536-7 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-24104-1 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003241041

Typeset in Bembo
by Taylor & Francis Books

CONTENTS

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>vii</i>
1 A world without capitalism?	1
2 The spectral realities of capitalism	23
3 What's in a name: working or 'middle' class?	46
4 The crucial role of race in American capitalism	66
5 "Working for the clampdown"	89
6 Workplaces, the city, and the world	109
7 The socio-spatialities of capital: urban landscapes and alternative imaginaries	131
8 What is to be done?	161
<i>References</i>	<i>169</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>185</i>

FIGURES

4.1	Sign at a Defund the Police rally, June 2020, Boston City Hall	87
7.1	The Lucas, South End, Boston	134
7.2	Behind The Lucas, South End, Boston	135
7.3	“Coal Office” 1, Kings Cross, London	139
7.4	“Coal Office” 2, Kings Cross, London	139
7.5	Graffiti 1, Camden Town, London	141
7.6	Graffiti 2, Camden Town, London	142
7.7	Graffiti 3, Kentish Town, London	142
7.8	345 Harrison, Shawmut neighborhood, Boston	145
7.9	“Meatland,” Jamaica Plain neighborhood, Boston	146
7.10	Condominium, South End neighborhood, Boston	147
7.11	“The Social Type,” Silver Lake neighborhood, Los Angeles	149
7.12	Traditional stores in Los Angeles	150
7.13	Echo Park Lake, Los Angeles	152
7.14	Sign near City Hall, Los Angeles	152
7.15	Graffiti on statue of John Endecott	154
7.16	Terminal 2, Logan International Airport, Boston	155
7.17	Mural 1, Pershing Square, downtown Los Angeles	157
7.18	Mural 2, Pershing Square, downtown Los Angeles	158
7.19	Graffiti, Orange Line, Boston	159
7.20	Graffiti, Heathrow Express, London	159

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my publisher, Routledge, for inviting me to write this follow-up book to *The Discourses of Capitalism*. I also thank the participant interviewees that are featured in this book, and the graduate assistants in the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Massachusetts Boston, who helped transcribe these interviews. In addition, I thank John Wiley and Sons for their permission to use my 2019 article that appeared in the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 23(4), entitled “Language, discourse, and class: What’s next for sociolinguistics?,” which has been amended and expanded in Chapter 3. I also thank *Diggit Magazine* for allowing me to use the published columns of mine throughout this book.

Especially in this past year and a half of the pandemic, there have been many people who gave me the love and support I needed to not only carry on with my life, but also encouraged me to finish this book; in particular, my sister Lorraine, my niece Claire, my nephew Kevin, and several dear friends and colleagues around the world who have always supported me and my work, including the late Jan Blommaert.

I dedicate this book to my late mother, Betty L. Chun, who taught me how to read and write before I started kindergarten, and encouraged my learning and love of both. Thank you, Mom.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

1

A WORLD WITHOUT CAPITALISM?

Capitalism *is* the crisis

In 2018, I posted the following quote by Arundhati Roy (2003) on my social media page: “Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing” (p. 8). A good friend of mine replied to the post, “Well then, she better hurry the fuck up!” Can we imagine a world without the socio-economic and politically enabled system known as capitalism? A society that is no longer co-created, permeated, and indeed, *invaded* by the social, cultural, political, ideological, and discursive enabling domains that work in tandem to co-construct, support, perpetuate, and justify a capitalist-run and dominated economy? Can our world even exist without capitalism? Inasmuch as capitalism “exists in part because it inhabits our minds and hearts: we breathe its culture everyday” (Adamovsky, 2011, p. 43), is it possible to free ourselves from it in our lifetime? Perhaps by framing these questions in positing there is only ‘one’ world, it may inadvertently enable abject resignation and frustration among those of us who yearn for a life beyond and free of capitalism with all its exploitations.

Why even bother asking these questions? Are they futile or even foolhardy? There are a number of reasons why, many of which will be elaborated throughout this book, but the most pressing one in my opinion – and not only my opinion, but that of the overwhelming majority in the scientific community worldwide – is that prior to the time of this writing, it has been estimated by scientists that we have less than 12 years to limit catastrophic climate change that will endanger many species including our own (Watts, 2018) with our extinction as a possible or even probable outcome. However, this estimation has now been recently revised by some to a mere 18 months as of June 2019 (McGrath, 2019). Our lives have become increasingly more endangered by the rapid and dire changes to our environment, dramatically evidenced in the recent wildfires around the world due

2 A world without capitalism?

to increasing global warming and ensuing droughts. Is it fair to blame capitalism – in its structural enactments (in part) by the global Fortune 500 corporations – for destroying the environmental ecosystem of our planet? Shouldn't we as individuals assume more personal responsibility in doing our part to save the Earth by not only recycling more, but also bringing our ceramic mugs to coffee or tea shops instead of using their plastic or Styrofoam disposable cups every day? How about we give up eating meat, especially red meat, and eat beans instead?

This discourse of the individual who should be solely responsible in saving the planet is drawn from the now forty-year-old and counting neoliberal framing of society's ills attributed to the fault and lack of doing on a person's part. In fact, it has been reported that just one hundred corporations including BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil, and Shell are responsible for 71% of global emissions (Riley, 2017). While we as consumers have played a role in this; for example, buying and driving fossil fuel-burning automobiles instead of supporting public tax-funded mass transportation (if it all exists in our communities, which is a common problem in the US context), or riding electric-powered scooters thinking we are 'hip' in not using gasoline (while forgetting or ignoring that its energy source is from coal), it begs a number of questions: is it in capitalists' interests to enact change to stop pollution or even attempt to limit climate change? Is it in their interests to support their (literally) representative governments in passing legislation to prevent environmental disaster? For those using the adjective "healthy" to describe the economy in 'good times,' who is it healthy for? Those 'fortunate' to have a job while getting paid minimum wages? And in the current discourses in social circulation on the COVID-19 viral pandemic, whose health takes precedence – the economy's or the planet's and our own health?

In addition to our lives being imperiled by the calamitous changes to our environment, as of mid-January 2021, the COVID-19 virus has killed over 2 million people worldwide since its known existence. As scientists have rushed to develop vaccines for this disease, it has been reported the drug industry in the US (known as "Big Pharma") is poised to reap immense profits from the pandemic. In an interview with Gerald Posner, the author of *Pharma: Greed, Lies, and the Poisoning of America*, he observed that "pharmaceutical companies view COVID-19 as a once-in-a-lifetime business opportunity" (Lerner, 2020). This haste to develop the vaccine to combat the virus as it rapidly spreads can be viewed in a frame other than corporate goodwill in saving humanity. Posner argued instead that this worldwide emergency "will potentially be a blockbuster for the (pharmaceutical) industry in terms of sales and profits ... the worse the pandemic gets, the higher their eventual profit" (Lerner, 2020). Here, the conveniences afforded by the discourse of the 'free market' in the US have enabled private drug companies to sell their products including the COVID-19 vaccine at prices they can alone determine, at often exorbitant rates for countries wealthy enough to pay for it in desperation. All this while their research to produce the vaccine is being taxpayer-funded by the government. In addition, as of late April 2021 with the skyrocketing rise of COVID cases in countries such as India, these vaccines and their formulas are not being made available to the poorer countries around the world. Clearly, it is

capitalism and its enablers that are not only the crisis, but also the deadly virus for the overwhelming majority of us – having to sell our labor to survive on a daily basis.

Another reason to ask if a world can exist without capitalism in our lifetime is to pose this question to our family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and strangers on the street: Is this the best we can do? The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) reported in August 2019 that in the largest firms in the US from 1978 to 2018, “CEO compensation grew by 1,007.5% (940.3% under the options-realized measure), far outstripping S&P stock market growth (706.7%) and the wage growth of very high earners (339.2%). In contrast, wages for the typical worker grew by just 11.9%” (Mishel & Wolfe, 2019). In the August 2020 report by the EPI, chief executive officers (CEOs) now get paid 320 times the typical worker’s salary, an increase from the 293-to-1 in 2018, and significantly higher than the 21-to-1 compensation in 1965 (Mishel & Kandra, 2020). Based on these figures and the wages ‘earned’ from their respective jobs, does a CEO really work 320 times harder than their employees to justify their salary? Not only is this unlikely, but given the fact that we all inhabit a world measured by the same time scales – 24 hours in a day, 7 days constituting a week – this would plainly be impossible, yes? Nevertheless, these EPI reports empirically illustrate (along with countless other documentations of wage gaps and wealth inequalities in capitalist-dominated and run societies) that “there must be something rotten in the very core of a social system which increases its wealth without diminishing its misery” (Marx, 1859).

In the US, where I was born and have lived most of my life, we often hear the running discourse that our human potential is infinite with endless possibilities because we can change our lives for the better *should we choose to do so*. The seemingly obvious (?) implication in this so-called ‘American dream’ narrative is that those who have not ‘succeeded’ in life – socially and normatively defined by determined income levels, a steady job, ‘owning’ a house by paying a mortgage to a bank or credit lender – simply chose not to work hard enough, thus failing to explore and pursue all the options supposedly offered in a capitalist, aka ‘the free society.’ However, if one pursues this logic of infinite possibilities beyond the individual scale to the communal and societal scale, this raises perhaps an apparent question (but perhaps not to all): why is it then “there is no alternative” – to use Margaret Thatcher’s (in)famous slogan – and hence no options whatsoever in organizing our economy differently? Are we doomed to be stuck with capitalism for the rest of eternity, or until the planet’s environment can no longer sustain human and all other life forms? Is this the best we can do in a society that purportedly is built on, and offers us unlimited innovation and promise? How then do we reconcile the contradictions of the discourses between the ideological notion of our individual capability to effect change to improve and elevate our lives with the impossibility to change the social and economic system of capitalism since there seems to be no viable alternative?

Indeed, there have been concrete alternatives to capitalism proposed by numerous philosophers, journalists, and political activists in the past 180 years. There have been not only concrete proposals, but also some of these ideas have long been

4 A world without capitalism?

enacted by the very agent that radical (defined here as being actively opposed to capitalism) writers have championed: those of us who need to sell our daily labor in order to live. The agency of workers who have sought alternatives to organizing and managing their workplaces have materialized in various milieus throughout the world such as worker owned and run co-operatives as well as social communes sharing communal labor and the surplus value they produce (e.g., Roelvink, St. Martin, & Gibson-Graham, 2015). This again illustrates the dynamic between actual lived practices that have in part given rise to a philosophy contesting capitalism, and the ongoing re-examinations of this philosophy influencing the further developments of practices co-constructing non-capitalist sites at the workplace, home, and in local communities. What might be seen and/or dismissed as a dream by some is in fact a lived reality for others.

What's in a word: neoliberalism or capitalism?

In the past ten years, critically oriented scholars in applied linguistics have been employing the term 'neoliberalism' in addressing its ideology, practices, and policies impacting and shaping teaching and learning in the English language learning classroom (e.g., Block & Gray, 2016; Block, Gray, & Holborow, 2012; Chun, 2009, 2013, 2015; Clarke & Morgan, 2011; Hadley, 2015; Jenks, 2017; Miller, Morgan, & Medina, 2017), language policies (e.g., Flores, 2013), diversity and superdiversity (e.g., Blommaert, 2017; Park, 2013), and discourses in social circulation (e.g., Chun, 2016, 2018; Holborow, 2006, 2007, 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2015; Springer, 2012). However, the specific mentions of 'capitalism' have been relatively less frequent in much of applied linguistics research (e.g., Bennett, 2013; Chun, 2017, 2022; Heller & McElhinny, 2017; Morgan & Ramanathan, 2009; Trinch & Snajdr, 2017).

This section addresses the limitations of using the term 'neoliberalism' as opposed to 'capitalism' in critical work in the applied linguistics field, and beyond. What are the affordances of employing one term over another? Why does this matter? Any conception and portrayal of the economy, or what Ruccio (2008b) has termed "economic representations," shape and influence "how we understand ... the consequences of those representations in terms of reproducing or strengthening the existing economic and social institutions and of imagining and generating new ones" (p. 7). Furthermore, Ruccio argued "that there is no clear line that can be drawn between economy and non-economy" inasmuch as any economy is "both determined by, and a determinant of, the social (including political and cultural) and natural elements that make up the rest of the world" (p. 10). Thus, whether one uses the term 'neoliberalism' or 'capitalism' in describing the economic system in which we labor and produce surplus value but have no control over the appropriation and distribution of that surplus value has important consequences because as Ruccio pointed out, there is the urgent need to consider both the role "diverse economic representations play in how ... subjectivities and identities are constituted" (p. 15), and how these representations are "produced, how they circulate, and the manner in which they are contested in sites and practices throughout society" (p. 15).

While the term ‘capitalism’ is often contested and misunderstood as it has been shown to have multiple and conflicting meanings, sometimes within the same utterances (Chun, 2017), the definition of neoliberalism on the other hand has been widely accepted and understood by scholars in anthropology, sociology, urban studies, and applied linguistics. One such example is David Harvey’s (2005) characterization of neoliberalism as “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade” (p. 2). Hale (2002) offered a similar definition:

In the shorthand of oppositional political rhetoric and much academic analysis, neoliberalism stands for a cluster of policies driven by the logic of transnational capitalism: unfettered world markets for goods and capital; pared down state responsibilities for social welfare of its citizens; opposition to conflictive and inefficient collective entitlements, epitomised by labour rights; resolution of social problems through the application of quasi-market principles revolving around the primacy of the individual, such as assessment based on individual merit, emphasis on individual responsibility and the exercise of individual choice.

(Hale, 2002, p. 486)

Thus, this dominant ideology that has been in social circulation since the 1970s “involves both a set of theoretical principles and a collection of socio-political practices, all of which are directed toward extending and deepening capitalist market relations in most spheres of our social lives” (Colás, 2005, p. 70). Indeed, “the *market* is the main theoretical and historical social, economic and political institution of neoliberal thought” (Dussel Peters, 2006, p. 123).

However, neoliberal discourse has not been consistently coherent in its policy stances and ideological and theoretical justifications. As Saad-Filho (2017) has pointed out, that while the Austrian school “emphasizes the inventive and transformative subjectivity of the individual and the spontaneous emergence of an increasingly efficient order beyond individual reason through market processes,” the neoclassical economics stance instead “focuses on the efficiency properties of a static equilibrium achieved entirely in the logical domain on the basis of unchanging individuals, resources and technologies” (p. 247). Since the 1970s, neoliberalism has become an “everyday discourse” (Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto, and Maringanti, 2007, p. 1) in which ideologically motivated phrases such as ‘flexibility,’ ‘accountability,’ and ‘best practices’ have dominated corporate speak, which have now been implemented in other settings such as universities in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia. Watkins (2010) argued that despite neoliberalism being “a dismal epithet ... imprecise and over-used,” it is necessary to have a term “to describe the macro-economic paradigm that has predominated from the end of the 1970s” (p. 7). If neoliberalism is a complex “reorganization of capitalism” (Campbell, 2005, p. 187), then one could ask, what is gained

from labeling these reorganizing dynamics as neoliberalism rather than using the term, capitalism? One argument perhaps is observation of the increasing “extension of market-based competition and commodification processes into previously insulated realms of political-economic life,” which have “accelerated, and intensified in recent decades” (Brenner, Peck, and Theodore, 2010, p. 329). Another trend that has been the accompanying attempts to deregulate and privatize formerly state-owned enterprises and de-fund social services resulting in private capital accumulation and profit by the dispossession of public wealth (Harvey, 2005). Deregulatory state policies have also included finance capital, particularly in the US and UK.

However, the term ‘neoliberalism’ is not widely known among the general public, and is not mentioned with any regularity in mainstream media, at least in the US (Chun, 2017). Perhaps part of the reason might be in the confusion among people between the commonly used term of ‘liberalism’ with *neoliberalism*. In the context of the US and UK, liberalism has traditionally meant the intervention of the state in creating and maintaining the social-welfare society, which stems from the policies of the Roosevelt administration in the US during the 1930s and 1940s in creating the New Deal, and the post-war Labour party government in the UK. Neoliberalism, on the other hand, does involve the state in its policies affecting the general public, but rather than aiming for a re-allocation of corporate profits in the form of sizeable taxes re-channeled to the public good such as health care and social security, the state appropriates public money for privatized gains, such as charter schools in the US, and the selling of public housing to private investors and owners, as in the case of the UK.

While these practices are specific in nature and at times oppositional to one another, they nevertheless are both part and parcel of the system known as capitalism. Capitalism has a multiplicity of meanings, which are of course shaped and articulated through ideological frames, some of which have achieved common-sense hegemony. One such example is that capitalism is ‘freedom’ – that is, the freedom to sell one’s labor power to any employer, or to set up your own business by either having capital of your own or borrowing it from a lender such as a bank or individual investors. This idea of freedom extends to also leaving any job in a capitalist society, unlike in the feudal and slavery era in which serfs and enslaved people were bound to their employer throughout their entire lives. Viewed in this frame, capitalism does appear to offer freedom to the individual who can exercise choice in the availability and opportunity of multiple job offerings and possibilities. And yet, this freedom also extends to the employer, who has the liberty as it were to fire or let go of any employee at a moment’s notice, and often without any legal ramification in doing so. The decision is usually made by only the employer, without the consent or input by the entire workforce. This would appear to contradict the notion of freedom for the employees in a company in which a situation like this depends on the will and at times, whim of a singular entity, be it a lone boss, or a board of shareholders. Indeed, Friedrich Engels (1845) noted that the worker “is ... in law and in fact, the slave of the bourgeoisie, which can decree his life or death. It offers him the means of living, but only for an ‘equivalent’ for his

work” (p. 112). And in doing so, the capitalist “even lets him have the appearance of acting from a free choice, of making a contract with free, unconstrained consent, as a responsible agent who has attained his majority” (ibid., p. 112).

My advocating the use of the term ‘capitalism’ over ‘neoliberalism’ goes beyond any semantic or epistemological argument. Although neoliberalism has its specific utilities in specifying the practices and ideologies of the past 40 years in countries such as the US and UK, the term is still largely unknown to the general public. Why does this matter? I argue that by employing the term ‘capitalism’ in its stead, it calls attention to the economic system that has been in place now for several centuries, rather than its specific phase or manifestation, be it a Keynesian state-managed capitalism in alleviating gross economic inequalities by increasing social welfare, or a neoliberal state-managed capitalism in privatizing the public domain. At times, the implication of naming neoliberalism as the ‘culprit’ in policies and discourses (such as the entrepreneur of oneself) creates the impression that by doing away with neoliberal policy, economic and social justice might be achieved. This is impossible if capitalism is still in place. If the system known as capitalism is named, and better understood among the public, a greater awareness of its injustices can be facilitated and heightened, whereas neoliberalism can serve to confuse that by its very situatedness as a stage or variety of capitalism.

The social ubiquities of ‘capitalism’

However, there have been multiple and not surprisingly, conflicting definitional frames of what capitalism is that have been co-constructed in numerous domains such as the mass and social media, academia, and accompanying common-sense discourses (Chun, 2017). Several definitions have been in social circulation in the US and many other countries for decades: ‘the free market,’ ‘the right to choose,’ ‘there is no alternative,’ and ‘capitalism is democracy and freedom.’ The word ‘capitalism’ and all that it signifies to people is an example that “the word is implicated in literally each and every act or contact between people – in collaboration on the job, in ideological exchanges, in the chance contacts of ordinary life, in political relationships, and so on” (Vološinov, 1973, p. 19). The differing and often competing (mis)understandings of what capitalism is depending on who is involved in the making and mediating of meanings stem in part “by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant” (ibid., p. 86). This interactional dynamic of how one defines capitalism and who is taking up a definition is “the very same thing that makes the ideological sign vital and mutable is also, however, that which makes it a refracting and distorting medium” (ibid., p. 23).

Thus, there is always a power struggle over who gets to define a socially ubiquitous word (Vološinov, 1973) such as ‘capitalism.’ A major component involved in who is viewed as ‘having the right’ to characterize this word is the acceptance of who has the ‘authority’ and ‘knowledge’ to do so. In what Gramsci (2000a, 2000b) termed “traditional” and “organic intellectuals,” his seminal insight of what constitutes hegemony as summarized by Fiori (1973) was that “the system’s real

strength does not lie in the violence of the ruling class or the coercive power of its state apparatus, but in the acceptance by the ruled of a ‘conception of the world’ which belongs to the rulers” (p. 238).

Conceptions of the world that help sustain the consent of those who are dominated and marginalized in society – the organic intellectuals (i.e., everyday people) trying to make sense of their worlds – are co-constructed by traditional intellectuals who are “the dominant group’s ‘deputies’ exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government” (Gramsci, 2000a, p. 306). These traditional intellectuals comprise those who make a living from writing and disseminating their knowledge – academics, philosophers, journalists, and media pundits. Thus, consent granted by organic intellectuals, aka ‘the masses,’ can be viewed as being “caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production” (ibid., p. 307). With the hegemonic intellectual and discourse production by traditional intellectuals of their “signs” of the economy – they enact an ideological meaning that “represents, depicts, or stands for something lying, outside itself” (Vološinov, 1973, p. 9). The traditional intellectuals’ attempts to co-construct specific meanings of capitalism that do not necessarily correspond with the lived material realities of people in their workplaces and communities are not conspiratorial in the sense that their work is a result of a planned concerted and joint effort. Rather, it is the ways in which traditional intellectuals strive to make the word unaccentual; that is, to be devoid of any other accents that would alter or challenge its meanings. In doing so, they align themselves with the dominant and dominating discourses and practices of “the ruling class (who) strives to impart a supraclass, eternal character to the ideological sign, to extinguish or drive inward the struggle between social value judgments which occurs in it, to make the sign unaccentual” (Vološinov, 1973, p. 23).

As a Gramscian traditional intellectual who sells my labor production of teaching and writing, I have been engaged with the “differently oriented accents” that “intersect in every ideological sign” (Vološinov, 1973, p. 23). And because the “social *multiaccentuality* of the ideological sign” that through its intersecting of accents enabling the sign to maintain “its vitality and dynamism and the capacity for further development” (p. 23, emphasis in the original), or “a living thing” (ibid., p. 81), I offer an alternative framing of capitalism that departs from the hegemonic ones of ‘freedom’ and ‘the right to choose.’ From my perspective based on my lived realities and observations of others, capitalism is a fundamentally dictatorial system in which the mutually interanimating economic and social relations between the surplus-value producing laborers and the surplus-value appropriating employers enact anti-democratic practices in that the latter are the sole decision makers in determining and deciding how much the former gets paid, the amount of holiday/vacation time and time off from work they receive, and benefits, if any (e.g., overtime pay, retirement funds). Thus, these systemic relations of capitalism are by their very design inherently exploitative of those of us who are producing the surplus value. We laborers might complain, appeal, bargain, protest, and/or go on strike but in the end, we often cannot override the final decision made by

employers on these matters. What one often hears is that ‘if you don’t like your job or your boss, get another job somewhere else!’ However, since “the worker has become a commodity, and he [*sic*] is lucky if he can find a buyer” (Marx, 1844, p. 283), as many of us know, finding another job is never easy – “the worker has not only to struggle for his physical means of subsistence; he must also struggle for work” (ibid., p. 284). If we are ‘fortunate enough’ to get another job, perhaps the new boss might be ‘nicer and gentler,’ but in the end, they are still the only ones calling the shots. These economic and social relations effect one another so that our social identities become an integral component in reproducing the system. These dynamics involve several dimensions including the nonstop commodification of promoting oneself through the use value of our labor – selling it in the ‘free market,’ the desires for other commodities of socially valued culturally specific capital in displaying our ‘status’ as consumers (such as fancy clothes and expensive cars), racialized identities and positionings (addressed in Chapter 4), and gendered enactments in the workplace, home, and community. In part, “the conversion of *insecure workers* – kept insecure to make them obedient workers – into *confident consumers*” (Streeck, 2017, pp. 2–3, emphasis in the original) that exhibit these social identities is essential to capitalism.

Thus, capitalism in a nutshell: You, the working person, bakes the pie. Then your employer, landlord, mortgage and loan lenders, insurance carriers, government tax agencies, credit card companies, and banks all demand and take their slice of the pie you baked. You’re left with the crumbs called ‘wages.’ Yes, the capitalist provided you with the ingredients and tools (the means of production) in order to bake the pie, but since you did all the labor in making it, shouldn’t you at least have a say in how the profits would be shared from the selling of the pie? Instead, when we get paid our wages that do not reflect the surplus exchange value (the profits) of the commodities we produce, we feel the need to be ‘grateful’ to have a job and a salary. ‘Thank you, thank you, master!,’ indeed.

Our imaginaries of a different world?

Henri Lefebvre asked:

What does the word ‘real’ mean today? It is the given, the sensible and practical, the actual, the perceptible surface. As for daily life, the general opinion is that it forms part of reality. But does it coincide with it? No, for it contains something more, something less, and something else: lived experience, fleeting subjectivity – emotions, affects, habits, and forms of behaviour. We may add that it also includes abstraction. Money and commodities possess an abstract dimension that forms part of everyday reality, which also contains images (a multiplicity of images, without thereby vanishing into the ‘imaginary’).

(Lefebvre, 2008, p. 5)

The complex, shifting perceptions of our material realities have often been rooted in a common-sense notion of what constitutes the ‘real.’ If you can recognize an object or thing through a sensory ability, or any combination thereof, such as seeing it with your eyes, touching it with your hands, hearing, feeling, smelling, or tasting it, then that has been seen as proof of its physical existence. In the virtual world in which we now inhabit (for those of us who can afford to have Internet access), the real has become even more complicated. From interactional encounters both in person and on-line, there appears to be a good number of people these days who reject accredited sources reporting on world events, be they from well-known newspapers such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*, seeing these as “fake news” and thus not to be trusted. In line with this, some people also dismiss scientific-based researched reports on climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the importance of vaccinations as ‘false’ or a ‘hoax’ even though none of them have academic degrees in these related fields. In a sense, they literally dwell in their own bubbles that have been co-constructed by social media, blogs, and other websites helping to spread disinformation. Interestingly, from an unscientific survey based on my own observations of these online re-postings of disinformation, none have addressed the representations of capital as being a ‘mirage’ or ‘imaginary.’

The use of the term ‘imaginary’ is “becoming common in the place of *culture* and *cultural beliefs, meanings, and models* in anthropology and cultural studies” (Strauss, 2006, p. 322, emphasis in the original). Like most academic terms, there are debates on what the imaginary is. One definition of the imaginary is “the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations” (Taylor, 2004, p. 23). The normative and hegemonic imaginaries of race, class, gender, and sexuality shape not only our daily expectations, but also how we enact our existences in relation to others. One obvious example of how “a social imaginary is determined by current ideas and practices constituted in relation to meanings and practices of the past” (James, 2019, p. 41) has been the social-historical co-constructions of ‘race.’ We have seen how the invention of race has enabled some people to imagine themselves to be innately, biologically, and genetically superior to others. Writing this in 1963 following the assassination of the civil rights activist Medgar Evers, James Baldwin (2017) brilliantly addressed the historical and ongoing imaginary of what has constituted ‘a nation’ in the US context, and how race has been inextricably bound within this violent imaginary:

What White people have to do is try and find out in their own hearts why it was necessary to have a “nigger” in the first place, because I’m not a nigger, I’m a man. But if you think I’m a nigger, it means you need him. The question that you’ve got to ask yourself, the White population of this country has got to ask itself ... if I’m not the nigger here and ... you the White people invented him, then you’ve got to find out why.

(Baldwin, 2017, pp. 108–109)

Although an imaginary such as race may be “shared by large groups of people,” it is never shared by “the whole society” as Taylor (2004) claimed. Racism in the US has been structuralized from the beginning, with the enslaving, selling, and owning of people from Africa in the early 1600s until enslavement was completely abolished in 1865 with the end of the Civil War. The end of enslavement however did not mean the end of racism as the freed Blacks in the Southern states were then denied their forty acres and a mule they had been promised, thus consigning them to becoming sharecropping and indentured wage laborers earning much less than their White counterparts for the same amount (and often more) of the work done. In the ensuing 155 years, with housing and job discrimination, lower wages, lack of adequate funding for education and healthcare (compared with White neighborhoods), and public health crises in poor Black communities such as cancer-causing lead in drinking water in Flint, Michigan, it could be argued that race as an imaginary is indeed shared by the whole society. However, how would one then account for the White people who have rejected racism and have participated in the Civil Rights movement marches and protests and the current Black Lives Matter rallies against police killings of innocent Black lives? It seems clear that these ‘woke’ Whites have actively rejected the imaginary of race.

So when it comes to the issue of race, which has been an integral and vital component of capitalism in the US, the argument made by Strauss (2006) would seem to be more useful, both theoretically and methodologically:

This means talking, not about ‘the imaginary of a society,’ but of people’s imaginaries. This person-centered approach recognizes the importance of learned cultural understandings but does not take ‘culture’ to be a fixed entity assumed to be held in common by a geographically bounded or self-identified group. Bounded or self-identified groups may share some cultural understandings, or imaginaries, with each other, but be fractured with respect to other understandings, which could be shared among people who have had the same formative experiences despite living in different parts of the world and not having a common identity.

(Strauss, 2006, p. 323)

In the case of people self-identifying as ‘White,’ each person’s understanding of what ‘Whiteness’ means would not be a uniform imaginary. For example, in being viewed and seeing oneself as ‘white trash’ – a slur that has been used in the US to index poor rural people, particularly in the Southern states – this semiotizing linkage between race and social class co-constructs a different identity than the reactionary discourse of “All (White) Lives Matter” in response to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. What this discourse illustrates is how any imaginary, in this case that of Whiteness, is enacted in specific forms and practices, be they wearing MAGA (“Make America Great Again”) caps, displaying guns, lynching of Blacks, and so on.

How are the notions, representations, discourses, ideologies, and imaginaries of a capitalist system mediated in the domains of language, culture, identities, and landscapes in everyday life? Another example of the imaginary is money. What is money? If you ask the proverbial person on the street, they would perhaps say, “What do you think it is?! Money is what I get paid with for my job. It’s what I use to pay my bills, my groceries, my credit card debt, my rent, all of that. If there’s any left over, I try to save it in the bank.” On the face of it, they would be right of course in defining what it is, and what it means to their daily lives. Whether it is the increasingly old-fashioned paper currency and paychecks one can actually hold, or the now much more common digitally configured bank deposits and credit card charge allotments, money is indeed real in its materializations of putting food on the table, the clothes on one’s back, and many more use values one needs to survive every day. And yet, these material representations of money may be tangible, but it is also “a symbol and representation of immateriality of social value” (Harvey, 2014, pp. 26–27). As David Harvey points out, “like all forms of representation (maps come to mind), there is a gap between the representation and the social reality it is seeking to represent” (*ibid.*, p. 27). Thus, “this gap between money and the value it represents constitutes ... (a) foundational contradiction of capital” (*ibid.*, p. 27). For example, the US ten-dollar bill signifies the amount featured on it that allows one to purchase a commodity listed for that price; however it is at the same time merely symbolic because what does ten dollars actually signify? When the Federal Reserve, which is the central banking system in the US, decides to increase or decrease the amount of money in circulation in response to economic downturns and crises, the seemingly obvious value of ‘10’ dollars is called into question.

Money is thus a central element of the many contradictions of capital, all of which are fundamental in helping to create and shape our social imaginaries. Indeed, “perhaps the most important contradiction of all” is that of “between reality and appearance in the world in which we live” (Harvey, 2014, p. 4). One illustration of the contradiction between appearance and reality is how the value of our paid social labor is determined, measured, allocated, and by whom in the material or virtual form of a paycheck or direct deposit. The conventional acceptance has been that some people are paid much more for their labor because their production value is worth more to society. As previously mentioned, the average pay compensation for a chief executive officer (CEO) in the US is 320 times higher than the typical worker’s salary (Mishel & Kandra, 2020). This would be one illustration of the social imaginary in which it “is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy” (Taylor, 2004, p. 23). Who shares the belief in the legitimacy of this huge discrepancy in pay between the CEO and the ‘average’ worker, and who legitimates it? In selling one’s labor power as a commodity in a capitalist economy that champions the ‘free market,’ this system

does not appear to rely on cheating, theft, robbery or dispossession because labourers can be paid their ‘fair’ market value (the ‘going rate’) at the same time as they can be put to work to generate the surplus value that capital needs to survive.

(Harvey, 2014, p. 63)

This imaginary is embedded at times within those of us who may feel that although we work our fingers to the bone to get the pay we ‘deserve,’ somehow, the CEO is worth much, much more than us – whether we attribute it to the CEO’s educational level, social background, talent, brains, ability, etc., all of which seem to some people to warrant the obscene pay discrepancy. And yet, how many workers would actually believe that one day, with enough hard work and dedication to their job, they too could become the CEO of the company they work for? Perhaps a few might, but it is doubtful in my opinion that all would think this might ever be possible.

So perhaps, “the way ordinary people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings ... is often not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories, and legends” (Taylor, 2004, p. 23), which contribute to some of the ‘average workers’ imaginary. But whose images and stories are being featured and told? How are some of these taken to be for real and truthful, whereas others are seen as fictional or outdated? In the context of US, for example, what has been the discourse trajectories that have helped shift perceptions of what constituted the ‘American dream’ to be formerly obtainable, which was presumably for all (which was of course never the case due to racialized, classed, and/or gendered inequities) to the now present view that many believe this dream is dead? The demise of the imaginary of the ‘American dream’ has been indexed by the appeal to those who have clung to the hope that Trump would “Make America Great Again!” This political slogan (and its acronym, “MAGA”) used in both his 2016 and 2020 US presidential election campaigns embodies how “an imaginary is not totalizing, but rather a cultural dominant, layered across prior and emerging imaginaries” (James, 2019, p. 41). The prior imaginaries of MAGA were the 1980 US Presidential campaign slogan of Ronald Reagan, “Let’s Make America Great Again,” which was also used by Bill Clinton in his 1992 Presidential campaign speeches. However, one emerging imaginary in response to the MAGA slogan in 2016 was the social media posts that asked, “Was America Ever Great?” This slogan and challenge to it illustrate that

In common use, the concept of ‘the imaginary’ came to refer to something invented or not real, something projected into the future, imagined beyond itself. However, for many writers from philosophers to psychoanalysts ..., even this imaginary projection of invented possibilities has to have a place to stand, a place from which to project imaginations. We do not imagine out of nothing. And, therefore, the imaginary provides one locus to begin to understand the complexity of human being.

(James, 2019, p. 37)

A capitalist or socialist imaginary?

A counter-hegemonic imaginary to capitalist society has been well-known throughout the world for at least 170 years – socialism, with all its historical and

ideologically inflected collocations with ‘Stalinism’ and ‘dictatorship’ (Chun, 2017, 2022). One very common-sense belief and critique of socialism is that it sounds good in theory but could never work in practice. Some view socialism as only a hopeless utopia, a nice dream but unrealistic and thus unattainable. And this is where history, or rather the omission and willful ignorance of history, comes in – societies and communities long before the 20th-century revolutions in the name of ‘communism’ were in fact socialistic. One example was the Iroquois Nation, which was based in the area now known as New York State in the US. They constructed their society as a collective-based community where everyone had a say in the governance of the resources they cooperatively produced including the crops from the land they owned and worked together (Morgan, 2003). There were many other communities across the world that had similar practices in which all inhabitants not only worked together, but also *for each other*, and importantly, democratically decided on the sharing of the labor and the value it produced, and how it would be distributed among them. Thus, radical philosophers such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were not inventing or imagining something that had never existed beyond their visionary worlds – they were drawing on actual realities enacted by many workers long before them. And it is these realities of worker-owned and run businesses that are evident of other worlds already existing inasmuch as

Representations of capitalism are a potent constituent of the anticapitalist imagination, providing images of what is to be resisted and changed as well as intimations of the strategies, techniques, and possibilities for changing it. For this reason, depictions of ‘capitalist hegemony’ deserve a particularly skeptical reading. For in the vicinity of these representations, the very idea of a non-capitalist economy takes the shape of an unlikelihood or even an impossibility. It becomes difficult to entertain a vision of the prevalence and vitality of noncapitalist economic forms, or of daily or partial replacements of capitalism by noncapitalist economic practices, or of capitalist retreats and reversals. In this sense, ‘capitalist hegemony’ operates not only as a constituent of, but also as brake upon, the anticapitalist imagination.

(Gibson-Graham, 1996, p. 3)

A posthumanist applied linguistics or a post-capitalist one?

The capitalist can live longer without the worker than the worker can without them ... The worker does not necessarily gain when the capitalist gains, but they necessarily lose with them ... The worker has not only to struggle for their physical means of subsistence; they must also struggle for work ... society is invariably and inevitably opposed to the interest of the worker.

(Marx, 1844, pp. 282–288)

The field of applied linguistics has traditionally been focused on two domains – that of language learning and teaching, and the other, language in its contextual

action and use (i.e., sociolinguistics). Sociolinguistics has addressed the functions and roles of language in and across multiple domains and scales (e.g., Agha, 2007; Blommaert, 2013; Blommaert & Rampton, 2016; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Duchêne & Heller, 2012; Eckert, 1989; Gal, 1989; Heller, 2010; Heller & McElhinny, 2017; Jaffe, 2007; Johnstone, 2016; Labov, 1966, 1972; Pennycook, 2007; Rampton, 2006; Silverstein, 2003; Trudgill, 1974). Research on language learning and teaching has also evolved beyond the narrow focus on second language acquisition (SLA) issues such as learning correct grammar and pronunciation, and improving one's listening and reading comprehension. SLA research has been critiqued for its absence of the contextual and classroom identities of both the learners and the teachers that impact their language learning and teaching (e.g., Benesch, 2012; Chun, 2015, 2016; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Morgan, 1998; Motha, 2014). It has started to critically address the language in use – that is, how discourses emerge in the classroom and beyond. However, there still remains a notion or “vision of objectivity in applied linguistics” (Motha, 2020, p. 128). In her article, “Is an antiracist and decolonizing applied linguistics possible?,” Motha relates a story about an outraged linguistics conference member who took umbrage at her co-presentation on language rights and antiracism in public schools, saying “Why are you talking about all these things? This has nothing to do with linguistics” (ibid., p. 128). This dismissal of topics viewed as not relevant to the field embodies “a belief that applied linguists can stitch together an understanding of the workings of language that is somehow impervious to the effects of racism, xenophobia, and concerns about language rights” (ibid., p. 128). Indeed, and for those applied linguists who might also dismiss any critical research of capitalism as irrelevant to the study of language, as Agha (2007) put it quite shrewdly, “Linguists of a certain type might well say, ‘That’s not linguistics.’ But no one cares” (p. 228).

The COVID-19 viral pandemic has highlighted once again that a capitalist economy is a capitalist society in which profit will always take precedence over people in “the best of times” and “the worst of times.” ‘Over 500,000 dead (as of late February 2021) in the US? A small sacrifice as long as the Dow Jones goes back up!’ People losing their jobs, corporations such as Amazon firing their workers for protesting unsanitary work conditions, workers not receiving personal protective equipment (PPE) while doing their jobs because companies don’t want to pay for it, healthcare available only to people who can afford it (private health insurance in the US) – all this and more exposes the shallowness of academics who do not acknowledge the existence of the capitalist economy in their work, and the interactions between our economic and social relations. One such example of this is the following argument:

Posthumanist materialism follows a line of thought running from Spinoza to Deleuze rather than Hegel to Marx, suggesting an alternative politics centred less on material infrastructure, political economy, and the demystification projects of ideology critique (which reduce *political* agency to *human* agency) and instead on a politics that reorients humans towards their ethical interdependence with the material world.

(Pennycook, 2018, p. 446)

Perhaps these academics could learn a thing or two from people who are the first to lose their jobs and at the most risk because they have to show up for work in a crowded workplace. “The economic prevails even in a domain that seemed to elude it: it governs lived experience” (Lefebvre, 2008, pp. 81–82).

The recent advocacy of adopting and employing the framework of posthumanism in the field of applied linguistics (e.g., Pennycook, 2018) unfortunately perpetuates a continuing misconception or dismissal of certain theoretical and methodological approaches that have existed for some time now. In his adopting the argument that posthumanism “doesn’t presume the separateness of any-‘thing,’ let alone the alleged spatial, ontological, and epistemological distinction that sets humans apart” (Barad, 2007, as cited by Pennycook, 2018, p. 446), Pennycook conveys the notion that posthumanism is a novel and innovative concept that offers a more vital and compelling paradigm of the worlds around and within us. However, he ignores the substantial work done by Marxist scholars such as Althusser (1971), Gibson and Graham (1992, 1996), Harvey (1990), Lefebvre (1991a), Resnick and Wolff (1987), all of whom have theorized this same idea of not only the interconnections between both immaterial and materialities, but also more importantly, how these domains overdetermine and effect one another (which I address in more detail in Chapter 3). But this also goes back to the ongoing rejections or even ignorance of the actual ideas that Marx himself advocated as evidenced by Pennycook (2018) in his arguing that “we can nonetheless start to consider the subject in more material terms, as part of a wider distribution of semiotic and material resources, as interpellated by objects” (p. 457). This is certainly not a new idea or approach because Marx (1976 [1867]) had already conceptualized the ways in which we are interpellated by objects; specifically commodities in his concept of commodity fetishism (explained in Chapter 2). And along with Engels, his close friend and collaborator, Marx clarified that

the premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity.

(Marx & Engels, 1970, p. 42)

This shortcoming of adopting posthumanism as the latest fashion in applied linguistics is also evident in Pennycook’s argument that

repertoires are the product of social spaces as semiotic resources, objects, and space interact. To imagine that repertoires are somehow an internalized individual competence (Wardaugh 1986) or can be found in a community reservoir (Bernstein 2000) is to overlook the dynamics of objects, places, and linguistic resources.

(Pennycook, 2018, p. 454)

Again, how these dynamics of objects, places, and linguistic resources interact had already been conceptualized over 30 years ago as mutually intereffecting by Amariglio and Callari (1989). Furthermore, who inhabits those social spaces in which particular repertoires may be valued over others in a particular community as embodied in specific interactional encounters? One anecdotal incident illustrates this: one Sunday morning I was walking in the Boston neighborhood of Lower Roxbury, which is a predominantly working-class Black community. I saw a fellow pedestrian walking toward me. The person was an elderly Black woman dressed in what appeared to be her church-going apparel – a beautifully matching hat and dress. We made eye contact and I said to her, “I love your hat!” She replied with a smile, “Thank you, darling!” Later that same day, I was walking in the neighborhood of Back Bay, which is an upper-class/upper-middle-class, predominantly White urban space. I noticed a big pile of dog poop on the sidewalk. As I sidestepped it, a few paces later, a person who was an upper middle class (judging by her clothes and demeanor) White woman walked past me and was looking at her phone but was not wearing an earphone. I said to her, “Watch out, there’s dog shit ahead of you.” She didn’t reply. As I turned around, she obviously heard me because she sidestepped it. I then muttered, “You’re welcome!” with an eye roll. These incidents illustrate that

Spatial practice regulates life – it does not create it. Space has no power ‘in itself,’ nor does space as such determine spatial contradictions. These are contradictions of society – contradictions between one thing and another within society, as for example between the forces and relations of production – that simply emerge in space, at the level of space, and so engender the contradictions of space.

(Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 358)

So when Pennycook (2018) claims that “posthumanist thought urges us not just to broaden an understanding of communication but to relocate where social semiotics occurs” (p. 446), but does not explicitly acknowledge the social semiotics of race and class as evident in my encounters in which the interactional repertoire of making eye contact and mutually talking with a fellow human depends on who is engaging with whom in these very different social spaces, this also ignores Marx’s concept of estrangement in which we are alienated from each other (Marx, 1975 [1844]). Indeed,

the purpose of theorizing is not to enhance one’s intellectual or academic reputation but to enable us to grasp, understand, and explain – to produce a more adequate knowledge of – the historical world and its processes; and thereby to inform our practice so that we may transform it.

(Hall, 1988b, p. 36)

Updating Lefebvre’s (2003) questioning of the then-fashionable hypothesis, “post-industrial society? Then what happens after industrialization? Leisure society?” (p. 4), I

ask, posthumanism? Then what happens after posthumanism? Robot society? In fact, robotics have increasingly become part of our society, workplaces, and our lives (e.g., manufacturing displacing human labor, algorithmic surveillance) but this is not posthumanism, it is the continuation of capitalism.

Aims of the book

With surveys in the US showing the majority of people under 30 years old favoring socialism over capitalism, the recent global stock market upheavals once again, and xenophobic nationalism enabled by demagogues on the rise, instead of focusing on individual political leaders, it is ever more pressing to explore the ways in which we can co-construct our worlds beyond capitalism. If there is “no essential or coherent identity” to capitalism, which “multiplies (infinitely) the possibilities of alterity” (Gibson-Graham, 1996, p. 15), then how do we define it and mark it off from non-capitalist practices, spaces, and imaginaries? Indeed, what are practices and spaces where capitalism is not dominant, or even intrude? Are there glimpses of this future already in our present everyday lives and practices? This book addresses these questions and provides potential and actual discursive interactional engagements in making a world possible beyond capitalism.

This is a follow-up to my 2017 book, *The Discourse of Capitalism: Everyday Economists and the Production of Common Sense*. It is a continuation of my research on the social semiotics of capitalism in their myriad discursive and material forms, with ethnographic and sociolinguistic explorations taking a paradigmatic view of capitalism as “an uncentered aggregate of practices ... scattered over a landscape” instead of a “systemic unity” (Gibson-Graham, 1996, p. 254). Employing this as a framework, the book examines the ways in which identities, discourses, and topographies of both capitalist and anti-capitalist imaginaries and realities are co-constructed, enacted, visualized, and embodied in the everyday practices of people in their manifestations in space, time, and urban domains. Methodologically, this involved on-the-ground documentations of “concrete material and symbolic conditions” (such as local neighborhoods and their linguistic landscapes) and interviews to explore “the understandings, emotions, and desires that individuals develop as they experience these conditions” (Strauss, 2006, p. 323).

My aim is to encompass the interdisciplinary theoretical approaches, methodologies, and epistemic affordances of sociolinguistic ethnography, linguistic anthropology, political economy theory, cultural studies, discourse analysis, urban studies, and visual studies in addressing these questions:

- How is capitalism partly manifested not only in specific discourses taken up by people in their everyday lives, but also in the materialized urban spaces that we see and interact with everyday?
- What are the interanimating dynamics between these discourses, identities, and material spaces?

- What are the actual social-semiotic meaning-making modes and processes involved in the everyday co-construction and discursive mediations of these ideologies of capitalism?

These questions are intended to contribute to expanding the field of socio-linguistics inasmuch as “sociolinguistics needs to engage more wholeheartedly with visual semiosis and the interplay between visual and textual/linguistic dimensions of meaning” (Coupland, 2016, p. 23). Now, one might ask, what does this have to do with questioning and challenging hegemonic discourses and beliefs about capitalism? Fontana (1993), on writing about the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation, observed that the Lutheran and Calvinist reinterpretations of sacred texts in the Bible through their translations involved “the movement from a language that was the exclusive possession of the ruling castes into one that was the natural vernacular of the people” (p. 37). This natural vernacular of the people was crucial in breaking away from the control and ownership as it were of the hegemonic representations of the Bible by the Catholic Church. Thus:

there is a very definite and ‘organic’ relation between types of language and the Gramscian notion of hegemony. The development of a new hegemonic conception of the world simultaneously requires the development of a language different from the prevailing one.

(Fontana, 1993, p. 37)

As we have seen in dramatic fashion with the 2016 US presidential election of Trump with his discourses of fake news, the conspiracy theories of the alt-right, and the open re-emergence of White supremacy and its accompanying violence in the US (and elsewhere), the Left needs to take note of how the Right has quite adeptly utilized what Gramsci argued inasmuch as “the transformation of social reality demands the elaboration of a language that is capable of becoming hegemonic and leading such that it becomes the national-popular language of the overall society” (Fontana, 1993, p. 38). It is in this vein that I am intent on contributing to how we on the Left in the US can co-construct and elaborate language in use that frames that a democracy as being fundamentally opposed to capitalism so that this becomes the national-popular language of society.

Another aim of this book is to develop an empirically based theory that explores the dialectical and ideological reciprocities between the individual and community. It is only through a community can an individual emerge, and through individuals acting in concert with others can communities form. The overarching purpose here is to develop ways to effectively develop mobilizing discourses and pedagogical practices that would help enable people to become the self-aware and self-cognizant subjects of history rather than the commodified (and commodifying) objects of capitalism. As Edward Sapir observed:

No harmony and depth of life, no culture, is possible when activity is well-nigh circumscribed by the sphere of immediate ends and when functioning within that sphere is so fragmentary as to have no inherent intelligibility or interest. Here lies the grimmest joke of our present American civilization. The vast majority of us, deprived of any but an insignificant and culturally abortive share in the satisfaction of the immediate wants of mankind, are further deprived of both opportunity and stimulation to share in the production of non-utilitarian values. Part of the time we are dray horses; the rest of the time we are listless consumers of goods which have received no least impress of our personality. In other words, our spiritual selves go hungry, for the most part, pretty much all of the time.

(Sapir, 1949, p. 101)

And so I have attempted to follow what Hall (2016) observed of Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* in that "his methodology is exactly that of an ethnographer, listening first of all to the language, to the actual practical speech which people use, to the ways they sustain relationships through language, and to the ways they categorise things" (p. 10).

The everyday

The third interrelated aim of this book seeks to address in an ethnographic manner the questions Henri Lefebvre raised:

Is the quotidian definable? Can it serve as the starting point for a definition of contemporary society (modernity), so that the inquiry avoids the ironic slant, the identification of a fragmentary or partial sphere, and encompasses its essence and its unity? Does this method lead to a coherent non-contradictory theory of the contradictions and conflicts in social 'reality,' to a conception of the real and the possible?

(Lefebvre, 1984, p. 72)

My explorations of the real and possible is with the purpose of someday realizing another world can exist, and indeed already does exist beyond and outside capitalism. As Lefebvre argued:

there can be no knowledge of everyday life, or of society, or of the situation of the former within the latter, or of their interactions, without a radical critique of the one and of the other, of the one by the other, and vice versa.

(Lefebvre, 2002, p. 11)

Building on my previous work (Chun, 2015, 2017), the critique of the everyday is thus a central theme I will be addressing throughout this book. This ideological view draws from Henri Lefebvre's (1984, 1987, 1988, 1991b, 2002, 2008) theoretical

framework of the everyday. This is not to be confused with simply ‘everyday life’ as for example, one might argue that everyday life is “not the same ... in Paris, in Teheran, in New York, in Buenos Aires, in Moscow, in 1900, in 1960” (Lefebvre, 2002, p. 18). By contrast, as Lefebvre maintained, the *critique* of everyday life is instead “a question of discovering what must and can change and be transformed in people’s lives, in Timbuktu, in Paris, in New York, or in Moscow ... it encompasses a critique of the political realms by everyday social practice and vice versa” (ibid., pp. 18–19).

Lefebvre conceptualized the everyday as the dynamic interactions of daily life (*la vie quotidienne*), everydayness (*la quotidienneté*), and the everyday (*le quotidien*):

let us simply say about daily life that it has always existed, but permeated with values, with myths. The word everyday designates the entry of this daily life into modernity: the everyday as an object of a programming (d’une programmation), whose unfolding is imposed by the market, by the system of equivalences, by marketing and advertisements. As to the concept of ‘everydayness,’ it stresses the homogenous, the repetitive, the fragmentary in everyday life. I have also stated that the everyday, in the modern world, has ceased to be a ‘subject’ (abundant in possible subjectivity) to become an ‘object’ (object of social organization).

(Lefebvre, 1988, p. 87)

As Lefebvre (1984) argued, “the history of a single day includes the history of the world and of civilization” (p. 4). In this, then, everyday life can be seen as “a moment made of moments ... the dialectical interaction that is the inevitable starting point for the realization of the possible” (ibid., p. 14). Thus, my aim here in my featured sociolinguistic ethnographic examinations of how time, space, topography of everyday life are experienced, imagined, constructed, obstructed, and articulated by people in ways that reproduce or reject capitalism, I seek how we might change the everyday for it is “modifiable and transformable, and its transformation must be an important part of a ‘project for society.’ A revolution ... must change *la vie quotidienne*, which has already been literally colonized by capitalism” (Lefebvre, 1988, p. 80). These contradictory formations of daily life, which have always existed and been permeated with values and myths, and now “literally colonized by capitalism,” have become the everyday. Thus, the everyday is a site of contestation in which our agentive acts can name and transform this (Roberts, 2006).

The everyday is thus an integral core of the interanimating sociocultural and economic relations in a capitalist society “insofar as it is saturated by the routinized, repetitive, familiar daily practices that make up the everyday in all spheres of life: work, leisure, politics, language, family life, cultural production” (Kipfer, 2008, p. 199). On one hand, these repetitive and familiar daily practices that make every single day feel the same to many of us (as in the film *Groundhog Day*, which I discuss in Chapter 2) comprising the everyday life attempts to be “the best ‘guarantee of non-revolution’ because it refers to what we take for granted,

what seems self-evident ('that's how it is') and inevitable ('it can't be any different'), irrespective of whether we like it or not" (Kipfer, 2008, p. 199). However, in true dialectical fashion, everyday life also "contains resistant or counter-hegemonic qualities that point towards the possibility of a radical dis-alienation and full 'humanization' of social life" (Gardiner, 2000, p. 17). Because our estrangement in present-day capitalist society "is not a permanent feature of the human condition ... (it) can be superseded through acts of individual and collective self-realization" (Gardiner, 2000, p. 17), these daily practices of the everyday must be the sites in which we re-humanize one another to recognize and embrace our humanity in rejecting the hate from the divisions that capitalism has long perpetuated among many of us. Hence, to reiterate the argument that our economic relations effect our social relations, and vice versa, my theoretical and methodological stance also

rejects the debilitating dualism between 'political economy' and 'cultural studies' ... one of the legacies of the debates within and on 'post' theory of the 1980s and early 1990s was an often acute bifurcation of theoretical debate that identifies marxism with studies of material social relations, class, and political economy while relegating considerations of subjectivity, identity, difference, and culture to poststructuralist versions of cultural studies.

(Kipfer, Goonewardena, Schmid, & Milgrom, 2008, p. 3)

Thus, in my continuing research on the discursive and materialized representations of capitalism, particularly that of everyday people's engagements, receptions, perceptions, co-constructions, productions, narrations, and mediations of these discourses and representations, the principal question I am asking is: In spite of recurring economic crises and the ensuing devastating material impacts on many people's lives, why do some people still defend capitalism as the only viable socioeconomic system available to us and choose to elect billionaires as their political leaders who claim they have the 99%'s best interests at heart? This book aims to further contribute to a much-needed understanding of how ideologically incoherent and contradictory discourses are mediated by everyday people in their multifaceted co-constructions of capitalist *and* anti-capitalist imaginaries, instantiated realities, and practices as narrated, lived, and embodied by them and their environmental material and virtual landscapes.

2

THE SPECTRAL REALITIES OF CAPITALISM

Estrangement of the everyday

As I write this from my desk, I see from my apartment window countless homeless people sleeping on the streets by my building, as well as hearing them loading up their bags and shopping carts with empty bottles and cans from the trash bins in the back alley to later sell at local recycling centers. The Boston neighborhood I currently live in was a predominantly local working class and student neighborhood, but has increasingly become 'upscale' with expensive high-rise condominiums and fancy stores catering to its affluent residents originally from around the world. Beginning when the weather gets warmer in late April, an increasing number of homeless people will start dwelling in the nearby park through the mid-autumn. For those of us 'fortunate' to live inside an apartment building or house, we almost never, if ever, interact with our neighboring people who are forced to live outside any residential structures. We do not inhabit the same interior spaces but we still live in the same general vicinity. And yet we never say hello, nor do we make eye contact with these neighborhood inhabitants without a home. "Love thy neighbor"? Clearly not.

Because of the lack of any interpersonal engagements, the people who are homeless may appear to be 'aliens' to many of us. However, my use of the word 'alien' here does not mean being from another country, planet, or universe. The homeless person you pass everyday on the streets? They could be your sibling, child, cousin, mother, father, and former co-worker, neighbor, friend, and yes, even teachers, as in the case of "Mary, homeless in New York" who wrote an article for *The Guardian* (Mary, 2013), entitled, "What you learn about humanity from living on the streets." This person, who has a university degree in computer science and was a substitute teacher, lost her job and was eventually evicted from her rent-controlled apartment in New York City. She relates her experiences and encounters with people on the streets since becoming homeless. A few have helped

her with food and providing care, but the vast majority of people have ignored her, with some even attacking her or attempting to steal her few remaining possessions.

But it is not only these people like Mary who are homeless whose physical presence we usually do not bother acknowledging with a nod or a smile, it is also pretty much everyone else. This self-isolating and mutually distancing of people on the city streets has long been an integral component of capitalist society. Because “only capitalism constitutes a social formation – that is, an organized multiplicity of people – united by the absence of community, by separation and by individuality” (Jameson, 2011, p. 16), these absences of any sense of a community are perhaps more obviously felt in urban settings with denser gatherings in shared public spaces. In his observing London during the 1840s with its intense industrializing and ensuing rapidly growing population that numbered at the time over two million inhabitants coming from not only across England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, but also the world, Friedrich Engels noted:

The very turmoil of the streets has something repulsive, something against which human nature rebels. The hundreds of thousands of all classes and ranks crowding past each other, are they not all human beings with the same qualities and powers, and with the same interest in being happy? And have they not, in the end, to seek happiness in the same way, by the same means? And still they crowd by one another as though they had nothing in common, nothing to do with one another, and their only agreement is the tacit one, that each keep to his [*sic*] own side of the pavement, so as not to delay the opposing streams of the crowd, while it occurs to no man to honour another with so much as a glance. The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest becomes the more repellent and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together, within a limited space. And, however much one may be aware that this isolation of the individual, this narrow self-seeking, is the fundamental principle of our society everywhere, it is nowhere so shamelessly barefaced, so self-conscious as just here in the crowding of the great city. The dissolution of mankind into monads, of which each one has a separate essence, and a separate purpose, the world of atoms, is here carried out to its most extreme.

(Engels, 2009 [1845], pp. 68–69)

What Engels was describing based on his experiences emigrating to England in the 1840s to help run his father’s factory located in Manchester (Engels divided his time between there and London) is still a vivid portrayal of the separations and distancing between and among our fellow humans today. This “brutal indifference” we exhibit toward each other is not an inherently genetic trait but rather something that has been socially and culturally inculcated in many of us from early on in our lives under capitalism.

But can this instilled behavioral attitude be solely attributed to any regional cultural habitus? A comic skit by *The Mash Report*, a British satirical comedy show

on the BBC, that is posted on YouTube, entitled “Northerner terrifies Londoners by saying ‘hello’,” features a fictional character who is named as “generic Northerner Stephen Malley” that “has been accused of terrorising London by walking around saying hello ... (which) left Londoners traumatised by his attempts to interact with them in a friendly cheerful manner.” Although the comic framing of this satire is the regional-cultural differences between those from northern England and Londoners in terms of a friendly demeanor towards strangers, one can argue it actually illustrates how we have become the “monads” as Engels termed it. When I first saw this video in late 2019, I was actually in London at the time and I wanted to see how this really played out on the streets. The next morning in the neighborhood of Somers Town, as I was walking along the street, I cheerfully said ‘morning!’ with a smile to the first passersby. They muttered back, ‘morning’ while keeping their head down and avoiding eye contact with me. I tried it again with another person walking past me and this one only grunted. These two interactions seemed to verify the comment from the reporter in the skit on why the Londoners that the generic Northerner was saying hello to were so worried and “unsure why a man they did not know was talking to them.” Like the generic Northerner, I was also a stranger to these passersby. For many of us, this is the norm that we do not say hello or reply back to people we do not know. However, to ask the perhaps obvious question – how would we ever get to know one another if we don’t attempt to interact with each other on a regular basis on the streets and other public spaces?

Alienation and estrangement – two effects of capitalism

The ways in which we feel alienated from one another not only at the capitalist-run workplace but also within society-at-large was addressed by Marx in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (Marx, 1975 [1844]). In what has often been adopted solely as “alienation” in English language use, Marx in this work actually offered two interrelated concepts in German: “*entäusserung*” – alienation – and “*entfremdung*” which is translated as estrangement. In any society in which most of us must sell our daily labor in order to survive, this dynamic is such that “the worker sinks to the level of a commodity, and moreover, the most wretched commodity of all” (ibid., p. 322). Although poststructuralist scholars such as Michel Foucault (1988, 2008) presented what seemed to be the novel notion of one having to become and enact “the entrepreneur of the self” as the defining element of neoliberalism starting in the 1970s, the forced selling and marketing of oneself had been going on long before the neoliberal stage of capitalism with the increasing spread of capitalist-induced social relations in the early 19th century. By having to sell one’s labor that effectively became a commodity in the ways in which it is sold to and bought by a willing capitalist, “the worker becomes poorer the more wealth he [*sic*] produces, the more his production increases in power and extent. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he produces” (Marx, 1975 [1844], p. 323).

Because we become a commodity in marketing and selling our labor, this specific economic dynamic effects a social one – that of increasing and ever-intense competition with fellow humans in not only trying to gain employment over others for the same job(s) so that we can get paid a ‘living’ salary, but also trying to *stay* employed to keep paying the bills. And these social dynamics of endlessly having to be competitive with others, which at times leads to literally working ourselves to death in turn effects the economic relations because

the more the worker exerts himself in his work, the more powerful the alien, objective world becomes which he brings into being over against himself, the poorer he and his inner world become, and the less they belong to him.

(Marx, 1975 [1844], p. 324)

The commodities we produce with our labor become far more valuable than ourselves since as workers, we are always replaceable – as many an employer have reminded us in their attempt to motivate us to work even harder. Thus, as Marx pointed out, “the *devaluation* of the human world grows in direct proportion to the *increase in value* of the world of things” (ibid., pp. 323–324, emphasis in the original).

So what did Marx mean by “*enttäusserung*,” translated as alienation? It is the effect of our daily labor producing a commodified object – a product that because it does not and will not ever belong to us unless we have to buy it with our wages ‘earned’ from producing this thing only if we can afford to do so. As such, the commodity object we produce becomes “a *power independent* of the producer” (ibid., p. 324, emphasis in the original). One example of this is in the context of academia. For those of us who work at research-oriented universities, we face enormous pressure to get our articles and books published – especially so for academics who are on the tenure track and hope to receive tenure and promotion. Like many of my colleagues around the world, we spend a lot of time writing, rewriting, revising, and resubmitting our manuscripts in order to get published to build our research profile and reputation. If and once a peer-reviewed article manuscript gets published however, the article is then behind a paywall. The publisher will send us a proof of it for us to copy-edit and the final version in PDF form but it becomes their property. If we want to republish parts of this article, we need to get permission from the publisher because this work we produced no longer belongs to us. Thus, our labor “becomes an object, an *external* existence, but that it exists *outside* (us), independently of (us) and alien to (us)” (ibid., p. 324, emphasis in the original). We thus become alienated from the very things we produce from our work efforts as they are transformed through these capitalist economic-social relations into “an autonomous power; that the life which (we have) bestowed on the object confronts (us) as hostile and alien” (ibid., p. 324).

But our becoming alienated from the products we make does not stop there. In what Marx formulated as “*entfremdung*,” this “immediate consequence” of our becoming alienated from the production of labor “is the *estrangement of man from man*” (ibid., pp. 329–330, emphasis in the original). It is because of these

interanimating dynamics of having to work all the time to put food on the table and vie with others so that we keep our jobs that we become competitive and thus a rival with fellow workers over the crumbs (wages) allotted to us by capitalists. Moreover, “the competition between workers creates a permanent ‘surplus population’ – what Marx was later to call the industrial reserve army – which keeps down the standard of all” (Hobsbawm, 2011, p. 93). In becoming competitors with one another, this often effectively closes the door on possible friendships, collegial solidarity, and emotional support of people who are not only working side-by-side us, but also the world at large. Writing in the context of the workplaces in the mid-19th century, Marx (1975 [1844]) argued that we only feel ourselves when we are not working and when we are working, we do not feel ourselves. Furthermore, he pointed out that a worker “is at home when (they are) not working, and not at home when ... working” (p. 326). However in the Internet age, this is no longer true as many of us know since we are constantly checking our work emails at home long after work hours officially ended. Thus, we can almost never feel ourselves even at our home because our work literally never stops.

We become alienated from the work we produce and thus estranged from one another inasmuch as we only exist as workers when we exist as capital, and exist “as capital only when *capital* exists for (us). The existence of capital is (our) existence, (our) *life*, for it determines the content of (our) life in a manner indifferent to (us)” (ibid., p. 335, emphasis in the original). These dual feelings of alienation and estrangement have another effect – that is of the growing anxiety that we ourselves will eventually become worthless. As Studs Terkel (1974) observed, “it is this specter that most haunts working men and women: the planned obsolescence of people that is of a piece with the planned obsolescence of the things they make. Or sell.” (p. xviii). And because of this dreadful feeling, “it is perhaps this fear of no longer being needed in a world of needless things that most clearly spells out the unnaturalness, the surreality of much that is called work today” (ibid., p. xviii). As our work becomes more and more meaningless, so then do our lives under capitalism. With the “exchange value (of our laboring activities and products), the social connection between persons is transformed into a social relation between things; a personal capacity into objective wealth” (Marx, 1973, p. 157). For those of us who have not ‘succeeded’ to achieve any semblance of this objective wealth, we are deemed to be ‘failures’ and ‘losers’ in capitalist society and come to see ourselves as such.

Estrangements of race, gender, and sexuality

For Marx, the concept of alienation served as “an anti-capitalist ideological platform ... Alienation left the books of philosophers and the lecture halls of universities, took to the streets and the space of workers’ struggles, and became a critique of bourgeois society in general” (Musto, 2012, p. 112). Although Marx primarily addressed alienation and estrangement in the context of the specific social relations of classed dynamics, our estrangements also involve the interrelated social

co-constructions and accompanying performative identities of race, gender, and sexuality. Numerous scholars in applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology have addressed how language and discourse are involved with these indexical enactments in interactional encounters (e.g., Alim, Rickford, & Ball, 2016; Bucholtz, 2016, 2019; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Cameron, 2000, 2005; Chun, 2016; Hall, 1997; Heller, 2003; Higgins, 2010; Hill, 1998; Hymes, 1996; Ibrahim, 1999; Lee, 2015; Lo, 2016; McElhinny, 2002; McIntosh, 2021; Motha, 2014; Ochs, 1992; Rampton, 2006; Rosa & Flores, 2017).

The egregious disparities in wages and wealth among gendered and racialized workers have led to further estrangements between people selling their labor. As of 2015, the full-time and part-time Black workers in the US earned only 75% of White workers' salaries in median hour earnings while female workers received just 83% compared with male workers (Patten, 2016). In the greater Boston area, the median net worth of White households in 2017 was US\$247,500 (Johnson, 2017). For non-immigrant Black households? US\$8! In addition to these wage discriminations leading to much less accumulated wealth, the long history of ethnic and religious divides among the working class in the US (Davis, 1986) has also contributed to our estrangement from one another. A vivid example of this happened to me about a year after I had moved to Boston. I was at a pub with several colleague friends in Cambridge, which has been generally perceived as a very progressive neighborhood in the greater Boston area. I went up to the bar to order a drink, and asked the bartender for a shot of Bushmills whiskey. The bartender looked at me with a frown, and said, "You don't want that Protestant drink, do you?!" Needless to say, I was stunned. It took me a second to realize what they were referring to – Bushmills being distilled in Northern Ireland. I answered back, "Fine, give me a Jameson, then." The bartender said, "That's better!" As they turned to get the bottle, I was literally shaking my head. I felt I had gone back in time to the 19th century in the US during which workers who had emigrated from predominantly Catholic countries such as Ireland faced immense hostility and violence at times from 'native-born' (Anglo-Saxon) Protestant workers who had taken up the discourse of immigrants stealing their jobs. This seems to be the only explanation why a bartender would not want to serve me alcohol distilled in a Protestant majority country such as Northern Ireland, never mind the fact that Bushmills is now owned by a company based in Mexico, which is a Catholic majority nation. Aside from the bartender's assumption I was not Protestant (which in fact I was raised and baptized as a child in the Episcopal Church), why would they care which brand of whiskey I was drinking as long as I was spending money at their business, even if they were not the owner? And if I were actually a devout Protestant, would that not have offended me, which probably then would have prompted me to leave this pub and go somewhere else? This interactional encounter is just one example of an estrangement stemming from how "the linguistic generates the economic, social, political, as well as how the economic, social, political generate the linguistic" (Blommaert, 2005, p. 66). I would add to this, the historical as well because of the long-running tensions between some

Protestant and Catholic workers in which their religious identities have taken precedence over their shared class positionality, much to the detriment of numerous unionized struggles in the US from the 19th century into the mid-20th (Davis, 1986). And not only in the US, but in the context of the divisions among the Irish because of British colonialism, Devlin (1969) wrote, “the tragedy of the situation is that by aligning themselves with those who work against their interests but share their religion, the working class of my country, Protestant and Catholic, perpetuates its own misery” (p. 107).

In another socially constructed domain, one discourse enabling estrangements among and between people interpellated in their gendered roles in US society is the phrase, “man up!” I have been told this by people a number of times. So what is involved with the articulation of this gender-role framing? The common understanding of this term is that one needs to show courage and ‘toughness’ in a challenging situation, however defined. When I was 8 years old, I saw a large beetle in my bedroom and started yelling. My father came into the room and asked me, “Who’s bigger, you or that bug?” I immediately understood his framing of it that I should just ‘man up’ and squash the insect myself. So, I replied to him, “The beetle is!” However, this discourse of ‘man up’ has also been used with others who do not self-identify as or appear to be a cisgender male. I once overheard a mother telling her daughter to man up after the daughter informed her mother that she was unnerved and scared upon seeing a rat running around in her apartment. How many of us, whatever gender we self-identify as, would be freaked out as well from seeing unwelcome vermin in our home? Through the discursive use of this phrase, ‘man up!’, it equates the ability or need to be ‘tough’ with ‘being a (real) man’ when faced with something unsettling or even dangerous. By doing so, it obviously reinforces an ideologically toxic notion of attributing a characteristic affect to a specific gendered role and its socially imposed enactments, thus enabling and furthering estrangement not only between but also within us in regard to how we then may feel inadequate in not living up to this expectation. Related to this discourse of ‘man up!’ is the often self-imposed regulatory behavior of people who self-identify as cisgender males not to cry in public or in front of family and friends.

In the interrelated social constructions and enactments of sexualities, there have been numerous discourses perpetuating heteronormativity. Whether based on one’s religious and hegemonic cultural beliefs, why should anyone care who a person chooses to sleep with? The history of violence against both the female and the LGBTQ communities in the US that has been fueled by heteronormative, sexist, and misogynistic discourses illustrate that estrangement goes beyond just feeling isolated and indifferent towards one another in becoming monads. Estrangement also leads to the killing of fellow humans seen as being ‘unhuman,’ ‘inferior,’ and ‘abnormal.’ This is obviously exhibited as well in our violent estrangements enacted by centuries of racist discourses, which will be addressed in detail in Chapter 4. I have heard numerous times stories from some White people that when walking on a city street at night, upon seeing a Black man walking towards them, they would cross the street to avoid him. Why? This goes beyond merely not giving a

glance at fellow pedestrians as Engels (2009 [1845]) observed. If you were a Black man, how would you feel seeing the White people who regularly avoid you on the street at night? Would that not fuel your anger and resentment? And of course, it does not stop there, with certain words coming out of some people that you and your ancestors have heard for centuries. How then do you forget those words that cut and seep into you, staining your soul, forming an invisible scar that you see and feel whenever something reminds you of a past injustice, a verbal infliction that is, most likely, all but forgotten by the assailant?

Subverting the grotesque body of capitalism

In the context of discussing the grotesque realism and images that were frequently featured in Renaissance literature, Bakhtin (1984) defined ‘grotesque’ in this context in the following manner: “contrary to modern canons, the grotesque body is not separated from the rest of the world. It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits” (p. 26). Literary scholars (e.g., LaCapra, 1983) have speculated that Bakhtin’s (1984) *Rabelais and his world*, which explored folk culture and popular humor in the context of the carnival, was an implicit critique and indictment of Stalin’s regime under which Bakhtin lived and suffered. However, Bakhtin’s characterization of the grotesque as an open, never-completed, continually expanding, and transgressive dynamic entity seems to be also an apt description of the spectral and grotesque realities of capitalism because the grotesque body is “continually built, created, and builds and creates another body. Moreover, the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world” (p. 317). In the capitalist economies’ attempts to swallow the world (aka, ‘globalization’), these aims and practices have in turn led to resistance to capitalist hegemony across the planet. These dynamics do exemplify that “the world as eternally unfinished: a world dying and being born at the same time ... the transfer from the old to the new, from death to life” (ibid., p. 166).

In this work, Bakhtin (1984) explored the history and practices of the carnival in European countries during the Middle Ages through the Renaissance era in which festive public celebrations connected to religious events (e.g., Lent) temporarily upended the social hierarchy. The multitude of villagers and people coming in from the rural areas to celebrate the carnival “in the marketplace or in the streets is ... the people as a whole, but organized *in their own way*, the way of the people. It is outside of and contrary to all existing forms of the coercive socioeconomic and political organization” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 255).

The important dynamic of the carnival as Bakhtin elaborates throughout this work is that it was an opportunity for the ‘ordinary’ people to publicly challenge the existing hegemonic social and economic relations with mockery, satire, and subversive acts through seemingly clownish performances on the streets. However, the carnival “is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people ... thus (it) is the people’s second life” (ibid., pp. 7–8), and which these official feasts were “a consecration of inequality. On the contrary, all were considered equal during carnival” (p. 10).

This upturning of the prevalent social-economic relations of the carnival offered a glimpse of how another world was possible in the gatherers' lifetimes.

These possibilities of alternative ways in which a society could be restructured that were enacted in "the world of carnival" was how "the awareness of the people's immortality is combined with the realization that established authority and truth are relative" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 256). This realization was illustrated via the sudden democratizing of people's relations to one another with the feudal hierarchy dismissed and ignored during the carnival and its public spaces. A crucial component of this involved language of course inasmuch as "the familiar language of the marketplace (billingsgate) became a reservoir in which various speech patterns excluded from official intercourse could freely accumulate" (*ibid.*, p. 17). The language used by everyday people in the marketplace was "quite unlike the language of Church, palace, courts, and institutions. It was also unlike the tongue of ... the ruling classes" (*ibid.*, p. 154). But more than the different linguistic repertoires of these people in the marketplace that were enacted both during and after carnival events, importantly the carnival-grotesque form was to "liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths, from clichés, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted" (*ibid.*, p. 34). In these performative spaces of the carnival, the people's challenging of the existing hegemony was able to be presented publicly without fear of backlash and/or punishment by the elites. These performances of the grotesque unveiled "the potentiality of an entirely different world, of another order, another way of life ... to escape the false 'truth of this world' in order to look at the world with eyes free from this 'truth'" (*ibid.*, pp. 48–49). By rejecting the intimidating notions of their lot in life being determined by a god that was perpetuated by the aristocratic overlords and their accompanying religious ideologues always attempting to instill fear and submission among the 'lower' class, the people in the context of "the marketplace feast opposed the protective, timeless stability, the unchanging established order and ideology, and stressed the element of change and renewal" (*ibid.*, p. 81). The subversive spaces of the carnival have continued to be enacted since these feudal European-era events.

In September 2011, a protest movement emerged that explicitly denounced the economic-systemic inequalities and injustices in the US. Calling their movement "Occupy Wall Street" and naming themselves as "We are the 99%," the protesters set up camp in Zuccotti Park, which is located in the Wall Street financial district of Manhattan, New York City. The movement quickly spread not only across the country but also other nations. I was living in Los Angeles at the time and when the Occupy movement soon started occupying the south and north lawns at the City Hall in downtown Los Angeles, I became an active participant including running a workshop on critical language in action (e.g., Chun, 2014a, 2014b). Seeing how the protesters co-created a differential space within the representational space of city government that included overnight shelters including tents, a public library with books on economics, politics, and history, and food-sharing tables, I was experiencing a 21st-century enactment of the Bakhtinian carnival. In this "marketplace feast" of Occupy protesters challenging the prevailing ideology and

order (Bakhtin, 1984), the people by their re-semiotizing of this public ‘official’ space demonstrated what Lefebvre (1991a) argued that “new social relationships call for a new space, and vice versa” (p. 59). In their aim in calling for a more economically and socially just society, the Occupiers temporarily reclaimed this urban public space that had been designed to embody an institutional power and authority that was not to be questioned. These spatial practices of the Occupy Wall Street Movement in presenting a demonstrable example of alternative social relationships with its multimodal displays of explicit critiques of the political-economic system co-constructed and produced a counter-hegemonic space within an existing hegemonic physical and representational domain with its own discourses of institutional power and control. Thus, like the participants in the carnival, the Occupiers in their overlaying of physical space, were “making symbolic use of its objects” in “which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 39) in calling for another world without capitalism in their lifetimes.

Othering with our structures of feeling

In discussing the significance of the work by the literary, cultural, and political critic and scholar Raymond Williams, Eagleton (1996) described Williams’s notion of “structure of feeling” as “mediating ... between an historical set of social relations, the general cultural and ideological modes appropriate to them, and the specific forms of subjectivity (embodied not least in artifacts) in which such modes are lived out” (p. 110). These specific forms in which our subjectivity are embodied and enacted through modes such as taking up particular discourses during societal crises and shifts are interanimated by the specific social relations that not only position us, but also how we self-position ourselves to one another. Williams (1977) conceptualized his notion of “structures of feeling”:

The term is difficult, but ‘feeling’ is chosen to emphasize a distinction from more formal concepts of ‘world-view’ or ‘ideology.’ It is not only that we must go beyond formally held and systematic beliefs, though of course we have always to include them. It is that we are concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt, and the relations between these and formal or systematic beliefs are in practice variable (including historically variable), over a range from formal assent with private dissent to the more nuanced interaction between selected and interpreted beliefs and acted and justified experiences ... We are talking about characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity. We are then defining these elements as a ‘structure’: as a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension.

(Williams, 1977, p. 132)

It is important to highlight here again that there does not exist an either/or binary of so-called rational thinking and our at-times seemingly ‘irrational’ feelings and emotions. Instead, as Williams pointed out, these exist as a dynamic whole, inseparable in the ways in which they inextricably feed into each other and affect the ensuing frames of thought and accompanying emotions. This should be obvious when in any conversation that has led to heated arguments among friends, colleagues, neighbors, or even strangers that deal with the controversial and divisive political events and ideas of our time, that we become more animated and upset when others strongly disagree with our views. And it is precisely these lived feelings that often obstruct any ‘rational’ counter-arguments from taking hold. As Gibson-Graham (1996) points out, “capitalism is not just an economic signifier that can be displaced through deconstruction and the proliferation of signs. Rather, it is where the libidinal investment is” (p. xv).

One example of this is a central discourse that has long been in historical circulation is discursive displacing of anger and resentment from the at-times overwhelming financial anxiety caused by the social relations of our labor productions onto those who have not been responsible for these worries and consequences. This discourse involves the constructing the ‘Other’ and its threats to our well-being and livelihoods. In the US, this has taken many forms including of course blaming selected immigrants for stealing our jobs, anointing some people and their ancestors who have lived in the country for generations as being the ‘perpetual or forever foreigner’ (as I have experienced this discourse many a time in my life), and the centuries-old dehumanizing and killing of people whose ancestors from Africa were enslaved. On writing about the influence of Machiavelli on Gramsci’s work, Fontana (1993) wrote that for Machiavelli, “the primary material around which reality is organized and ordered (are) emotion, passion, thought, beliefs, prejudices – the entire complex of sociocultural structures without which reality cannot exist or be understood” (p. 80). Our emotions, impassioned feelings, and prejudices shift depending on the political-motivated and created contexts in which an Other emerges seemingly overnight. This Other becomes the new ‘Them,’ or rather joins the company of Others, or ‘*those people*’ – the Them. But this Them who attempts to destroy our lives never includes the capitalist ruling class. And this Them raises the binary opposite of course – the ‘Us.’

Yet who is this Us? Who gets to belong in the Us? Is this Us always homogeneous in terms of demographics, be it race, gender, class, and sexuality, and any combinations thereof? And if not, how and why does the identity as it were of an Us change? During World War II, the overwhelming majority of Americans were united in their support in the battle against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, often framing themselves as devoted patriots loving their country. However, a little over twenty years later, the peace movement against the Vietnam War was led by a good number of Americans including those who resisted the military draft and denounced the US government for its attempts to further its imperialist expansion in Asia. Did these Americans love their country? They were certainly framed by

pro-war politicians and the media as being anti-patriotic and thus not one of Us in this context. The discourse of Us is of course entextualized within the discourse of You. In writing about the British National Front poster which featured a xenophobic discourse that claimed that “*swarms* of illegal immigrants and *bogus* asylum seekers *invade* Britain *by any means available to them* (in) only seeking the easy comforts and free benefits” (emphasis added), which are “all funded by YOU – the British taxpayer!,” Ahmed (2014) noted that “it is not the case, however, that anybody within the nation could inhabit this ‘you’” (p. 1). So who gets to inhabit the You and become part of the Us?

Many a political leader has presented the discourse of a nostalgic longing for a fictionalized past in which a specified and named people are accorded the singularized and sole identity of the nation. In the case of the US, politicians have often proclaimed “We, the American people!” Yet depending on the audience that politicians were addressing, “American” indexed not necessarily everyone who would identify as an American. Would an American citizen who had immigrated to the country be seen as an ‘American’; i.e., part of the ‘Us/You’ by everyone in the audience? This discourse of a “doleful nostalgia for an unrealizable ‘paradise lost’ that is perhaps no less debilitating or distorting than ideology itself” (Gardiner, 1992, p. 27) has an extremely effective and affective appeal to those who lament their relative loss of economic status and attribute this to the Other. This discourse has two aims – the first of which is the construction of a “conservative utopia” which “is characterized by an ideological appeal to an idealized and mythologized past which de-legitimizes any challenge to the reigning social order” (ibid., p. 32). This in effect dismisses or de-legitimizes the cries among those who are suffering from job losses and declining living standards. The framing of ‘Us/You’ in presenting a selected ‘unity’ of a certain demographic along racialized ones, aids in shifting the focus away from the hegemonic political and social order of the elites to an ideologically invented adversary, the Them. This co-construction of the Them is the second function that acts in dialogical tandem with the chosen Us, who are accorded the singular nationalistic, racialized, and linguistic identity, as in the case of US society, being White English-speaking Americans. Indeed, the role of politically motivated and produced emotions of particular people “provide a script, certainly: you become the ‘you’ if you accept the invitation to align yourself with the nation, and against those others who threaten to take the nation away” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 12).

This has had historical consequences including not only the violence enacted toward particular immigrant communities and individuals, but has also served to sustain the reigning power elite’s divide and rule strategy for generations. As Davis (1986) argued, “it is important to challenge the common assertion that immigration *per se* – ‘hordes of peasants’ – created an unmeltable and culturally backward heterogeneity that vitiated class unity” (p. 41). It was never the immigrants that undermined attempts at US working-class unity inasmuch as their “conscious decision to forge larger ethnic solidarities as the basis for communal organization in America was most often a defensive reaction to exclusion and victimization in the

new country” (ibid., p. 41). This has led to the working class in the US continuing “to find its social identity in fragmentary ethnic and racial communities” (Davis, 1986, p. 99) as the result of this Us/You and Them discourses. And of course this long-running playbook of divide and rule of the working class has not been limited to only the US. In the context of the UK during the period when Margaret Thatcher was prime minister, Hall noted that

we underestimate the degree to which Thatcherism has succeeded in representing itself as ‘on the side of the little people against the big battalions.’ Ideologically, it has made itself, to some degree, not only one of ‘Them,’ but, more disconcertingly, part of ‘Us’; it has aligned itself with ‘what some of the people really want,’ while at the same time continuing to dominate them through the power bloc.

(Hall, 1988a, p. 6)

Commodities as discursive identifications

One ubiquitous image of the American dream that was prevalent during the 1950s and ’60s was the commodities of the house and property in the suburbs (which was related to what has been called “White flight” in the US in which the White middle-class were fleeing urban spaces of growing communities of color) and importantly, the car. The automobile as commodity has been a dominant figure in US society for the past 100 years, with the enabling capital implementations of highways and major roads replacing mass transportation accessible to all via subways, trains, and buses. In the context of urbanized spaces, this is abundantly evident in Los Angeles in which early-20th-century public transportation (e.g., streetcars) began to be increasingly dismantled during the 1920s with the rise of the automobile that was “spurred on by automobile advertising” in which “the private car was counterposed to public transit as the epitome of modernity and stylishness. An automobile provided an individual with freedom of choice, (and) was an object of conspicuous consumption” (Wachs, 1996, p. 118). So although many residents in Los Angeles already had access to good public transportation that covered many parts of the city, this was clearly the case that “the commodity prevails over everything. (Social) space and (social) time, dominated by exchanges, become the time and space of markets; although not being *things* but including **rhythms**, they enter into **products**” (Lefebvre, 2013, p. 16, emphasis in the original). These spatial and time-scale rhythms in Los Angeles and worldwide where cars became a sought-after commodity included the sense of ‘privacy’ (being by yourself in the seemingly comforting space of an automobile and not having to share it as opposed to riding on crowded buses and subways during rush hour), and importantly, feeling the sense of ‘control’ in which you no longer had to wait for a bus or subway train to arrive because you could just jump into your car at any time of the day and night to go wherever you wanted to go. Thus, this car product’s rhythm has given this seeming sense of ‘freedom’ to many people.

But it also goes beyond this affective notion of freedom by merely having a car. The appeal of this commodity also lies in the materialized semiotic forms which have been co-constructed as desirable in its indexing of affluence, leading to a prestigious status in society to all those who see you driving and getting out of a particular car. As Lefebvre (1984) noted, “the car is a status symbol, it stands for comfort, power, authority and speed, it is *consumed as a sign* in addition to its practical use, it is something magic, a denizen from the land of make-believe” (p. 102, emphasis in the original). The use value in terms of mechanical mobility of a second-hand car that one person bought for US\$5,000 is the same use value as the car that someone bought for US\$100,000. So why this huge price differential? Of course it is usually presented as the latter car having high-quality leather seats, air-conditioning, state-of-the-art technology, and so on. And the fact the car has a logo on it that shows to the world you paid a lot of money for it. But did this car take as much time to make as another car that is sold for much less money? Marx wrote:

The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists ... in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's [*sic*] own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution, the products of labour become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time supra-sensible or social ... the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities, and is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities ... this fetishism of the world of commodities arises from the peculiar social character of the labour which produces them.

(Marx, 1976 [1867], pp. 164–165)

Marx's important and insightful notion of the emergence of commodity fetishism from the social relations of labor under capitalism illustrates our attachments to particular commodities and the accompanying contextualized identities that have been co-constructed and thus associated with them. Although what Marx meant by his idea of commodity fetishism as an imaginary in regard to “a commodity's physicality, its palpable ‘thing’ quality, bears little or no connection to the social relations that made it” (Merrifield, 2002a, p. 159), what are the ways in which a specific commodity becomes a ‘prized possession’ as it were? And not only the commodity itself, broadly speaking such as the car, but how and why is a brand also fetishized? What he called as the “finished form of the world of commodities,” that is, “the money form,” Marx (1976 [1867]) argued that this “conceals the social character of private labour and the social relations between the individual workers, by making those relations appear as relations between material objects, instead of revealing them plainly” (pp. 168–169).

The culture of commodities has further fueled our alienation and estrangement in which we experience what has been called “phantasmagoria” (Benjamin, 1999, 2008):

this self-alienation is reflective of what Benjamin insightfully conceptualized as “phantasmagoria,” which he used to describe his experiences with the Paris Arcades. Developing Marx’s notion of the commodity as an all-consuming fetish object, which obscures its own material and social relations of production by its de-contextualized and seemingly eternal appearance that formulated a certain phantasmagorical power in all its spectral projections and presentations, which is difficult to escape in our lives, Benjamin extended this notion of phantasmagoria to describe the entire commodity culture in which we are saturated through endless advertisements in our urban and suburban landscapes, including billboards, transportation, street posters, print media, and now online in all its multimodal forms.

(Chun, 2018a, pp 294–295)

The phantasmagoria in the 21st century is of course the Internet with its endless tailored advertisements popping up on every webpage we visit. How many of us, when after searching for a product using Google, do we see this product then advertised in the sidebar of our email page or on Facebook? And not even from a search, we could have mentioned it on a post on our or a friend’s social media site and the product ad will be sure to appear very soon thereafter. The phantasmagoria’s algorithmic surveillance is the latest update of George Orwell’s *1984*. This time though it is not the Party that is tracking and spying on us, it is a new ‘party’ looking to make more and more money from us: Google, Facebook, and Amazon. As one social meme featuring the face of George Orwell says, “I fucking told you so!”

Agency from commodities?

To what extent do certain commodities enable or encourage a certain agency of those who purchase them? That is, not the agency involved in buying commodities, be they goods or services, but the agentive acts and accompanying identifications from using a commodity in cultural contexts and spatial-temporal settings? What are the discursive dynamics involved in the interactive meaning-making processes of making a commodity appealing through a complex social-semiotic force of advertising and associated histories to an aimed and socially constructed demographic, and how some who identify (but not all) in that demographically defined category respond to in their mediating the commodity’s manufactured appeal? How do people view their agentive acts in using a particular commodity? Do these agentive acts become part of one’s identity in a visual, discursive manner? How does the use value of a commodity object become a seminal part of some people’s lived experiences, without which leads to a sense of personal loss and lack of meaning? Do their self-perceived agentive acts in their commodity usage make up for their knowing absence of any agency at their workplace? In other words, for

some people, why the effort spent both monetarily and temporally on gaining agency in spaces other than their jobs? In discussing Marx's notion of alienation in *Capital*, Skeggs notes that

value becomes established through exchange, but in this exchange the relationship to the commodity itself generates different forms of personhood. There are persons who are alienated from their labour (the labourers), but who have an attachment via use-value to objects, and other persons who can only view objects as the basis for exchange (the European capitalist colonists). These different relations to objects shape the forms of personhood that are established, as well as forming the historical basis for different relationships between groups.

(Skeggs, 2004, p. 9)

Thus, it is important to address the ways in which people discursively construct their relationship to the commodity that generates a distinct personhood; e.g., in the case of a certain classed, racialized, and sexualized gendered role as indexed by ownership of commodities such as oversized pick-up trucks (which are not necessarily bought for work purposes) or guns in the case of the US.

Ebert and Zavarzadeh (2008) argued that during the Fordist (modernist) era in the US, the discourses of consumption presented it as "almost always purely functional – it is a practice aimed at meeting needs" (p. 170). However, in the post-World War II era, this discourse of consumption shifted from its sole functional purpose, to "a matter of affect, feeling, desire, and longing ... (becoming) a matter of wants not needs; it acts as a symbolic communication of the identity of the consumer, who by choosing a commodity chooses a lifestyle that provides an identity" (ibid., p. 170). On February 14, 2018, a 19-year-old male opened fire on his former high school in Parkland, Florida. He had legally bought an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, a military-grade weapon which can fire 45 rounds of ammunition in one minute. It was the 18th school shooting in the US so far that year. It was in fact, just another day in the US.

The US news media addressed this issue from the usual perspectives, framing it as an issue of a mental health illness of the assailant (who soon confessed to the police he committed the murders). Another frame by the more liberal media outlets such as the *New York Times* blamed the easy access for Americans to purchase guns as the main enabling factor in these mass shootings. The day after the shooting, an article in the *Times* argued that the number of mass shootings in the US, which far exceeds such occurrences in any other country, is directly related to the number of guns owned by Americans. This is estimated to be anywhere from 270 to 300 million handguns, hunting rifles, and semi-automatic assault weapons like the AR-15, or almost one gun per person in the country.

People around the world who keep hearing about these almost twice or thrice-weekly school shootings (along with other mass shootings such as the one in Las Vegas, Nevada in October 2017 in which 57 people were killed at an outdoor country music concert by a gunman firing from his hotel suite windows) may not

know or indeed wonder why gun ownership is still legal in the US. The legal status dates back to 1789 when the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution was written, which it proclaimed that “a well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” This Constitutional amendment has often been presented as the absolute necessity of common citizens (i.e., free men in 18th-century America excluding indentured servants, enslaved Africans, and women) to be able to rise up and protect the newly won war of independence from Great Britain and any other potential foreign threat to the new nation in 1789 and thereafter. However, what is almost never mentioned in either the media or US high school history textbooks is that

the real reason the Second Amendment was ratified, and why it says ‘State’ instead of ‘Country’ (the framers knew the difference – see the 10th Amendment), was to preserve the slave patrol militias in the Southern states, which was necessary to get Virginia’s vote.

(Hartmann, 2013)

As the word ‘militia’ is usually disseminated in both mainstream media and historical discourse in the US, it seems to suggest either a localized community or government-formed armed unit of people (almost always men) willing to fight for “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” But in fact, as Hartmann (2013) points out, these 18th- and 19th-century militias formed a police state in which armed patrols comprised of Southern plantation enslavers and their male White employees literally aimed to violently suppress whenever necessary the frequent uprisings and rebellions by enslaved people.

Since then, gun ownership has become both an identifiable and indexical way of life for some Americans. Rooted in this historical legacy of enforcing the system of enslavement, gun ownership in the US is actually not for all, it seems. In the 1960s, a revolutionary socialist organization was formed by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. Originally called the “Black Panther Party for Self-Defense,” it became known as simply, the Black Panther Party. Exercising their Constitutional rights as specifically articulated in the aforementioned Second Amendment, they organized citizen patrols equipped with guns for their self-defense in carefully observing the Oakland Police Department for any potential police brutality against the Black community, which was known as “copwatching.” Although there would eventually be numerous gun battles between the Black Panthers and the police across the country, the Mulford Act became law a mere seven months after the founding of the Panthers and before any of the aforementioned gun battles. This law was passed in California in 1967 and signed by then Governor Ronald Reagan that repealed an earlier law that permitted people to publicly carry loaded guns. The Mulford Act was specifically in response to the Black Panther Party who conducted their armed patrols in the Black communities, which were essentially ‘militias.’

This speaks to how “every sign, as we know, is a construct between socially organized persons in the process of their interaction” (Vološinov, 1973, p. 21), and importantly, how “any consumer good can likewise be made an ideological sign” (ibid., p. 10), which depends on who is displaying which consumer product. In the context of the US, numerous Black men have been murdered by the police without carrying any weapons whatsoever. If a Black man were walking on the street in any part of the US, while openly carrying a gun (which is legally permitted in some states), he would most likely be shot dead by the police. And this does not only apply to Black adults as in the case of Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old boy who was playing with a *toy* gun by himself at a public park in Cleveland, Ohio and was killed by a cop who fired his gun without giving any warning. By contrast, in an open-carry gun state such as Texas, the El Paso mass murderer walked into a Walmart store carrying a gun and security left him alone until he started shooting and killing people in the store. Guess which ‘color’ this person is?

The ownership of guns in the US for the most part is not exercised within communal groups or citizens’ militias. It is individualistic in the sense that for the people who own guns, it appears to index a particular cultural and social identity. This identity partially rests on the premise that owning a gun signifies an independence from the ‘system.’ This system seen by some appears to be conformist, socially liberal, and ‘politically correct.’ Owning a gun seems to hearken back to ‘the good old days’ in which the hierarchy of race, gender, and sexuality was unchallenged. In this sense, gun ownership would seem to index a specific identity of White heteronormative masculinity in which ‘real men’ have guns. There is of course also the issue of class in all of this. Based on my own observations, upper class and upper middle-class Americans usually do not own guns. Their identities are based on other commodities; having two homes or nice art for example. But it appears that for some White working-class males and/or those originally from the working class, having a gun gives them a sense of power missing in their everyday lives. And this is exactly what the system known as capitalism wants. Gun manufacturing and sales have become a booming (pun intended) industry with profits soaring from guns sold in stores, conventions, and outdoor markets in many states in the US. What better way to continue to perpetuate a commodity-based identity that ‘safely’ allows (except when shootings erupt as they do on a regular basis) a token measure of power allocated in the proverbial crumbs to the dispossessed and angry White working-class male in the form of a gun while raking in profits?

Discourses of the everyday

The discursive hegemonic framings in insisting that capitalism is the only viable and indeed, desirable economic system for any society attempt to create the spectral sense that capitalism is and will be an eternal pervasive system throughout time and space. Time in the sense of ongoing history and our everyday lives including our experiential presences and/or absences at work, home, and the community. Space in that capitalism has supposedly infiltrated every corner of the globe and thus there

can be no ‘escape’ from it. As we have seen repeatedly, there have been seemingly ordinary phrases and utterances that emerge from both everyday people and the powers that be in which these discourses frame our social-economic relations in society as an eternal and immovable fixture, which is a key component of our hegemonic consent (e.g., Gramsci, 1971). As Bakhtin noted:

Every age has its own type of words and expressions that are given as a signal to speak freely, to call things by their own names, without any mental restrictions and euphemisms. The use of these colloquialisms created the atmosphere of frankness, inspired certain attitudes, a certain unofficial view of the world.

(Bakhtin, 1984, p. 188)

In the past few years, I have heard the phrase “it is what it is” from several friends, family members, and colleagues when discussing political, social, and economic events and situations. I don’t recall ever hearing this expression before as it seems to be fairly recent. So why and how has this particular discourse emerged in social circulation? And what is it suggesting? Does it imply a sense of apathy or passive resignation? And/or a proverbial (and sometimes literal) shrugging of the shoulders in saying we can’t do anything to change what the ‘it’ is referring to in any particular context? Note the use of the present tense with the verb, ‘be’ in both clauses. Why not say, “it was what it was”? Or “it is what it will be”? Using the present tense seems to index an interminable situation which we cannot do anything about it to change. The discourse of “it is what it is” does indeed suggest for those who use this fatalistic phrase that they are acknowledging that they feel the inability and incapability to do anything to change the situations they observe around them as well as immersed in. This discourse appears to be the dialogical entextualization of the famous epigram by the 19th-century French writer Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, “plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose” – the more things change, the more they stay the same. Whether one’s interpretation of this is that he was intending it to be either satirical or cynical, the consensual effect seems to be the same as “it is what it is” – giving up hope for a better world. But it is not just feeling helpless; because the abandonment of any agency to make things happen for the better on economic and social scales is part and parcel of our hegemonic consent to the system. Yet, there are other discourses that seem to suggest otherwise, but are they counter-hegemonic in their intended aims and actions?

It was reported in the January 6, 2021 online edition of the *New York Times* that Senator Mitt Romney, who is a Republican, was harassed at both the airport in Salt Lake City, Utah, and on plane to Washington, DC by Trump supporters who were traveling to protest the official Electoral College count to confirm the US Presidential election of Joe Biden. When a Trump supporter confronted Senator Romney in the airport lounge, she was not wearing a mask and so Romney told her to put one on. She retorted, “don’t tell me what to do!” even though wearing a mask in all spaces at the airport was required by state regulations. In the age of the COVID-19 pandemic, this is now a common discourse of some Americans

who protest that the government is infringing on their freedom and liberty by requiring them to wear a mask in public spaces and keep their social distancing to help prevent the viral spread. “In some societies people are forced at the end of a machine gun to behave in a certain way. In our own this is achieved through apparent freedoms” (Willis, 1977, p. 171). This notion of insisting on being ‘free’ from the government ‘interfering’ in our lives is grounded in historical discourses in the US context such as “live free or die” (the official motto of the US state of New Hampshire), “give me liberty or give me death” (attributed to Patrick Henry in a speech in 1775 advocating for the American Revolution), and the 2nd Amendment of the right to own guns that gives the sense of freedom to some.

What is intriguing and indeed puzzling is that for the people who use this discourse of “don’t tell me what to do!” seem to be for the most part, quite complacent, or at least acquiescent in another context of being told what to do *all the time*. This context is their workplace in which unless they are the employers themselves, they are often told by their bosses (aka ‘masters’ as explained in Chapter 4) what to do, when and how to do it, or else. Now, it would be seem obvious that they have no choice in the matter of being told what to do because if they don’t, then, we know what happens to them at their workplace – getting fired on the spot in many instances. However, the question here is, why do they displace their anger and frustration at being controlled by others onto their government, who for the most part attempts to enact controls for the safety of the general public (e.g., stop signs and traffic signals so drivers and pedestrians don’t get killed; mandatory smoke alarms in buildings so people have the sound notification to escape from a fire)? It is interesting why this person and other anti-maskers like her would view the public safety requirements to wear a mask to not only protect others from the virus, but importantly also protect *oneself* from contracting it as an egregious infringement on one’s freedom. Why don’t they direct their anger in a collective fashion at their employers, corporations, and CEOs who alone can determine if they have food on their table and a roof over their head by ‘giving’ them a job with ‘wages’? One explanation would be that it is much easier to get angry at politicians like that person yelling at Senator Romney in the airport without any dire consequences than it is to yell at one’s boss for the obvious reason. And workers have often revolted and organized in their workplaces through unionized struggles and strikes, but again, the question here would be, why hasn’t this happened not only more often, but also on a larger scale – among all capitalist owned and run-workplaces across all communities on a state and national level? Given the historical divides among the working class in the US, based on racialized, gendered, ethnicized, and religious identities and their discourses (Davis, 1986), it appears that yelling, “don’t tell me what to do!” is the sole privilege of a self-selected demographic of people who view themselves as the only ones having the right to say this to the government. In this case, yes, “there are no indifferent, neutral words; there can only be artificially neutralized words” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 432).

Literary and cinematic representations of the everyday in capitalism

In his classic novel of 1854, *Hard Times*, Charles Dickens offered a dark portrait of England during the height and depths of their Industrial Revolution in the 19th century. I do not know if Dickens had read Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in England* that had been published nine years earlier, but Dickens's novel also brilliantly encapsulates the everyday lives and worlds of both the workers in Coketown – his fictional mill-town set in northern England, perhaps patterned after Manchester. He portrays Coketown thusly:

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

(Dickens, 1854, p. 21)

Dickens's portrayal of this manufacturing-based town was set in the context of mid-1800s England but it certainly could have been taking place somewhere else in the world in the 21st century. It is not only the pollution with the “interminable serpents of smoke” in the sky and the river filled with “ill-smelling dye” caused by the factories, it is also the crowdedness of this urban space with people both going to and from the workplace as well at their home. Dickens's description of Coketown echoes Engels's observations in his ethnography of Manchester:

[The] dwellings of the workers are everywhere badly planned, badly built, and kept in the worst condition, badly ventilated, damp, and unwholesome. The inhabitants are confined to the smallest possible space, and at least one family usually sleeps in each room.

(Engels, 2009 [1845], p. 108)

What both Dickens and Engels were describing regarding the living conditions of the working poor is still in place today in cities around the world. A major reason for the huge disparities between wealthy Whites and the poor Black and the Latinx communities in the US contracting the COVID-19 virus is due to the latter's

crowded homes because they cannot afford to live by themselves and therefore self-isolate in protecting themselves from getting sick. Furthermore, Engels's (2009 [1845]) description of a dead-end street in Manchester in which "at the entrance, at the end of the covered passage, a privy without a door, so dirty that the inhabitants can pass into and out of the court only by passing through foul pools of stagnant urine and excrement" (pp.88–89) would be an apt portrayal of some streets and alleyways in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and many others in the US which have seen skyrocketing rates of homelessness well before the pandemic.

Dickens also described the local capitalist running the factory in Coketown who he called Josiah Bounderby, a "boastful and wealthy manufacturer":

He was a rich man: banker, merchant, manufacturer, and what not. A big, loud man, with a stare, and a metallic laugh. A man made out of a coarse material, which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him. A man with a great puffed head and forehead, swelled veins in his temples, and such a strained skin to his face that it seemed to hold his eyes open, and lift his eyebrows up. A man with a pervading appearance on him of being inflated like a balloon, and ready to start. A man who could never sufficiently vaunt himself a self-made man. A man who was always proclaiming, through that brassy speaking-trumpet of a voice of his, his old ignorance and his old poverty. A man who was the Bully of humility.

(Dickens, 1854, pp. 13–14)

Remind you of anyone? What Dickens was doing in his literary representations of this town and the capitalists who were owning and running it was not an attempt in exposing the individualistic corruption and the unfortunate situation taking place but rather to demonstrate how they were quite "intrinsic to the workings of the system. They seem, if the analogy is permitted, to be the breathing mechanism of the capitalist organism, inhaling the purifying oxygen and exhaling poisonous waste" (Wallerstein, 2011, p. 34). Although this passage by Wallerstein was referring to the cyclical nature of capitalism, I'm taking the liberty of using his quote as a dialogical illustration of Dickens's portrayal of capitalist society.

The lead protagonist in the film *Groundhog Day* is a Pittsburgh-based television weather reporter named Phil Connors who travels to a rural town in Pennsylvania to cover a ceremony on February 2, known as Groundhog Day. This American tradition originating in Pennsylvania purports that if the groundhog, coming out of winter hibernation, sees its shadow on the ground, then there will be six more weeks of winter. Connors is quite dismissive of the locals, viewing them as insular, provincial people, and is anxious to return to Pittsburgh that night. However, he is trapped in the town because of a snow blizzard and forced to spend another night at the bed and breakfast inn. When he wakes up the next morning and every morning thereafter, he finds himself in a time loop – it is Groundhog Day again and again, from which is he unable to escape. It seems that he is the only one

experiencing this seemingly bizarre phenomenon because when he relates what he is going through with his co-workers, they have no idea what he is talking about. However, after Connors experiences countless repetitions of Groundhog Day, he is having drinks with some local working-class males in a bar and the following occurs:

CONNORS: What would you do if you were stuck in one place, and every day was exactly the same, and nothing that you did mattered?

RALPH: That about sums it up for me [*downs his drink in one gulp*].

(Albert, Ramis, & Ramis, 1993)

This short exchange sums up brilliantly how the banality of our lives in capitalist society stems from the estrangements from work and other people, and from our own lived experiences. How many people feel that their jobs are utterly meaningless and pointless? Not only the feeling they can be replaced, which furthers one's sense of insignificance, but also how, by extension from their alienation from the labor they produce at work, their lives become hollow and futile. Feeling stuck in one place like the Phil Connors character is not a fictional enactment of what he is going through in the film's plotline, it is a vivid and often real occurrence in many of our lives. Even if we are so called 'fortunate' to have a 'decent paying job,' do we not then at times feel trapped, as it were, because although we may become bored and angry in our workplace, it is difficult to find another job paying the same salary, as we well know.

3

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Working or 'middle' class?

Representations of class

For some who may want to forget or downplay their working-class backgrounds, “class is never simply a category of the present tense. It is a matter of history, a relationship with tradition, a discourse of roots” (Medhurst, 2000, p. 20). Indeed, it is important that sociolinguists’ own classed identities and backgrounds also be addressed and foregrounded in our work on class, language, and identity to further “encourage reflexivity about the role of the researcher in data collection and analysis and the politics of representation in scholarly writing” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008, p. 406). This critical self-reflexivity is needed inasmuch as fulltime academics have traditionally been viewed (at least in the contexts of Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US) as belonging to the middle class. Yet, especially for those who work at private universities, “a schoolmaster who works for wages in an institution along with others, using his [*sic*] own labor to increase the money of the entrepreneur who owns the knowledge-mongering institution, is a productive worker” (Marx, 1976 [1867], p. 1044). Marx’s class-positioning paradigm situates academics more accurately as “collective labour, i.e., the working class” (ibid., p. 344). Certainly, since academics produce more than we receive in our salaried wages (i.e., particularly our surplus labor value from writing journal articles and books), Curtis (2001) argued there is a “remarkable similarity between the productive labor of a college professor and that of a worker on a factory assembly line or behind the counter of a fast-food establishment” (p. 81). It may be problematic for some academics to see themselves in the same economic-social relation as a factory or service worker, particularly those of us with tenured positions. However, given the increasingly growing adjunctification or casualization of faculty, which is reported to be now over 76% in the US by the American Association of University Professors (n.d.), adjunct lecturers are also “proletarians producing commodities for sale, though

perhaps today it is less difficult (to recognize) than it used to be” (ibid., p. 83). This development has relegated many adjunct university instructors in the US to rely on food stamps, forcing them to work additional jobs, with some even residing in their motor vehicles to survive since they cannot afford to pay their rent (Gee, 2017). Therefore, in researchers’ attempts to define class, how does this reflect on, and refer back to not only our own classed position(s) but also our featured participants’ indexed class identities? This is important because we as sociolinguists can offer our definitions of class and assigning of class categories, “but how it is lived may be significantly different” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 42) throughout one’s life trajectories.

What is class?

Goffman (1951) argued that “an important symbol of membership in a given class is displayed during informal interaction” in which these observable behaviors “involve matters of etiquette, dress, deportment, gesture, intonation, dialect, vocabulary, small bodily movements and automatically expressed evaluations concerning both the substance and the details of life” (p. 300). In the ensuing years since Goffman’s interactional paradigm of these class indexicalities, sociolinguists have documented, classified, analyzed, and theorized these various symbols of class memberships in their linguistic, discursive, and other social semiotic meaning-makings and enactments (e.g., Bernstein, 1971; Block, 2014; Block & Corona, 2014; Eckert, 1989, 2000; Heath, 1983; Labov, 1966, 1972; Milroy, 1980; Rampton, 2006, 2010; Rickford, 1986; Snell, 2010, 2018; Trudgill, 1974). However, to what extent have sociolinguists inadvertently perpetuated static models of class categorizations in which people are consigned to a fixed membership in either the working or middle class? This classifying distinction between ‘working’ and ‘middle’ class is extremely problematic because “when class is understood as a social *grouping* (rather than as the social *processes* of producing, appropriating, and distributing surplus labor), class analysis involves sorting individuals into mutually exclusive class categories, often a frustrating analytical project” (Gibson-Graham, Resnick, & Wolff, 2001, p. 17). This underscores that class should not be viewed as a ‘thing’ in the sense of a categorical grouping (often based on income levels and net worth), but instead a perpetual process in performative motion dynamically shaped and effected by situational contexts in which economic-social relations are enacted. Furthermore, as this class process relates to language-in-action, rather regarding classed identity as a “pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices,” it is critical to “recognize identity as emergent in cases where speakers’ language use does not conform with the social category to which they are normatively assigned” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 588).

In going beyond analyzing class as static social groupings, an alternative class analytic paradigm for sociolinguistic inquiries is proposed here to explore how class process-performativity “emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction” (ibid., pp. 595–586) in particular encounters. I first discuss how class is conceptualized in this alternative paradigm within the context of the numerous

scholarly debates on class. This is followed by a participant interview illustrating aspects of the problematic of a fixed-category class analytic. The interview and other highlighted examples are drawn from US contexts due to my positionality as a scholar and activist who has long engaged with issues of economic and racial inequalities in US society including being an active participant in the 2011 Occupy Movement.

I then argue why the alternative paradigm of class process-performativities drawn from the interdisciplinary perspectives of economics, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies is needed for sociolinguistics now, and how it can help us understand and engage with the current issues of nationalist, racist, and demagogic discourses often embodied in violence toward the 'Other' with which static models of intersectionality and identity politics have been insufficient in their analyses. I conclude with future directions and suggestions for sociolinguistics research on class.

Who is the working class?

In their *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels defined "the modern working class" as "a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital" (Marx & Engels, 1978, p. 479). By this measure, those of us who can only survive on a daily basis from the money we receive (or in common-sense capitalist parlance, 'earn') from our employers that hired us because our labor contributes to their bottom line form the overwhelming majority in any capitalist-dominated society. The long-accepted category of the so-called 'middle class' in the US and UK is exactly that – so-called. Why 'so-called'? For those of us who have to work for a living in order to pay our rent or the mortgage, food and utility bills, credit card debt, and in the US context, healthcare premiums (since there is no universal health insurance), regardless of whether one earns below or above the median income, this necessity places us in the class of laborers (i.e., the working class). Perhaps one good illustrative example of how we would identify as members of the *working* class is the popular Internet meme on social media that announces, "I used to live paycheck to paycheck, but now after a lot of hard work, I live direct deposit to direct deposit." Undeniably, in contrast to the enslaved person who "is assured of a bare livelihood by the self-interest of the master" and the serf who "has at least a scrap of land on which to live," both of whom have "at worst a guarantee for life itself," the worker "must depend upon himself [*sic*] alone, and is yet prevented from so applying his abilities as to be able to rely upon them" (Engels, 2009 [1845], p. 144). Thus, as Engels argued, this should render "more and more evident the great central fact that the cause of the miserable condition of the working class is to be sought, not in ... minor grievances, but in *the capitalist system itself*" (p. 39, emphasis in the original).

Rather than categorizing class with varying income levels, Marx viewed our positionality via the actual social relation of our labor production:

Capitalist production is not merely the production of commodities, it is, by its very essence, the production of surplus-value. The worker produces not for himself, but for capital. It is no longer sufficient, therefore, for him to simply produce. He must produce surplus-value. The only worker who is productive is one who produces surplus-value for the capitalist, or in other words contributes towards the self-valorization of capital. If we may take an example from outside the sphere of material production, a schoolmaster is a productive worker when, in addition to belabouring the heads of his pupils, he works himself into the ground to enrich the owner of the school. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of a sausage factory, makes no difference to the relation. The concept of a productive worker therefore implies not merely a relation between the activity of work and its useful effect, between the worker and the product of his work, but also a specifically social relation of production, a relation with a historical origin which stamps the worker as capital's direct means of valorization. To be a productive worker is therefore not a piece of luck, but a misfortune.

(Marx, 1976 [1867], p. 644)

It is the use value from our living labor which becomes a commodity that capitalists obtain. And importantly, it is the surplus value that “lies in the difference between the value that living labor yields to the capitalists and the value capitalists pay to purchase that labor power” (Resnick & Wolff, 2013, p. 158). Viewed in this manner, our class status is not our occupation that supposedly indexes it but rather “who in society participates in the production and who in the appropriation of surplus value. That is, who is in the position to acquire more value in production than is paid in exchange for that production to occur?” (ibid., p. 158). By this measure, for those of us who are not in any relational position to appropriate another's labor surplus value, we are literally the working class regardless of our income level.

The capitalist system has always been presented in history textbooks and social discourses as a huge improvement over the previous systems of feudalism and enslavement. Better for whom, though? Yes of course capitalist employers do not have the right and license to kill us as the enslavers did to their enslaved workers. If we leave our jobs, the boss or their minions will not be chasing us across the country to drag us back to their workplace against our will. However, on the other hand, with capitalism, “the bourgeoisie ... is far better off under the present arrangement than under the old slave system; it can dismiss its employees at discretion without sacrificing invested capital, and gets its work done much more cheaply than is possible with slave labour” (Engels, 2009 [1845], p. 115), unlike those who enslaved others and had to provide them with minimal shelter and food. Engels is certainly not defending enslavement but making the argument that capitalism is not a freer system in this regard.

The debates on class belonging

In contrast to the notions of race as a series of social-historical and ideological constructs and gender as dynamically evolving and fluid performative practices that

are now largely accepted by most scholars in the humanities and social sciences (e.g., Butler, 1990; Rodseth, 1998), the concept of class has often generated fierce debates within and across the disciplines of sociology, cultural studies, and economics (e.g., Atkinson, 2015; Bourdieu, 1984, 1987; Gibson-Graham, 2005; Medhurst, 2000; Resnick & Wolff, 2003; Riley, 2017; Roberts, 2018; Skeggs, 2004; Thompson, 1963; Wright et al., 1998). In addition to “the deep conceptual, methodological and empirical uncertainties around the concept of class” (Savage, 2000, p. 8) among scholars in these fields, it is perhaps no surprise that there exists multiple and competing class definitions and models given the different theoretical and ideological orientations of researchers.

Are the various definitions of class necessarily conflicting with one another? For example, if class is being primarily defined economically, does this exclude moral discourses – ‘the poor are poor because they didn’t want to work hard enough’? As Skeggs (2004) pointed out, class was produced from “the discourses of the dangerous outcast, the urban mass, the revolutionary alien, the contagious women, the non-recuperable” (p. 3). Hence, class “is always and intimately connected to the concept of the self” (ibid., p. 27). Thompson (1963) offered a similar construct in that class “happens when some men [*sic*], as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs” (p. 9). For Thompson, class is neither a structure nor a category, but rather as “something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships” (ibid., p. 9); thus, class is “a cultural as much as an economic formation” (ibid., p. 13).

However, when discussing class, which class are we talking about? Is it the group or culture (another difficult terrain to define) to which you belong and/or identify with? Is your income level a main determinant of your class category? Is it your social position in the labor marketplace; i.e., your occupation indexing class? Is the notion of the classed self necessarily equated with the principle of ownership (Skeggs, 2004)? For example, does owning property, such as a house in the suburbs, necessarily indicate or automatically confer only middle-class status, even if one’s occupation has traditionally been seen as ‘working class’ and ‘blue collar’ (e.g., auto mechanic or plumber)? These classifications and the language and discourses attributing thereof have “supported unhappy descriptions and unfortunate practices, trivializing and rejecting the struggles and aspirations of a wide variety of workers who fall short of the normative worker known from labor iconography and the proletarian imaginary” (Southern, 2000, p. 223). This raises the issue of what *is* the classed self exactly? Does it extend beyond the presentation of oneself in everyday life (Goffman, 1959) to include its own interiorities in one’s structures of feelings (Williams, 1977)? Rampton (2010), in discussing the work of E. P. Thompson in which Thompson argued class has to be studied “in the medium of *time* – that is, in action and reaction, change and conflict” (Thompson, 1978, as cited by Rampton, 2010), interprets this as class meaning “a sensed social difference that people and groups produce in interaction, and there is struggle and negotiation around exactly who’s

up, who's down, who's in, who's out, and where the lines are drawn" (Rampton, 2010, p. 2). Perhaps, but are these interactions producing a "sensed social difference" particular only to specific cultural contexts, or do they occur in enough multiple domains to make this generalizable? Furthermore, what about when our inhabitable, self-performed classed identity does not correspond with an ascriptive one held by others?

Wright (1986) summarized four dissimilar approaches that Marxists have traditionally employed to address "nonpolarized class positions within a logic of polarized class relations" (p. 115): The first is that the 'middle class' is only an ideological illusion and thus the class structure in capitalist societies are indeed polarized. The second is the notion that the middle class is "a segment of some other class, typically a 'new petty bourgeoisie' (e.g., Poulantzas, 1975), or a 'new working class' (e.g., Mallet, 1963)" (Wright, 1986, p. 115). Others argue that the middle class is its own (new) class that largely emerged in many countries after World War II. Lastly, the fourth view is that those who identify and are identified as the middle class do not actually belong to a class, but are located "simultaneously in more than one class" (*ibid.*, p. 155). Wright gave the example of managers, who should be viewed as both in the working class – "in so far as they are wage labourers dominated by capitalists" and in the capitalist class because "they control the operation of production and the labour of workers" (*ibid.*, p. 115).

Wright's (1998) view in analyzing class was to incorporate several dimensions consisting of class structure, class formation, class struggle, and class consciousness. Thus, he contended that any class analysis was "not simply to understand class structure as such but to understand the interconnections among all these elements and their consequences for other aspects of social life" (*ibid.*, p. 271). However, "an important conceptual precondition for developing a satisfactory theory of the relationship" (*ibid.*, pp. 271–272) among these dimensions is to first elaborate "a coherent concept of class structure" (*ibid.*, p. 271). To this end, Wright argued regarding the Marxist notions of class structural mechanisms specifically emphasizing "material interests, lived experience, and capacities for collective action" (*ibid.*, p. 280), that "material interests provides the most coherent basis for the elaboration of concrete, micro-level concepts of class structure" (*ibid.*, p. 280). This view aligns with the aforementioned work of E. P. Thompson (1963). These material interests include economic welfare and economic power; the former meaning "the total package of toil-leisure-income available to a person" (Wright, 1998, p. 281), while the latter refers to having access to, or being "excluded from control over the allocation of the surplus" (*ibid.*, p. 284). However, Wright noted that this concept of material interests is problematic inasmuch as arguing a certain class shares common material interests "seems to imply that theorists know what is good for people in a class – what is in their 'true' interests – better than they do themselves" (*ibid.*, p. 286).

Wolff (2017) outlined the two prevalent and contradictory definitions of class held by many in sociology, economics, cultural studies, and sociolinguistics. The first is that class is defined by one's income and/or owned wealth such as residential

property and liquid assets. The other is that class is manifested through its wielding power over others. Wolff points out that these two views have resulted in different sub-groupings according to these classifications. As he points out, “the social distribution of property is not identical to the social distribution of power” (ibid., p. 30). This has resulted in historical cases in which “property theorists of class made the simplifying presumption that altering the social distribution of wealth and income would necessarily and correspondingly alter the social distributions of power” (ibid., p. 30). And the power theorists of class made the “same determinist argument in the reverse direction: changing power distributions would necessarily alter the social distribution of property” (ibid., p. 30).

In contrast to these two aforementioned dominant conceptions of class, Marx introduced an alternative view of class: it is realized in how the social relational processes of the production, appropriation, and distribution of surplus value (i.e., profits) produced by workers are organized and enacted in society. Marx differentiated workers who actively produce the surplus as ‘productive’ from those who enabled and supplied the necessary conditions for the surplus value production, who he named as ‘unproductive’ (Marx, 1976 [1867]). These so-called unproductive workers include “supervisors who make sure direct laborers do their work, security guards who protect the enterprise, and an army of other enablers such as the secretaries, clerks, various managers, sales and purchasing personnel” (Wolff, 2017, p. 34).

However, this raises yet another issue for sociolinguists analyzing people along class lines. According to Marx’s distinction between productive and unproductive workers, security guards are grouped in the latter category but have traditionally been viewed and self-identified as ‘blue-collar’ workers, whereas managers and salespeople in this same category of unproductive workers are seen as ‘white collar’ with the accompanying classed implications of these occupations, i.e., ‘working’ and ‘middle.’ Does Skeggs’s (1997) claim that “class connotations may be ubiquitous but they are rarely directly spoken by those who do not want to be reminded of their social positioning in relation to it” (p. 77) hold up in interactional moments between these workers? As such, Rampton (2006) makes the compelling point that “an analytic vocabulary will be needed that is much more differentiating than the traditional sociolinguistic focus on occupational category membership” (p. 274).

One possible descriptive term has been put forward by Resnick and Wolff (2006a, 2006b). They categorize people “who neither perform nor extract surplus labor” as “subsumed classes” (Resnick & Wolff, 2006a, p. 94). In this situated role, “they carry out certain specific social functions and sustain themselves by means of shares of extracted surplus labor distributed to them by one or another fundamental extracting class” (p. 94). Indeed, the “fundamental and subsumed class processes thus require each other if each is to continue to exist, if the social class structure which they comprise is to be reproduced” (Resnick & Wolff, 2006b, p. 130). Furthermore, the ever-dynamic relationship between fundamental and subsumed classes is “complex, contradictory and on a terrain of class struggles which are different from, although interactive with, the class struggles between performers and extractors of surplus labor” (Resnick & Wolff, 2006a, p. 94). However, to be clear,

this is not necessarily an either/or thing because “Marx ... repeatedly noted that individuals within a social formation usually occupy multiple, different class positions, both fundamental and subsumed” (ibid., p. 95).

These debates on class also stem in part from the historical usages and understandings of this term, at least in the context of western Europe, the UK, and the US, in which the emergence of the classed categories of ‘middle’ and ‘working’ during the 19th century became the accepted norm. The ‘middle class’ category “implied hierarchy and therefore implied lower class: not only theoretically but in repeated practice” which became “an expression of relative social position and thus of social distinction” (Williams, 1985, p. 65). In contrast, the categorical term ‘working class’ was viewed as “an expression of economic relationships” and “implied productive or useful activity, which would leave all who were not **working class** unproductive and useless (easy enough for an aristocracy, but hardly accepted by a productive **middle class**). To this day this confusion reverberates” (ibid., p. 65, emphasis in the original). Despite any confusions however, there seems to be ongoing assumptions about the obviousness of class identity inasmuch as “blue and white collars are considered a central divide within the workforce and organizing principle of social space” (Southern, 2000, p. 191). Indeed, “blue collar, white collar – when we hear these words, we believe we know the actors. Who they are, where they are, what they want, how they feel toward society and one another” (ibid., p. 191). Yet, despite the different models of class as a social position and distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) and as an economic one (Wood, 1998), those who identify with either middle or working class both “sell and are dependent on their labor,” which “is the point of critical overlap between the models and the terms” (Williams, 1985, p. 66).

This critical overlap has important implications for sociolinguistic research in which alternative coding schemes (Goodwin, 1994) of class are clearly needed to not only explore contextual processes of class positionings, but also “their actual manifestation in practice” which “is dependent on the interactional demands of the immediate social context” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 591). Indeed, Goffman (1951) had argued that in any attempt in defining social class, “we must refer to discrete or discontinuous levels of prestige and privilege, where admission to any one of these levels is, typically, determined by a complex of social qualifications, no one or two of which are necessarily essential” (p. 296).

Overdetermining or interanimating class

Thus, there needs to be a “deliberately antiessentialist conception of class” as Watkins (2005) described the work of Resnick and Wolff (1987). Referring to the complexities of our lived domains of class, Watkins argued if these “need not somehow be explained as a product of objectively structured positionality, all sorts of useful questions can be raised beyond the dead end of how and to what extent such experience is necessarily ‘mystified’” (p. 10). This is important for sociolinguists to address because of prevalent tensions between the ‘objective’ categories

of class ascribed by others and our own subjective ones of lived discursive identifications (Chun, 2017). As Resnick and Wolff (1987) argued in their reading of Marx through the lens of antiessentialist and overdetermination perspectives that “classes not be considered as actual groups of persons” (p. 110) inasmuch as they “usually occupy multiple, different class positions” (p. 124), as Marx (1976 [1867]) himself maintained. Indeed, individuals “typically participate in more than one kind of class process and their interests and alliances with others are ... overdetermined, by all the processes of social life” (p. 110). In other words, “how do the nonclass aspects of the social totality function so as to overdetermine its class aspect, and what dynamic is constituted by the mutual overdetermination of both class and nonclass aspects?” (ibid., p. 51). Some of these nonclass aspects of the social totality would include gendered performativity, racialized situational contexts, and the ascribed identities by others in overdetermining class aspects. Thus, Resnick and Wolff make the compelling argument that

class is a distinct process of surplus labor production/distribution which is different from the important processes of power, property, consciousness, etc., and (b) the analytical method of linking distinct processes together into a social totality is overdetermination rather than reductionism.

(Resnick & Wolff, 2006b, p. 135)

Althusser (1977) employed the term “overdetermination” to conceptualize the multitude of the ever-ongoing dynamic and “complex variations and mutations of a structured complexity” (p. 210) of any social formation without giving any of these structural and interrelated variational determinants higher permanent prominence in according causality. In rebutting the traditional notion held by some scholars that all Marxists insist on the economic as being the singular and final determining factor, Althusser observed that “from the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the ‘last instance’ never comes” (ibid., p. 113). Elaborating upon Althusser’s notion of overdetermination, Amariglio and Callari define it as:

The nature of the *relationship among* cultural, political, and economic processes that are discursively designated as participants in the constitution of practices and forms of agency in a social formation. Specifically, overdetermination refers to the conception of a relation of *mutual intereffectivity* among these processes. Thus, the concept of overdetermination is different from, say, the concept of a multiple determination, according to which forms of social agency would be affected by a variety of processes which exist separate and distinct from each other.

(Amariglio and Callari, 1989, p. 41, *emphasis in the original*)

As such, Roberts (2018) characterizes overdetermination as embracing “a complex conception of causality” in which “each term ... not merely *affect* other terms ... but also to *effect* them, constitute them, participate in determining the *nature* of, not

merely the further changes in, every other turn with which it is in relation” (pp. 122–123 (emphasis in the original)). Therefore, in selecting class as a focal point of a sociolinguistic ethnography analysis, it is vital to examine not only the social semiotic meaning-making practices from which class identities emerge, but also how these are “overdetermined by the other processes that provide its condition of existence” (ibid., p. 123), such as the cultural politics of difference, as Fraser (1995) argued, in the move away from a class-absent identity politics.

The construct of overdetermining, or what I prefer to call “interanimating” processes affords us a sociolinguistic perspective to view and examine class “being enacted in multiple forms and social sites – not just in the capitalist enterprise but in noncapitalist ones” (Gibson-Graham, Resnick, & Wolff, 2000, p. 10). As Gibson-Graham, Resnick and Wolff (ibid.) point out, noncapitalist domains are particularly crucial because of the spaces and practices in which we may or do not engage in the appropriating and distributing of others’ surplus labor, but rather through a collective action, such as a home in which all family members might engage in a communal class manner (e.g., cleaning, cooking, laundry). This might differ in some ways from a capitalist enterprise workplace, but how the different class processes in such a home environment versus this workplace would contribute and shape class identities needs to be ethnographically explored. For example, this has been extensively addressed in social reproduction theory; specifically, the examination of the functionalities of unpaid domestic labor (Hopkins, 2017).

One illustration of how the interanimating dynamics of class, race, language, and nationality in a specific domain are shaped by racial and language privileging would be Hong Kong’s private K-12 schools in their recruitment of teachers with certain identities. When I lived in Hong Kong from 2013 to 2015, I knew several White British citizens who had been elementary school teachers in the UK. If their social class grouping was assigned according to their income they received in their home country, it would be borderline working class (Savage et al., 2013). In Hong Kong, though, they now received a salary that was triple their former wages, based on the values attributed to their race and perceived linguistic competence in their so-called first language, English. Their Hong Kong salary put them in the near echelon of the upper middle class. However, the salary of one of these teachers was over 25% more than one of their co-workers at the same school even though both had the same level of teaching experience and both were ‘native’ English language speakers. Why? Their colleague, who was born and raised in Canada, is of Asian ancestry. This highlights how “class, ethnic, and gender attributions and competencies are centrally important in the market place, both as resources that individuals bring to it, but also in terms of the allocation of value to the places in the market” (Anthias, 2005, p. 26). Thus, transglobal contexts play a crucial role in situating a person’s class identity that can be interanimated by race, gender, and linguistic resources as it shifts from one locale to another.

When I asked these teachers to identify their class, they were reluctant to say “middle class.” This is akin to the findings by Devine’s (2005) study in which her British interviewees were “uneasy with the term ‘middle class’ and keen to distance

themselves from the label because of its associations with status” and were intent on not being seen as people “who thought themselves superior to the working class” (p. 161). This was in contrast to the Americans interviewed by Devine, who found that they were “quite comfortable identifying themselves as middle class. It was an inclusive rather than an exclusive category embracing ordinary working people seeming to exclude only those at the extremes: namely, the very rich and the very poor” (p. 161). This raises the issue of how class and its categorical grouping (e.g., ‘the middle class’) is self-identified by people in various national and cultural contexts, and their possible differing perceptions of where they stand in society.

This vantage point of exploring interanimating processes rather than the view of a fixed social structure allows us to ask “what is my class becoming?” instead of “what is my class belonging?” (Gibson-Graham, Resnick and Wolff, 2000, p. 11). Indeed, this approach would enable “us to see individuals as participating in multiple class processes at a single moment and over time” (Gibson & Graham, 1992, p. 109). This is crucial for sociolinguists in addressing classed positioning seemingly indexed by people’s language varieties if we are to go beyond the common sociological binary of blue collar/white collar as indexing class belonging (Southern, 2000) inasmuch as

class distinguishes a single process occurring in society and interacting with – determining and being determined by – the infinity of other, nonclass processes. For us, classes as groups of individuals have no meaning. No one ever had a cup of coffee with or shook the hand of a ‘class.’ Rather, individuals participate in class processes (typically more than one) and nonclass processes and in doing so take on multiple, shifting, and conflicting class and nonclass positions or identities. We think this alternative offers a much more nuanced and rich approach to understanding what class is and means than is found in traditional Marxism. It implies that voting behavior, cinematic preferences, attitude toward private property, dress styles, and indeed anything else about any individual cannot be reduced to being an effect of one, or a subset, of the infinite overdeterminants defined as some ultimately determining cause. Understanding class as a noun substitutes a simplicity at the cost of missing completely this kind of complexity.

(Resnick & Wolff, 2013, p. 159)

Addressing how one’s class position shifts in differentiating processes through ethnographic studies can illustrate the ways in which “multiple discourse systems (are) operating” (Scollon, 1996, p. 9) that identify, position, perform and situate a particular class identity depending on the contextual domain. These multiple discourse systems will be apparent in the featured participant in the following section.

The lived discursive domains of class

Gibson-Graham and Ruccio (2001) argued that “to define class as a process is to shift the focus away from subjects and social groups – ‘class’ as a noun – and toward certain practices and flows of labor in which subjects variously and multiply

participate” (p. 169). This conception of class “as a process differs markedly from the notion of class as a social grouping defined in terms of an amalgam of income-generating capacity, property, power, or organizational capacities” (ibid., p. 170). This incompatibility of class as a grouping and a process is amply illustrated in the following account by a public school teacher in southern California:

ME: In terms of social class, which would you identify as?

PARTICIPANT (P): I'm a middle-class person, basically. I'm still, I'm one of the last remaining people in the middle class in America 'cause I have enough money to live, I have enough money to save a little ... I own a house, I own my car, I have health insurance, I am in line for a pension. I mean that's just unheard of, I'm living in a world that doesn't exist anymore, but you know, I feel like I make enough money. Actually, I never thought I needed to make more money than I make, I feel like I make enough.

ME: How would you describe your daily life?

P: My job sucks all my time and I can't do ... I can't see people ... everything is affected by my job, everything. The clothes I wear ... I only buy mostly clothes that I would wear to work. I spend my money on, everything I spend is about work, work. Everything I buy and most things I do are: will it help me for work? I bought an air conditioner because I know that I need to get a good night's sleep so that I can go to work, so like, pretty much everything in my life is affected by my job. It's the same thing every day. I have to get up early by some people's standards. I get to work an hour before students are there to get ready for the day. I work my whole day with the students, five hours basically straight. I have a half hour for lunch, it's not enough time. I have one-hour prep-period after all of that where I do more work and when I go home I eat something and then I sit down and I do more work. And I work until I can't see anymore, my eyes hurt. And then I go to bed, and I do that every day. That's my work day, it's the same thing every single day, does not change. The only difference is Friday nights I don't work at night, but then I work all day Sunday. Not all day, but from 12, 1 o'clock again till I go to bed on Sundays.

Although this teacher places themselves in the middle-class category, which they define as having a home, a car, some savings, and health insurance, from the description of their daily life, it appears that their actual lived experiences do not conform to the usual or previous representations of what constituted a 'middle-class' lifestyle in the US. This might have included the seemingly comfortable 9–5 job with evenings and full weekends reserved for leisure. The teacher's lived domain of class processes as one of non-stop labor going well over the forty-hour work week calls into question this very categorical grouping of 'middle class' based on income level and certain consumer goods. Undeniably, their situation demonstrates that “work and property ownership can be uncoupled” (Wright, 1998, p. 325). Furthermore, this contradiction between the middle-class construct of

supposed social position and the class processes of selling and depending on one's own (non-stop) labor to survive is the critical overlap that Williams (1985) argued. Clearly, as illustrated by this teacher's self-narrative, their class is not exclusively one of belonging, but rather becoming in the ongoing battle with the neoliberalizing transformation of public schools with increased class sizes and teaching loads.

We can see from this participant's accounts of the ways in which class and its interanimating processes shape their lived histories, experiences, and present everyday lives. The participant's narrative highlights in varying ways a fundamental feature of lived experience of class according to Wright (1998). This is the experiential necessity of "having to sell one's labor power to live" (*ibid.*, p. 337), which was foregrounded in the teacher's account of the impact of their job on their daily life extending beyond their immediate workplace.

Class and identity politics

Until fairly recently, class was perhaps "in so many ways the 'lost identity' of identity politics" (Medhurst, 2000, p. 29). However, Rampton argued that:

There is a risk that if the notions of 'identity' prevailing in sociolinguistic analyses of interaction are allowed to dominate interpretation, a rather shallow view of social class will emerge, neglecting the complicated ways in which the fears, hopes and subjectivities of individuals are shaped by class structure.

(Rampton, 2006, p. 331)

Yet, are our fears, hopes, and subjectivities necessarily mutually exclusive from how our identities may, and do emerge through specific interactional moments? Wouldn't these identities be indexed through an imbricated interaction in which, for example, our feeling as thought, and thought as feeling (e.g., Ahmed, 2014; Williams, 1977) be apparent in our stance at the moment? The challenge for sociolinguists would be to observe how these cultural politics of emotion (Ahmed, 2014) and structures of feeling (Williams, 1977) are enacted and indexed not only through linguistic and discursive means and utterances, but also our bodily performative modes and gestures that can either reinforce what we are saying at the moment, or indeed, contradict it, depending on the situational context with whom we are engaging. These fears and hopes both inform and shape our identities at any particular instance, and in turn, enact those fears and hopes in a continuum of domains. Might the seemingly 'passive' person at the workplace, fearing for their job and resenting their boss, go home and then take out their frustrations in aggressive and at-times, violent acts of verbal and physical abuse toward family members and loved ones? Their identity would undeniably shift from a fearful, passive subject positioning to an aggressive, active one. Both identities, I would argue, are components of a classed identity recognizing in both thought and feeling of being exploited only to release their frustrations and anger in enacting abusive personal relationships at times.

Thus, there is an urgent need for sociolinguists to re-examine how these notions of identity, and in particular, identity politics have been appropriated by right-wing political parties in several countries including the US and UK in neoliberal discourses (Chun, 2015). Discourse trajectories and itineraries (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, 2004) of the 'individual self' have historically been positioned as the entry point of neoclassical – now named as neoliberal – economic theory. Wolff and Resnick (2012) argued that neoclassical economic theory (e.g., Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*) claimed “an economic utopia” could only be achieved if society aimed to “(1) endow and protect each individual with the full freedom to act in his or her own self-interest and (2) establish the institutional framework (competitive markets and private property) that guarantees that freedom” (p. 15). This has been the discourse that present-day neoliberal pundits have adopted in advocating for the 'individual self' to be realized. There seems to be a certain compatibility with this neoliberal individualized self with identity politics inasmuch as the tendency toward a silo effect of the self (as defined in one community over another) is enacted that further facilitates social division and estrangement, rather than a greater cohesion based on class interests. This is perhaps where Stuart Hall's (1996) notion of identifications comes into play – for the ongoing dynamic shifts in the agentive acts people use in identifying with others, seemingly contrary to their own supposedly stable and at-times attributed identities.

One example might be some (certainly not all) working-class voters in the US who strongly identified with Trump despite the fact he is extremely wealthy. This highlights a compelling need to examine why some of these voters would identify more strongly with their Whiteness than their class interests (Ignatiev, 2003). Perhaps this can be partly explained in how identity politics has been appropriated by neoliberal multiculturalism in which the White working class is now seen as “*the* blockage to future global competition and national economic prosperity ... a self who is immobile, useless and redundant, who cannot, because of their location in pathological culture, make anything of themselves” (Skeggs, 2004, pp. 79–80). This was exemplified by Hillary Clinton's remark during her 2016 US presidential election campaign, in which she characterized many rural White voters as “the basket of deplorables.” Her signifying rhetoric of “the non-respectable who represent a threat to civilization, citizenship and, ultimately, global capitalism” (ibid., p. 91) perpetuated the notion of the backward 'White trash' resistant to 'progress.'

This raises the issue of what are the specific culturally/socially constructed and meaning-making processes, including language, discourse, and the embodied enactments thereof that produce class *in conjunction with* experientially lived contexts? What are the multiple class identities and practices of a given individual in situated contexts? For example, if the same person at home regularly benefits from appropriating her/his partner's labor-value in the form of cooking or cleaning (i.e., does not participate in any of these activities), while at work has her/his own surplus labor appropriated by the company owner(s), it would appear the person's class identity is variable depending on the context of home or work (Gibson-Graham, Resnick, & Wolff, 2000). Additionally, in any given sociocultural

context, what would be the interanimating dynamics shaping a classed identity which might include at any given instance, race, gender, and sexuality? The contradictions, or rather, the focal point from some people on one aspect over another in terms of positioning a person in a particular context? For example, if you are Black and also identify as working class, in what contexts would you be seen by others as only Black or vice versa? As Levine-Rasky (2011) noted, “there are racialized differences within social class groups as there are social class differences within any racialized group” (p. 241). What contexts would you be viewed solely as a working class person regardless of your race? Similarly, if a working class person identifies as a cisgender female, what would be the particular discourse(s) that would position and identify her in multiple contexts exclusively as a woman?

It would appear that from a sociolinguistic perspective, “class cannot be made alone, without all the other classifications that accompany it” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 3), which would include socially constructed performativities such as gender, race, and sexuality. It is important to note that a return to or focus on class does *not* mean ignoring these other classifications, but instead can inform and deepen them by examining and highlighting the extent to which the interactional, interanimating, and mutually enabling dynamics of these performativities play out in their particular contexts, and what aspects are most salient at a sociopolitical juncture. One example might be examining why the majority of White working-class women in the crucial swing states of the Midwest in the US voted for Trump in the 2016 presidential election instead of Clinton (Jaffe, 2018). It seems clear that their gender identity was not the primary factor in choosing the candidate (as it was presumed by the Clinton campaign); rather, class concerns such as fear and anxiety over the loss of manufacturing jobs (which Trump promised to restore) seemed to be the deciding dynamic. Gender and ethnicity identities/identifications may well interanimate with class position; but the point here is to explore which may be most prevalent in an interactional context, be it on a micro-scale of a one-to-one encounter, or a larger scale such as social media.

This speaks to the need to re-examine the construct of ‘intersectionality’ because of its implication of a static point in time and/or space. The concept of intersectionality is, as Levine-Rasky (2011) put it, “in a strange transitional phase between emergence and ubiquity” (p. 239). She argued that “the former commands attention but risks suspicion; the latter confers a legitimacy but risks loss of specificity. It both explodes into a proliferation of identity categories and implodes into a distillation of such categories into a simplistic model” (p. 239). And as Anthias (2013) argued, “one problem with the powerful metaphor of intersectionality is that it may be misleading, as it suggests that what takes place is similar to what happens at an intersection (where things collide or crash together)” (p. 13). Sociolinguists need to conceptualize and analyze how the dynamics of class identifications interanimating with gender, sexuality, and race play out in multiple domains and scales through constant processes in motion being shaped by a number of forces, be they social, political, personal, historical, linguistic, and discursive frames. It is only in this manner can we achieve the long-overdue task of “developing a critical theory of recognition, one which

identifies and defends only those versions of the cultural politics of difference that can be coherently combined with the social politics of equality” (Fraser, 1995, p. 69).

One example of this is the following transcript from a video posted on YouTube by a group calling themselves “Massholes Not Assholes” (see www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLcDQMQ3Urg) that successfully supported a Massachusetts state ballot initiative in 2018, Question 3 that protected transgender rights. The setting is a working-class bar with two customers and a bartender:

CUSTOMER 1: [puts beer down] I mean, think about it, kid. We bang u-eyes wherever we want; no blinkah. We cut you off on the Pike and then we slow it right the fuck down ... and the second that light turns green, I'm honking.

BARTENDER: Spoken like a true Masshole.

CUSTOMER 1: We use our grandmother's furniture to save our parking spots, we drop our R's and put them back in words that don't even have them: Manhattan clam chowder ... what the fuck is that? And New York sports teams?

BARTENDER: [laughs] Already golfing.

CUSTOMER 1: Seventeen years; ten championships.

CUSTOMER 2: Eleven.

CUSTOMER 1: We'll still find something to bitch about on sports radio and we'll remind you who the fucking goat is every five minutes. We cross the street wherever we want because I'm a fucking pedestrian and this is where I'm crossing. You know our forefathers granted us this right ... to be loud, proud ... occasionally obnoxious, and that freedom is so important to us. So, who are we to take away our neighbors' liberties? Or revoke the law that protects their right to live a life free from discrimination? Or be biased against someone based on the gender they identify with? Yeah. We're Massholes, but we're no assholes [sips beer].

As indicated by Customer 1's style of speaking, this character is from the working class in terms of habitus, which is visibly supported by their demeanor and apparel in this bar. Self-identifying as a Masshole – which is usually defined as having an utter disregard for pedestrians and other drivers when driving one's vehicle and being a devoted Boston sports fan who is obsessed with New York teams (which has been true in my observational experiences living in Boston for the past few years), it is perhaps unexpected the conversational-discursive turn Customer 1 takes. Framing freedom and liberty in this context as a fellow human's right to be free from any discrimination and to have the right to identify beyond the gender binary, Customer 1 evokes a solidarity with the social politics of equality by saying if you are against transgender rights, you are an asshole. In my reading of this video performance, this goes beyond an intersectionality in the sense that the character's interanimating class and gendered performativity – that of the proverbial 'blue-collar tough guy' you would not want to mess or pick a fight with in a bar – is reconfigured in a fashion that reframes this toughness against those who do not accept others for who they are. Yet this raises another issue – because this character is speaking in a style that has often been indexed as 'working class,' what does this actually signify?

Classed ways of speaking?

Rampton (2010) argued that although “material and cultural inequalities matter a great deal...human agency still plays a vital part in class processes” (p. 2). However, what agentic acts, particularly linguistic and discursive ones can we say are definitively indexing class? Are differing discursive conceptions of the ‘self’ indicative of a class conflict, as Day (2001) argued? For example, what are the ways in which middle-classed identities are self-defined in reaction and relation to working-classed ones in specific contexts, and are these consistent? Yet, there is the risk that solely “defining class through culture dislocates it from the economic and firmly locates it within the moral, in which representation and visibility become central mechanisms for knowing and identifying the working class.” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 40). Defining class through culture was the paradigm employed by Bourdieu (1984) in his notion of habitus as the embodied indicator of classed positioning and differences in aesthetic taste. Riley (2017) offered a compelling critique of habitus in that Bourdieu “fails to specify either an empirically tractable meaning of the term ‘class,’ or to show any compelling evidence for the existence of ‘habitus’ in the sense of a ‘generative mechanism’ that can be applied to numerous domains” (p. 6).

Thus, is it possible to consistently map out ways of speaking (Hymes, 1980), that comprise “speech styles, on the one hand, and contexts of discourse, on the other” (p. 27) that index class in every interactional context? In other words, when discussing their views of society, do people use different speech styles in their contextual discursive framing that can be argued are class-based? As Bucholtz and Hall (2004b) pointed out, referring to the work of Labov (1966), “more than three decades ago, variationist sociolinguistics conclusively refuted the notion that language within a speech community must be shared by all members” (p. 475). Thus, how do people speak within their working class-based community among one another as well as engaging in the broader networks beyond their immediate communities? How are class-based attributes of linguistic and discursive styles enacted and received in different cultural and national contexts? For example, Hymes (1980) noted, “we tend to think of explicitness (in public communication at least) as frankness, directness, and as egalitarian and democratic in its implications. In many societies, however, explicitness and directness are experienced as authoritarian, something associated with imposed decisions” (p. 51). Similarly, ‘straight-talk’ style of speaking, notable for its directness and egalitarian explicitness (e.g., ‘I’m not gonna bullshit you’ or regularly using ‘fuck’ as an adjective and adverb), might be viewed as an indexical order (Silverstein, 2003) and solidarity stance (e.g., Bennett, 2012; Cotter & Valentinnson, 2018; Snell, 2018) in working-class communities within certain regions of the US (e.g., New York, Philadelphia, Boston), but may actually be perceived as rude and offensive in other working-class communities across the US such as the Midwest and the South, and certainly other countries. And this is where more ethnographic sociolinguistic studies are needed to explore the ways in which working-class people in differential and interanimating domains of gender, race, ethnicity, age, and sexuality may or may not talk in the same manner depending on the particular local, national, and trans-global

context to see how “the construction of globalised class identities” (Rampton, 2010, p. 20) actually play out in different situational circumstances.

Future directions

Savage et al. (2013) proposed a new model of social class that continues the static categorizing of class along various income levels in the UK based on their selected measures of social, economic, and cultural capital. This again illustrates that

any attempt to demonstrate the existence of classes by the empirical measurement of objective indicators of social and economic position will come up against the fact that it is impossible to find, in the real world, clear-cut discontinuities: income, like most properties attached to individuals, shows a continuous distribution such that any discrete category one might construct on its basis appears as a mere statistical artefact.

(Bourdieu, 1987, p. 2)

This raises the question: how do our classed identities emerge in other regional, national, cultural, and importantly, workplace interactional contexts that would either align with a uniform class model across these domains or significantly diverge from it in alternate formations? For example, in what ways can the meaning of class change through the employment of situated uses of language varieties and their indexical valences (Rampton, 2006) in different milieus? Linguistic and discursive styles of speaking indexing class have been researched in various regional contexts in the UK and the US (e.g., Bennett, 2012; Cotter & Valentinsson, 2018; Snell, 2018), but the ways in which class is indexed in many other societies have only recently been addressed (e.g., Dong, 2018). In addition, what other avenues can sociolinguists explore through the prism of language and discourse grammar (Hymes, 1980) that can advance the discussions of class not only within sociolinguistics, but also help contribute to the disciplinary fields of sociology, cultural studies, and economics?

Furthermore, it is important for sociolinguists to find ways to present people's lived realities and identities of class in all their complexities (Hymes, 1996) and shifting class positions depending on their contexts; e.g., workplace, home, school, and community (Resnick & Wolff, 1987; Gibson-Graham, Resnick, & Wolff, 2000, 2001). From the perspectives of people being studied, would they agree they inhabit different class positions depending on their situation? Also, do people dismiss their own class status or background in situations, be it a job interview, meeting potential in-laws, or an online posting engaging with others on social media?

These debates over class are not merely academic in nature; importantly, they shape “how social action is understood and engaged: the theoretical debate over class is a practical matter for activists no less than for social theorists” (Resnick & Wolff, 2003, p. 10). I would add it is also a practical matter for sociolinguists in how we conduct our class analyses of research participants. Going beyond the

important foundational work on classed identities indexed by specific linguistic and discursive styles (e.g., Eckert, 2000; Heath, 1983; Labov, 1966; Rampton, 2006; Willis, 1977), what other avenues can sociolinguists explore to address the performative (either conscious or reflexive) processes and self-reflective narratives demonstrating the multiple interanimating processes of class in their specific cultural and interactional contexts including not only their temporal but also spatial dimensions? One important trend has been the spatial and geographical referents of class in its lived identities and practices through linguistic landscapes in gentrifying urban neighborhoods (e.g., Trinch & Snajdr, 2017). These linguistic landscapes are not necessarily spatially rooted (such as billboards and storefront signs), but can be of course mobile (e.g., Chun, 2014a). One example of mobility would be in the form of writing on clothing apparel indexing a classed identity. I once saw in Boston a White male walking with his co-workers, and was wearing a sweatshirt that said, "Dirty hands, clean money!" This seemed to signify not only a certain working-class pride in manual labor, but also by implication that his labor production was for the betterment of society ("clean money"), rather than for individualized gains at the expense of others – 'dirty money.'

Another aspect to explore would be the ways in which mobility (and the lack thereof) and particular located-ness index class in various racialized and ethnic domains. For example, in the context of the US, the neighborhoods of East Los Angeles, South Central Los Angeles, the Lower East Side in Manhattan, South Boston have all traditionally been viewed and/or presented as solely racial/ethnic communities (i.e., Latinx, Black, Italian, Jewish, Chinese, Irish). What would be the ways in which local inhabitants discursively identify and linguistically index themselves as classed persons in relationship to their racial/ethnic identities? This is particularly important especially with these neighborhoods and others like it that have been undergoing gentrification and thus changing the demographics based on race and ethnicities.

Thirty-five years ago, Rickford (1986) noted the "almost total neglect within sociolinguistics" (p. 216) regarding conflict models and called upon sociolinguists to employ ethnographic and conflict perspectives in addressing class antagonisms and struggles. In doing so, though, it is crucial that

the 'working class' has to be conceived of as a variable alliance of distinct classes changing continuously through history. Within capitalist social formations, such alliances might involve the fundamental class of *productive* laborers together with the Type 2 subsumed classes of *unproductive* laborers ... To analyze a construct such as 'the working class' at any moment of a capitalist social formation amounts to an analysis of whether and what alliances existed then among the various fundamental and subsumed classes. This would be a Marxist class analysis of the structure, contradictions, and dynamic of the working class.

(Resnick & Wolff, 2006a, p. 103)

Thus, the question that needs to be asked in these times of demagoguery and hyper-nationalism is: what are the ways in which we as sociolinguists should seek to investigate how to use heretofore discourse analytic approaches (e.g., Blommaert, 2005; Chun, 2017; Fairclough, 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Gumperz, 1982; Heller, 2003; Jones, 2016; Lemke, 1995; Scollon & Scollon, 2003, 2004; Willis, 1977) with the aim of developing and facilitating on-the-ground discursive frameworks and methods to cultivate and advance class-for-itself consciousness for progressive and indeed, revolutionary projects seeking social and economic justice for all working people? I believe this is certainly worth exploring.

4

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF RACE IN AMERICAN CAPITALISM

Class and its Others

Class is a slippery slope, it seems. At least the way it has been perceived, embodied, and enacted in the US, where I was born and have spent most of my life. During the 1960s and 1970s, I often heard about what was called the ‘American Dream’ from my parents, family members, and schoolteachers. This was the ideological and idealized narrative that anyone could pull themselves up by their proverbial bootstraps if they *really* wanted to ‘make it’ in US society. This narrative claimed that people made it by working hard enough to get a good-paying job so they could buy a house in the suburbs with one or two cars in the driveway and having enough money in the bank for a vacation every year. As an elementary school student, I was taught several historical exemplary models who realized and represented this American Dream, and perhaps none typified this more than the life of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the US during the American Civil War, 1861–1865, and the first Republican Party member to be president. Born in a one-room log cabin with the Bible as the only book in the house, Lincoln learned how to read largely on his own, taught himself law, and worked his way up the social ladder with a number of jobs before eventually running for political office, culminating in his presidency.

The lesson was clear to some of us back then in school, and in our families. Those who made it like President Lincoln had done so by grit, determination, and hard work. The implication of course was that those who had not made it in society simply did not work hard enough because *they did not really want or care enough to succeed*. As a kid, the exhortation ‘get a fucking job!’ was something I heard all the time from people yelling at those begging on the streets of New York City. In those days, there seemed to be no excuse not to be able to make it in American society, for who had it worse than growing up in a one-room log cabin? Yet interestingly, President Lincoln in his 1861 inaugural address observed that

“labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration” (as cited by Nichols, 2015, p. 64). Who knew Lincoln was a socialist?

In his book, *Class, Race, and Marxism*, Roediger (2017) argued against the notion maintained by some Marxists that race lies outside the logic of capital. Roediger cited numerous historical examples elaborated by his and others’ research (e.g., Allen, 1994, 1997; Du Bois, 1992; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 2007) that showed how race has integrally functioned as a major component in the development of capitalism in the US. My own family’s history is an apt illustration of the racial dynamics involved in how capitalism constructs and maintains racialized, classed, and social differentials. In the mid-1930s, my father arrived in the US when he was a child with only his father, having left his mother and five sisters behind in China, as the immigration laws in the US starting with the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 that prohibited married men from China bringing their spouses unless they had a certain amount of money. The government clearly wanted the surplus labor power of Chinese males, minus their sexually reproductive power. Because of this mandated law, my father was not able to see his mother and sisters again for another 32 years. Within a few years, his father passed away from tuberculosis, which has been linked to conditions of poverty; namely malnutrition and living in overcrowded urban neighborhoods. My father was left on his own as a mere 12-year-old in New York City, and with a substantial gambling debt incurred by his father. Because he had to pay back this debt to one of the local tong associations, he started working in one of the few workplaces available to Chinese immigrants in those years: a laundry store. He worked every day after school and on the weekends to pay off his father’s debt and it took him over five years to do so.

After my father finished paying off the debt, he quit high school in his senior year and enlisted in the US Army at the tail end of World War II. Upon completing his service, he returned to New York and held a number of jobs including tending bar in a Chinese restaurant on Long Island, NY for many years. Eventually, he left that job and along with a few of his co-workers who became close friends, they opened up a restaurant of their own in 1968, which was named the China Sunn. Located in Bayshore, Long Island, it soon became a popular spot with people coming from miles away to eat what was thought at that time to be ‘authentic’ Chinese food. Customers included several celebrities, such as the actors Marlon Brando and Telly Savalas, and the author of *The Godfather*, Mario Puzo, who gave my father an autographed copy of the book. My father eventually did prosper and in fact achieved the ‘American Dream’ by buying a house in the suburbs with two cars (albeit one was over ten years old) in the driveway. He also made sure to put me to work when I turned 14 years old by giving me a job in his restaurant, where I worked summers during high school as a busboy and bringing the takeout food from the kitchen to the front cash register at the bar.

My father worked his ass off, 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, with only a week’s vacation once a year, and was able to provide for his family. Yes, he finally ‘made

it' because he worked hard for it. And yet, as I got older, I saw firsthand many, many people working just as hard but never getting anywhere. In an alternate reality, had my father been Black, would he have been as successful given his same circumstances as a youth with no parents and needing to pay off gambling debts? Highly unlikely. If my father's restaurant had served what has been called "soul food" instead, would those celebrities and customers have frequented it to the same extent they did with the China Sunn restaurant? Almost certainly not. First, soul food restaurants have almost always been 'permitted' only in Black neighborhoods, which White people almost never go to. Chinese restaurants themselves had also primarily been restricted to the racialized confined urban spaces known as "Chinatown" in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco until the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943. After this repeal, Chinese restaurants slowly opened in selected White suburban areas. There have been no soul food restaurants in the White suburban neighborhoods that I have known. And, the so-called 'Chinese' food was seen as 'exotic' back then so Whites flocked to these restaurants to show their 'sophistication.' There was, and is, no similar dynamic with soul food places.

So yes, my father achieved the 'American Dream,' but only because society allocated that particular racialized social space to people like him back then, which allowed him to prosper and join the 'middle class.' In turn, because of this space, the offspring like me and my sisters had the financial resources to go on to university and 'get that job.' Thus, the so-called 'model minority' was conveniently co-constructed in part through these racialized and classed spatial practices.

The creation of race in the US

The historical invention and ensuing enactments of racial discourses, identities, and practices have been essential in their purposeful enabling of capitalism in the US for over three centuries, with the divisions of enslavements and indentured servitude that continued with the post-Civil War sharecropping, much higher rates of unemployment among Blacks than Whites, and the former's lower wages for the same work. Indeed, "race has at all times been a critical factor in the history of US class formation" (Roediger, 2007, p. 11). The very notion of 'Blackness' and 'Whiteness' in the context of US society began to take hold starting in the late 17th century after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 when European (before they saw themselves as 'White') indentured servants and enslaved Africans (before they became 'Black') joined together in revolting against the ruling plantation-owning class in Virginia. They had viewed each other simply as fellow humans inasmuch as:

before Bacon's Rebellion, African and European indentured servants made love with each other, married each other, ran away with each other, lived as neighbors, liked or disliked each other according to individual personality. Sometimes they died or were punished together for resisting or revolting. And masters had to free both Europeans and Africans if they survived to the end of their indentures.

(Buck, 2001, p. 24)

Although there does not seem to be any documented records (as far as I know) of a planned effort among the ruling class in the US at that time to literally divide and conquer workers, both individual and collective societal measures by those in power began to develop to quell future worker revolts. These included the gradual discursive and materialized dissemination of race in creating ‘Whiteness’ and ‘Blackness’ so that indentured servants from Europe began to see themselves as somehow superior to their fellow workers from Africa. This has continued to the present day over 340 years later with some people in the US who continue to strongly cling to their White identities, to the apparent extent of literally voting against their interests for politicians who appeal to their sacralized Whiteness despite having nothing in common other than this racialized-historical construct. Indeed, “for if it is difficult to be released from the stigma of Blackness, it is clearly at least equally difficult to surmount the delusion of Whiteness” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 190). In a capitalist society such as the US, “in which downward social mobility was (is) a constant fear ... one might lose everything but not whiteness” (Roediger, 2007, p. 60). This is not limited to only the US; for example, Whiteness has also been a hegemonic discourse in the UK (e.g., Bonnett, 1998), and was the central factor in the rise of Nazi Germany.

Whiteness is an example of how one’s class identity and positioning by others have been overdetermined, or “interanimated” (Chun, 2019) beyond the sole economic relations of production by the social co-constructions and relational enactments of race, gender, and sexuality in creating the identities of White working class people in the U.S (e.g., Allen, 1994, 1997; Buck, 2001; Davis, 1981; Du Bois, 1992, 2018; Marable, 1983; Roediger, 2007, 2017). The construct of viewing oneself as ‘White’ *and* being seen as such serves as what W. E. B. Du Bois (1992) called “a sort of public and psychological wage” (p. 700). These ideological wages that have been fundamental in compensating many White workers for their low material wages manifested in a variety of forms: “they were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools” (ibid., p. 700). In tandem with this was how Blacks were “compelled almost continuously to submit to various badges of inferiority” (ibid., p. 701). These racial dynamics served the capitalist class in that “the wages of both ... could be kept low, the whites fearing to be supplanted by Negro labor, and the Negroes always being threatened by the substitution of white labor” (ibid., p. 701). These fears among Whites being supplanted by Black workers have also included additional Others – immigrants and refugees from around the world, of which a selected few would be eventually ‘welcomed’ into Whiteness such as the Irish (Ignatiev, 1995) decades after their arrivals, and then later, Italian and Jewish immigrants.

With the particular racial dynamic of Whiteness and Blackness, “the idea that the pleasures of whiteness could function as a ‘wage’ for white workers” (Roediger, 2007, p. 13) helped to foster the acceptance of many White workers of their class position “by fashioning identities as ‘not slave’ and as ‘not Blacks’” (ibid., p. 13). This self-semiotizing of what one is *not* – ‘I may be poor or down and out but at least I’m not Black!’ – works in dialogical tandem with what one *becomes* – ‘I’m proud to be

White, what's wrong with that?!' Thus, at crucial historical moments in the US, the White working class has not only been "manipulated into racism, but ... it comes to think of itself and its interests as white" (Roediger, 2007, p. 12). Accordingly, in certain interactional contexts, the racial construct of Whiteness is enacted as a primary identity for some, rather than class or gender. However, while race might be foregrounded at times, it is often interanimated with accompanying agentive enactments of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and class often involved in any social interaction. To take one situational example, heteronormative masculinity acts in tandem with Whiteness and class in the US with the commodity forms of the so-called 'muscle cars' – high-performance coupes, chopper motorcycles, and the oversized pickup trucks driven not necessarily for work but to present a White working-class 'manly' identity. The commodity of these particular motor vehicles along with owning guns gives some White males a sense of agency that is denied them at the workplace, as discussed in Chapter 2. Another example would be with the COVID-19 viral pandemic, I have seen a good number of White working-class males who do not cover their faces while working in close contact with one another (e.g., construction workers who either have their masks pulled down or not wearing one at all). Their actions align with discourses on social media that wearing masks are 'unmanly' and against one's 'freedom' from being told what to do by the government. Their agency of resisting following orders from above is displaced from the workplace to an individualized domain.

The divisional alignments of racial identities deepened during the struggles in 19th-century US to abolish enslavement in that "the poor whites and their leaders could not for a moment contemplate a fight of united white and black labor against the exploiters" (Du Bois, 1992, p. 27). This coming 150 years after Bacon's Rebellion illustrates how race had taken hold in society to function as the vital force in capitalist society. As Du Bois (1992) argued, "the plight of the white working class throughout the world today is directly traceable to Negro slavery in America, on which modern commerce and industry was founded, and which persisted to threaten free labor" (p. 30). Despite enslavement being partially overthrown in 1863 in the Northern states of the US, "American labor simply refused, in the main, to envisage black labor as a part of its problem" (ibid., p. 29) inasmuch as the "resulting color caste founded and retained by capitalism was adopted, forwarded and approved by white labor, and resulted in subordination of colored labor to white profits the world over" (ibid., p. 30). However, there were exceptions of course with White abolitionists such as John Brown fighting side-by-side their Black comrades to end enslavement. And yet because "race and class are powerfully articulated with one another but they are not the same and, consequently, each is likely to both unite and divide" (Hall, 2016, p. 187), how do we address both in their situational enactments with the aim of overcoming the divisions desired and endorsed by the capitalist system?

The affects of being White

The construct of the psychological wages of Whiteness is not merely an academic theory proposed by radical scholars, but an interpellating discursive production both enacted and observed by those in power. While serving on the staff of Lyndon B. Johnson, who would become US President in 1963 in the aftermath of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Bill Moyers related an anecdote when both of them were in Tennessee in 1960, and Johnson witnessed racist epithets on protest signs there. Later that evening, Johnson commented on this to Moyers:

I'll tell you what's at the bottom of it. If you can convince the lowest White man he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you're picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you.

(Moyers, 1988)

This observation by Johnson has been an important playbook used by politicians and capitalists, which illustrates “why some members of the working class act in the interests of a group rather than the interests of a *class*, that is, as *whites* instead of as proletarians” (Ignatiev, 2003, p. 228, emphasis in the original).

Viewed from this perspective of the structural hand-in-hand enabling of racism and capitalism, the pattern among Whites “to exhibit racist behaviors and practices is not a psychological aberration ... to be racist ... is to be normal; to reject racism, denounce lynchings, and to fight for Black political and economic rights is to be in a symbolic sense ‘abnormal’” (Marable, 1983, p. 45). Decades and centuries of representations of Whiteness in US and other Western societies appearing in schoolbooks, novels, theater, film, art, and media have promoted the construct of one being White as the epitome of civilization and culture. One example are the narratives and images of the Indigenous people in Hollywood films during the 1930s–1960s portraying them as ‘primitive savages’ threatening the ‘civilized’ society that only Whites were building in the 19th century, and thus warranted their genocidal elimination. This discourse of White superiority was co-constructed by “the colonial castes of the various nationalities (British, French, Dutch, Portuguese and so on)” who worked side-by side in presenting themselves as defending civilization “against the savages” (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991, p. 43). This “representation – ‘the White man’s burden’ – has contributed in a decisive way to moulding the modern notion of a supranational European or Western identity” (ibid, p. 43). Similarly, infrequent (if at all) representations of Blacks (when actually portrayed by Black actors rather than White ones in ‘blackface’) in Hollywood films during this same period were mainly of housekeepers, servants, buffoon-like figures, and hyper-sexualized people dangerous to the common ‘decency’ of White folks.

Thus, although racism is indeed “fundamentally affective rather than rational” (Bucholtz, 2018, p. 352), these cinematic and other discursive and material representations of race have helped in the past to co-construct common-sense beliefs

(seen as ‘rational’ by some) among Whites regarding who has contributed more to society and therefore who was worthier than Others. Certainly, the affective dimensions of pride in one’s Whiteness “are not mere individual psychological experiences but social, material, political, and racialized phenomena” (ibid, p. 352). Consequently, it is also crucial to examine how these discursively mediated representations of race co-constructing a common-sense rationality justifying White supremacy work in dialectical and dialogical tandem with affects of Whiteness. Accordingly, the claim made by some that “the category of whiteness has to date proven to be an inadequate tool of historical analysis” (Arnesen, 2001, p. 6) ignores why and how some Whites have settled for their psychological wage rather than fighting together with *all* fellow workers for a better system than capitalism. Indeed, in the US, “many Whites bought into the psychological wage, expressing their superiority over non-Whites and defining them, rather than the capitalists, as the enemy” (Buck, 2001, p. 57). Studs Terkel, in his book *Race: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel about the American Obsession*, saliently illustrated the psychological wages of Whiteness with the following two references:

Lillian Smith, in her short story, “Two Men and a Bargain,” writes of the rich white who persuaded the poor white to work for fifty cents an hour and, when the other complained, said, “I can get a nigger for two bits an hour. You’re better than him, ain’t you? We’re the same color, ain’t we?” Martin Luther King was more succinct in his 1965 Montgomery speech: The poor white was fed Jim Crow instead of bread.

(Terkel, 1992, p. 18)

Organic intellectuals on race, class, and identity

The notion of ‘Blackness’ is perceived, framed, and enacted depending on the interactional contexts and agencies of people who take hold of this discourse in their resemiotized reclaiming of a racialized identity:

ME: How do you identify as, and how have people identified you, whether it’s here in this city (Los Angeles) or elsewhere in the country or around the world?

PARTICIPANT 1 (P1): I feel, by and large in the United States, I identify as Black and other people have always ... almost always identified, called, or would assume or think that is how I identify. Traveling abroad, I think that sometimes, particularly in Europe, some people had assumed I was African, which I also identify as African American, but I think for a person of African descent in the United States, Black is more ... is more appropriate terminology, I think. I was talking to one of my friends about this, that Black is distinctly American, so maybe people from Honduras and Dominican Republic, or Brazil, they might say, “I’m Brazilian,” “I’m Dominican,” or “I’m Honduran.” I think for historical purposes and persons to have some type of distinction about it, I think Black is appropriate cause...you know, if someone moved here from,

you know ... Charlize Theron is ... could be technically African American. So, I think that Black is appropriate and for me it's appropriate. It's like I say, both, I'm a person of African descent, but I identify ... I say Black. I don't necessarily think they're interchangeable, but I think that Black is appropriate.

The participant relating his encounters with some people while traveling in Europe in being positioned as an African rather than American resonated with me inasmuch as I have had similar experiences overseas with people assuming I was from Asia based on my visage rather than my spoken language and other social-semiotic modalities indexing otherwise. His agency in self-defining as "Black" is a re-appropriation of this racialized term operating on several levels. One important point he makes is the example he gives of the actress Charlize Theron, a US citizen who grew up in South Africa and is seen as being White. Would her being an 'African American' in terms of her national origin and present status be aligned with someone who is seen as Black? Would she even identify as such, given the assumed indexicality of the identifying term? On another level, as the participant observes, self-defining oneself as Black in the US indexes the specific history of the country because the lived experiences among people from other countries would obviously not be identical despite them being also perceived as Black. In this context then, the use of the term 'Black' to identify oneself in 21st-century US is an example of what Stuart Hall (2016) argued in his being positioned as 'coloured' in Jamaica and Black in the UK in that "'Black' ... exists ideologically only in relation to the contestation around those chains of meaning and the social forces involved in that contestation" (p. 153).

When asked which social class P1 identifies as belonging to, he responded:

P1: I mean, I feel that I'm definitely not rich by any means. I feel that I am a working-class person. I have a 9-to-5 job. I work at a movie studio, so maybe more glamorous than the regular 9-to-5, but I'm in a union. I'm in the Editor's Guild. I've been in the Editor's Guild for 12 years. I identify as working class, like, somewhat, maybe, salary-wise because I live in Los Angeles. You make this salary here in Los Angeles, you know, you're doing all right, but if I was in Michigan or the Midwest – I grew up in Detroit – I would probably be leaning more towards upper middle class, but even in LA, I feel like if you have a decent job, you know, the cost of living is so high. Somebody making 150 grand a year is not living, you know, high off the hog.

In a parallel dynamic with the public school teacher featured in Chapter 3, while this participant is a highly paid professional compared with other workers not labeled as 'professional,' he rightfully sees his social relational positioning as working class. Although he indexes it as a relative salary amount in Los Angeles due to its ever higher costs of living (the rapidly increasing rental prices in gentrifying neighborhoods and the need for a car due to inadequate public transportation across the greater Los Angeles area), from a Marxian perspective he is indeed

working class since he certainly does not own or run the means of production at which he works – a film studio. This is implied by his mentioning of belonging to a union, which would not be necessary if he were a studio executive.

I then turned the conversation back to race:

ME: Did you interact with any White people outside of high school during that time, or was it after when you started college, or ...?

P1: I think when I got to college it was when I really started to meet a lot of people from different backgrounds, from different parts of the country. People were, you know, ethnically different. Meeting other Black people; Black people from the South, Black people from the West Coast, Black people, just like different types of people. So that was ... that was a good experience. So I think that ... you know, I remember meeting a White guy from Michigan when I was in college and he was really like kind of a staunch Republican, and I was like, “How can you be from Michigan and be like a ... really?” I didn’t understand back then. You know, I was like 19 or 20, so I didn’t like ... I never thought about it before like, how can you be Republican at all? To me, that was how I felt.

Having grown up in a Black community in Detroit and attending elementary and secondary schools that were predominantly Black, the experiences of the participant in eventually encountering people beyond Detroit that might have ‘looked’ like him but were not like him should be a familiar one to many of us. In these interactional encounters, what were some of the identities that might have been foregrounded by being called into enactment? Likewise, what might have been the identities that were not significant in that context? It seems from his telling of meeting Black people from different regions of the US, there was a dual dynamic in play. On one hand, perhaps an instant racial solidarity; and on another scale, some cultural differences might have emerged based on their specific areas of the country that shaped in part their identities? Traditionally in the US, people from the South have been seen as being more ‘polite’ than those from the Northeast – from my observations and from several Southerners who have confirmed this with me. For example, native Southerners apparently do not curse as much in public as people from New York (or least the fellow New Yorkers I knew growing up). So even if you racially identify with someone of the same ‘color,’ would you be culturally identical if you and the person came from at-times very different regional and hence, dissimilar cultural (in some ways) backgrounds in the same country?

However, in another dynamic, in relating his surprise that a fellow Michigander was a “staunch Republican” indexes to some extent his assumption when he was 20 years old that someone coming from a state that has traditionally voted Democratic in US Presidential elections (although in 2016, it went for Trump) would naturally be a Democrat illustrates several things. One is that the supposition of someone would share the identical political leaning based on the same regional

and hence assumed cultural correspondence. When I asked him if he asked the question directly why the person was Republican, the participant replied that he did not want “to be confrontational.” This comment can be interpreted in several ways. One is perhaps that the participant wanted to maintain a friendly, collegial atmosphere with his schoolmate. Another is that as a Black person, would he feel comfortable in directly questioning a White person’s conservative views in a face-to-face encounter, given the animosities many Blacks face when challenging Whites directly? “People locate themselves as belonging to a community because within it, some experiences are common and some of the ways in which they have been defined and understood are shared” (Hall, 2016, p. 32). Clearly, in this instance, the complex interwoven identities of Whiteness and its embodied materializations of particular politics can and does take precedence over a regional identity that was associated with fairly progressive one.

The conversation continued:

ME: Why do you think that some people have rejected racism, but others have embraced it or you know, never let go of it?

P1: Well, that’s kind of a hard question, but I think a large part of it in the United States I think is ... it’s kind of ... it’s not mine, I’m kind of paraphrasing here, but bell hooks, there’s a racial hierarchy, and in the United States, Black people are ... at the bottom of this hierarchy, and so, like maybe working-class White people – poor White people or White women, when they, they’ve experienced class struggle, and I think that when they’re trying to close that gap of class and privilege, um, they’re not looking to necessarily always show solidarity with other minorities in that respect. I feel like sometimes it’s more like being insensitive about ... they don’t like their share of the pie, you know, American capitalism, and they’re more upset about being left out than they are about the actual injustices happening. And I feel that that’s kind of my view on it, it’s not like they see that Black people are ... that they should be showing solidarity with the migrant, with the minority, with the immigrant. It’s more like, you know, “How come we don’t have what they have?”

The participant raises the central issue of how capitalism has thrived from racism. As previously discussed in this chapter, the ongoing lack of working-class solidarity due to race has enabled the decline of relative wages in the US during the rise of neoliberalism beginning in the late 1970s with the dismantling of unions, cutting funding for public education, health care, and unemployment compensation, etc. There have been notable cases of White workers forging alliances with Blacks, such as the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO) during the Great Depression of the 1930s was an activist coalition of workers across race fighting for worker rights; more often than not, though, when White workers have organized into unions, they have excluded other workers or admitted only a few as ‘tokens.’ How can we on the Left address the ongoing self-imposed racial divisions by some White workers that end up sabotaging their relatively meager gains from their employers,

who are only too happy to see this happen? How do we present effective counter-discourses to convince those who cling to their wages of Whiteness that capitalists have been profiting from their Whiteness in the materialized forms of non-unionized minimum wages to name just one example? As Du Bois (2018) asked, “Can a minority of any group or country be left out of the Socialistic problem?” (p. 119).

Since these workers certainly “don’t like their share of the pie” as the participant succinctly frames it, is there any other rationale for why “they’re more upset about being left out than they are about the actual injustices happening” in the participant’s view? What are the ways in which people are socialized and enculturated into viewing their problems in being able to pay their bills for food and rent on time and trying to earn a decent living as solely their own situation being left out that is not experienced by others who are also unhappy with their share of the pie? Is this specific to American culture or in the cultures of all capitalist societies? Furthermore, again as the participant pithily puts it, why do some White workers complain by asking, “How come we don’t have what they have?” in their displacing their anger toward minorities and immigrants rather than directed at the capitalist class?

These are the more obvious discursive forms of racism. However, what is even more insidious are the covert discourses of racism, one of which denies that racism is widespread and is only limited to a select few:

P1: And I also think that there is a sense even amongst moderate White people in this country, whether they agree with it or not, you meet a pretty moderate White person and you start to talk to them, but I feel like they don’t truly understand how racism can shape and affect your life and your possibilities and your potential, um, because anything other than somebody walking down the street with a Nazi flag, or in a KKK outfit is not necessarily racist. It’s like moving goalposts so far that now we do have people who are Klansmen and Nazis and who feel like they should be heard and listened to and there’s a good amount of moderate White people who say, “Well, just let them protest ... just let them have their say ... just let them do what they want,” you know, ‘free speech.’ And I think that’s kind of why we are where we are now, and there’s always going to be some of that because even Martin Luther King said, I’m paraphrasing again, he thought that the ... White moderates were more of a threat to the civil rights progress than the Klan. I mean, yeah, we know where we stand with the Klan, but the moderate White person is you know, very *laissez-faire* and devil’s advocate about what is reasonable and decent, is to me, more problematic. Whenever I encounter somebody like that, I always ask, “if there was a group of people in your neighborhood who want to have a protest in your neighborhood and they said, ‘Well, we demand, and we want to decriminalize pedophilia and we want to decriminalize statutory rape, and we want to roll back, you know, the age of consent laws,’ and a group of people actually wanted to do those things and they had a

protest in your neighborhood, would you be OK with that? Would you be worried you know, if their Internet servers got wiped, or they got arrested, or harassed or offended in any way?" And without a doubt, nobody wants to answer that question because they know what the answer is. Everybody can empathize with being a child because we've all been children or we know children, but when it comes to empathizing with people who are being racially uh, targeted or harassed, they don't necessary empathize with that. So, I mean, I think that the problem is moderate White people who don't necessarily like ... maybe they're just people who reject racism outright, or who maybe are just on the fence about it 'cause I think they're afraid to take a stand against other White people. So, much more concerned about that.

This is the quote by Dr. King that the participant refers to:

I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

(King, 1963)

Covert racism is defined here as one who blithely accepts the racial hierarchy of society in its affording certain privileges to those who are accorded – those identifying as Whites including 'moderates.' A covert racist might denounce egregious and blatant acts of racism typified in violence resulting in the murder and maiming of Black people by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), but would mostly likely defend the KKK's right to free speech as the participant points out. It is important here to emphasize that racism is enacted as "a social relation, not the mere ravings of racist subjects" (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991, p. 41). The White moderates' enabling of the KKK and neo-Nazi rallies and protests by defending their rights mirrors those who identify on the Right who support them in more obvious ways. There is also a class dynamic involved inasmuch as many so-called 'skinheads' over the past few decades who have incited riots against minority communities in both the UK and the US have largely been from working-class and lower-middle-class backgrounds. The White moderates adhering to the 'genteel' covert racism may be from all class backgrounds, but in my experience many are upper middle class who profess to

condemn the actions of the skinheads. In addition, the White moderates who have settled for 'less' with the political, economic, and social policy 'compromises' by their elected politicians have in effect pushed the Democratic Party evermore toward the center-right. This in turn has prompted the Republican Party to become increasingly rightwing in perpetuating the myth that there are two main political parties in the US holding significantly differing views. The reality is both parties uphold the system as is.

The participant then offers a brilliant example of how a monological identity politics have subverted class solidarity across race:

P1: There's another Martin Luther King quote, it's like people who are more concerned with civility than justice. So, people who don't really want to rock the boat; don't really want to take a stand; don't want to risk losing anything because, I feel, they understand too that Whiteness is something that have to hold on to. That it could upset the balance of Whiteness in their lives. I mean, I feel like it's very challenging when you have friends who are White to tell them things like that, but I feel like I have to because, you know, because even my friends who are White feminist, they'll say, "well, you're a man." I'm always like, "Are you trying to have the same rights and privileges as me, or somebody else? Are you trying to get treated like a Mexican guy who is out doing daily work for Home Depot? He's a man too ... Do you want to be treated like him? It's like, you don't even recognize truly your own privilege and what you're talking about because you're not trying to ... Do you want to get treated the way I do by the police or the criminal justice system? I know you don't." And I always try to bring up that point. Again, that's bell hooks argument, not mine. But again, you're not trying to have the rights and privileges of a Black man. You're trying to have the rights and privileges of a wealthy White man. You're not trying to be like me. And, I think White ... poor White people would be better served showing solidarity with migrants, immigrants, working-class Black people, but, you know, they don't, and I feel like it's because ... yeah, it's not the injustice that's a problem. It's the piece of pie they weren't happy with.

The deficiencies of a singular identity politics is amply demonstrated in the participant's anecdotal illustration of his White feminist friends reminding him that he is a man in the context of sociopolitical discussions. In this interactional context, the denotational indexicality of his White feminist friends in their propositional act of telling him he's a "man" is an example of a nomic truth or timeless truth (Agha, 2007) in the singular referent of gender in their universalizing claim. His response with real-life examples of people whose gender may be viewed as male but are interanimated with race and class are an excellent rebuttal of an indexical identity politics that tends to highlight an oppression in ways that do not address or even acknowledge at times other oppressions simultaneously operating throughout multiple scales. His refusal to be interpellated by his White feminist friends only as

a “man” emphasizes that there is no social relational meaning without the other interanimating dynamics defining, presenting, and being viewed in various contexts. His case in point of asking if the gendered positionality of a Mexican male working full-time at a national chain store while getting paid the US minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour, which is well below the poverty line, would be preferable to one of a middle-class White woman is interpreted here as his not ignoring or dismissing the devastating oppressions women have suffered because of their gender (e.g., sexual assault, harassment, discrimination, etc.), but rather his attempting to raise a much-needed awareness that also addresses race and class oppressions in building greater worker solidarity. In addition, the participant’s reminder to his White friends that as a Black man, he is in constant danger of being killed by the police or unjustly incarcerated (e.g., Alexander, 2012) redirects the attempted discursive indexical positioning of “man” in this situational framework to that of a *well-off White* male, thereby recontextualizing the privileges. And in order for this to occur, the participant argues that Whites need to let go of their Whiteness as the last vestige that continues to haunt all people in a capitalist society.

This obstacle of the psychological and public wages of Whiteness leads to my next question:

ME: Right, so, then, what would your ideas be about how we can eliminate racism in our country?

P1: I think the way to eliminating racism is by having ... is, I don’t want to say having a wholesale rejection of capitalism, but that’s part of it. I think that, like, if you have capitalism, there’s a top of this pyramid and every other exclusionary tactic is like a part of that; it grows from that. You can’t perpetuate capitalism if ... you can perpetuate capitalism, but sexism is a part of that, homophobia is a part of that, racism is a part of that, xenophobia is a part of that because there’s all kinds of people who stand to benefit financially from exploiting or excluding people from having a say in society, from benefiting equally. So, I think that, you know, if we move towards more a socialist type of system, more people are more even. Not only will you see less racism, you will inherently see less classism, but also, I think you’ll see less drug addiction, you’ll see less mass shootings, you’ll see less uh, crime because all of those things are intertwined into capitalism. There’s somebody who always benefits from the exploitation and exclusion of somebody else.

In contrast to those who are against racist injustices in society without specifically mentioning and/or addressing how capitalism co-constructs and enables racialized social relations, the participant’s view embodies the Gramscian good sense (Chun, 2017; Gramsci, 1971) in his appraisal of how best to abolish racism. His representative image of capitalism as a pyramid with those on the top controlling those on the bottom supporting the top is not novel; however, his specific mentioning of the structural-supporting roles of racism, fear of the Others, sexism, and anti-LGBTQ views in dividing workers and thus facilitating exploitation is an

often overlooked or entirely absent piece (by ideological design) of the proverbial puzzle. This needs to be shared among a far greater number of people if capitalism is ever to be overcome. Not only does he connect racism and classism to capitalist practices and ideologies, but he also situates drug use and killings in the context of estrangement that is a central effect and affect of capitalism (Marx, 1975 [1844]) rather than the usual common-sense framing of these acts as solely individualized mental and social pathologies. His argument that “there’s somebody who always benefits from the exploitation and exclusion of somebody else” is a defining and brilliantly succinct characteristic of capitalism by an organic intellectual. This discursive framing can be utilized for on-the-ground engagements with people who defend capitalism:

ME: So then how do we get these people to become aware of this, you know, that they’re being exploited by capitalism and being used so that we’re just fighting over crumbs? What would be some of the ways that we can literally wake them up?

P1: You know, I feel like educating ... education is huge ... I think that people have tied like a certain amount of their liberty to capitalism, their ability to spend and consume, to do whatever they see fit, with whenever they see fit because they have the time or the money, it’s like directly ... it’s like conflating liberty with capitalism. And also, like, people demonizing socialism to the point where, even if I were just to talk to laborers and asked them what they thought about socialism, the response is not going to be steeped in something reasonable, it’s going to be some extreme example where socialism didn’t work in the world. It’s going to be more like, “Look at Venezuela right now!” You know, it’s going to be one of those types of ... like real blanket talking point responses and not anything that’s truly in depth or powerful. I think that if you could just really reach out to people and say, “Hey, you know, I need health care and you need health care, and I need access to clean food and you need access to clean water, I need a retirement plan and I need all the same things you need, and we can do that if we check off boxes x, y, and z. But again, I think that trying to get people to see that is hard because a more even society means that Whiteness doesn’t serve to benefit people the same way. And White people don’t want to lose that. They don’t want to lose their place in society as being the people who get to make decisions; who get to set the tone. And maybe trying to explain that to a poor White person is difficult cause they can say, “Well, I don’t make any decisions, I don’t set the tone.”

The discourse collocating capitalism with freedom and liberty has had a long history in the US, which I have addressed in Chapter 1, and elsewhere (e.g., Chun, 2016, 2017, 2018b). It has worked in dialogical tandem with the discourses during the Cold War of the 1950s–1980s in which the “evil empire” (as Ronald Reagan called it) of the former Soviet Union was used to discredit and dismiss any discussions in American society about alternatives to capitalism, be it in the mass media

or among co-workers, friends, and families. The framing of socialism within the authoritarian models of government in the USSR and the People's Republic of China instilled a horror among many Americans that led them to embrace capitalism even more because of its appearance enabling their freedom to buy and choose as the participant notes. The shift in identity of workers laboring under the conditions of having little to no say in their workplace regarding wages, time off, and so on to the appeal of the identity of "confident consumers" (Streeck, 2017) was reinforced in part by the multiple images in the Western media of people often waiting in long lines to buy scarce supplies of basic commodities in the USSR and the Soviet bloc countries. As I mentioned in my book, *The Discourses of Capitalism*, when I spent a day in East Berlin in 1986, I suffered from an incredible urban sensory deprivation in terms of not seeing advertisements anywhere in the city. This had an almost ghost town effect on my surface-level perception of that place. In this regard, it is understandable that some people would demonize the 'socialism' that East Germany claimed to be.

The participant's response to this is another example of an organic intellectual appealing to the good sense within the shared common-sense beliefs: the right to survive and live in any society depends on having the necessities he draws attention to. But yet again, the specter of Whiteness arises as this participant knows full well from his lived experiences as a Black person in America – only those who should and can make decisions for all are limited to Whites only. This should of course be amended with the adjective 'rich' but as he points out again, the interanimating dynamic of class in this instance reveals the awareness of poor Whites as knowing full well they are not in control, but for some, they have clung to their race over gaining that very power in society to improve their, and others' lives for the better. The participant concludes:

P1: So my overwhelming feeling is White people in this country won't do anything until it shows up on their doorstep and punches them in the face ... you know, a bad enough economy downturn, something horrific, which if we stay on the same path it's going to happen. Like it's going to take for White Americans to have to be basically, almost entirely bankrupt of everything they own before they show solidarity, before they even come around to try and understand that how we've been going is wrong ... when it's bad enough, when it reaches the critical ... tipping point, then we can do something, but I feel like the tipping point economically has come close, but not overbearing...if we had a great recession, again, something on the scale of the Depression, I think you'll finally see that again ... we live in a country where even working-class people of color are, are complicit and, you know, just being uber-capitalist ... I don't know, I really hope that it doesn't have to get that bad, but it's going to take something oddly horrific for people to, to abandon, uh, capitalism. We have to. This is not working. This is killing us because we can't afford health care. It's killing us because it's destroying our environment. It's killing us because it's driving people into drug addiction. It's killing us for a whole set of reasons and, you know,

people, you know, don't ... I think a lot of working-class White people think that capitalism is just going to stay working for them, but I think that's a completely wrong-headed idea. That's just like ... that's a very thin veneer. It's not going to protect you when every city is like Detroit was when I was a kid.

Unfortunately, many working-class Whites have already been “punched in the face” with the increasing rates of unemployment in former industrial areas due to job outsourcing and the closing of manufacturing centers in both urban and rural areas in the US in the past 40 years. Will it take total economic disaster for these working-class White Americans before they realize they should have embraced and enacted solidarities with their fellow workers of color, as the participant hopes? In fact, many Whites have already fallen into poverty from unemployment and lack of job opportunities in the past several decades, but some continue blaming the government and certain politicians for the state of the economy. Others have voted for and continue to support those running for office who present themselves as ‘outsiders’ of the political system and thus their savior from the government. Their congruent accompanying discourse of the Other has these Whites blaming immigrants for stealing their jobs. How many actually condemn the economic system of capitalism itself for their misery and hunger? As the participant notes though, many working-class Whites still believe that capitalism works for them despite all this. However, as the participant reminds us, there are a good number of working-class people of color who are not critical of capitalism either. They know full well the racial discriminations they have faced throughout their lives, but may not always connect it with capitalism. For people to finally abandon capitalism, what will be the “oddly horrific” thing it will take for them to do so as he predicts?

The following interview with a person identifying as White working class suggests the subtle intertwining of the “wages of Whiteness” (Roediger, 2007) with race:

ME: Are you a native of Boston?

P2: Yes, I am, I'm a townie, a proud townie from Charlestown. Growing up, it was very much working class. You know, your truck drivers, Teamsters, carpenters, and when the Navy yard was open you had a lot of shipyard workers there. And then that closed in 1972, so that put a lot of people out of work around that area. I can remember as a kid, you know, 4 o'clock, the whistle would blow at the Navy yard, I lived not too far away from there and the streets around there would be jammed with traffic from people going home. I think that was a big blow for that part of Boston when the Navy yard closed ... I'm going back to when I was growing up there in the '70s. Tough neighborhood, very insular. You know, they just kept, basically wanting to be left alone, I think. With busing, that changed everything, you know?

ME: When you say left alone, left alone by whom?

P2: Yeah, well, you could say the government. You know, telling people what to do. I mean ... I had a high school right up the street from me, but I had to go uh – no, I did go to that high school for 2 years, Charlestown High in the

beginning of busing. And it was so crazy with fights and riots and all that stuff that for my next two years of high school I went to Boston High, which was on Newbury Street in Boston. It's not there anymore. But yeah, I would say so, I think the government inflamed tensions between Blacks and Whites 'cause my brothers and sisters before me told me, you know, that Black people and whoever up in Charlestown High that everybody got along. But I think when you're forcing stuff on people that maybe aren't ready for change, they don't want Big Brother telling them what to do.

The participant refers to the busing crisis that occurred in Boston in the mid-1970s in which the state mandated the racial desegregation of schools. This led to numerous violent protests by primarily White working-class people objecting to Black students being bussed into their school districts. There are several discursive strands interwoven throughout his narrative. One is an identifiably proud working-class identity indexed by his growing up in Charlestown, which was in stark contrast to the much more affluent nearby neighborhoods of Back Bay and Beacon Hill. The second discourse he employs is the by-now familiar neoliberal framing of the government being the problem (stemming from Ronald Reagan's famous speech) telling his neighbors "what to do," but who only wanted "to be left alone." In this view, the government is the guilty culprit in provoking more racial tensions between poor Blacks and Whites. From his account, the (few) Blacks students attending his high school apparently got along with his White classmates before desegregation; however, why then would many Whites object to the presence of more Black students in their schools? Was it a concern over the already scarce educational resources, now threatened to be used by more (Black) students?

What is interesting is that the participant does not condemn the government for not providing more funding to overcrowded public schools in both his community and those in the Black communities; rather, he blames the government for the ensuing unrests in inflaming racial tensions and reactions to enforced desegregation. This dynamic of White working-class communities divided from other working class people of different racial backgrounds because of racism (which in this case the government is the culpable agent in the view held by the participant, and presumably others in his community) instead of being angrily unified against their shared capitalist exploitation supports Wright's (1998) observation that "at a relatively concrete, micro level of analysis, people occupying a common location within (social relations of production) will nevertheless have different lived experiences and collective capacities" (p. 296). Thus, the participant's narrative offers a glimpse of the lived contours of how the interanimating processes of race and class produce a particular racialized (White) classed identity that is proud of one's class, and by implication, perhaps one's race as well. The participant's narrative illustrates two features of classed experience according to Wright (1998). One is "the experience of being bossed around within work ... being told what to do," and another is the experience of "basic powerlessness with respect to the allocation of social resources" (p. 337). These two are implied in the participant's account of

his experiences from the Boston busing crisis – except that his dislike of being told what to do was transplanted from his workplace to the government, which is characteristic of capitalist discourse.

This participant is also a self-identified White person from a working-class background:

ME: How did you become aware of race and class ...?

P3: It's actually been a life-long experience for me sort of piecing it all together ... this summer I went to a plantation tour in Louisiana, but it was super focused on the slave trade, and very much not what they termed the hoopskirt plantation tours, which is all about the "Oh, how did the plantation owners live?" I mean, this tour very deliberately dispenses with how the plantation owners lived and goes straight into how this ... and they never used the term slave or master at this place because those terms are sort of deterministic. You know, when you say slave, it's like that's what that person is. So slave and master, just by using those terms it's like, this is going to lead back to the factory ... it seems like a normal situation. So, instead of saying slave, you always say enslaved person, instead of saying master, you always say, you know, the enslavers of human beings or something like that. And you sit through a couple of hours of a tour, and you're always hearing it contextualized like that, it's always these are human beings that were enslaved. These are human beings who enslaved other human beings, who, when you always hear it contextualized like that it becomes ... powerful. I really made a choice in my life to always use those terms since that tour.

The participant offers an insightful example of how a critical awareness of language can and does reshape one's sense of social relations. By relating his experience learning to reject the terms 'slave' and 'master,' it highlights how certain language use by some can codify people into seemingly naturalized identities and positionalities that support and perpetuate racial hierarchies. The resistance to this of course is embodied and enacted in the linguistic and discursive reframing of these terms as 'enslaved' and 'enslavers' as the participant now uses. And yet, resistance to hegemonic words has also been reactionary at times. In his book *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, Roediger (2007) addresses the gradual abandonment starting in the 19th century of the term 'master' by White workers to describe their employers because they did not want to be seen as being in the same relational position as Blacks who were enslaved by their 'masters,' or as the participant relates from his tour experience, the "enslavers." In its place, the White workers began using the Dutch word '*baas*,' which became 'boss' in American English. However, '*baas*' in Dutch means master. By adopting a word from another language with the same meaning, these Whites were attempting to have their economic and social relations with their employers to be redefined in relationship to Black workers. By calling them 'boss' instead of 'master,' this linguistic and eventual discursive switch by White workers gave them

a sense of superiority over their fellow workers of color without obviously improving their own work conditions by changing their economic-social relations. In their reframing of 'master' with a different word with the identical indexicality, race clearly took precedence over class.

The participant continues:

P3: One of the things they mentioned was that there's this lie that's told about slavery, which is that these people were completely passive ... there was constant rebellion among the slaves, despite the level of brutality that they faced and there was constant sabotage and work slowdowns and actual slave revolts that have been suppressed by history, so effectively suppressed by the media at the time because it was very dangerous to even report on that stuff. So, hearing that stuff and hearing how ... about the constant certain monkey wrenching that was going on, made me think about the stories my dad told us. "Yeah, those guys they'd just walk through the factory and one of them would just toss a wrench over their shoulder into the machines, and yeah, it shuts down the whole line for the rest of the day." And as a kid, I struggled to understand because my dad would contextualize it as, "why would you do that to people that pay your paycheck and employ you?" And it didn't fully click until I was on this tour this summer. I thought, you know, this is often African Americans who did this and that was ... and that to this day would not ... you're not rewarded for how much you get done for the factory or for the slave master, you're rewarded for how much ... or how little you do. That's your badge of honor, and if you can cause everyone else to do less for the period ... for some period of time that's ... you are rewarded for that. That's your badge of honor. That's how little you can do for the slave master and how that ripples through culture just really made sense to me.

The participant's historical paralleling of slavery with capitalism in both their social relations of Black American workers with their heretofore enslaving "masters" and present-day "bosses" presents a strong argument challenging capitalism as being the ultimate culmination of organizing economic production and distribution. If this economy were truly 'free' as some people have maintained (Chun, 2017), why then is the term "wage slave" still in social circulation? In the context of the participant's relating about his father being perplexed by workers sabotaging production at their workplace, he sees it as the continuation of their ancestors' workplace and lived resistance to their enslavers. This illustration brings to mind the famous line by William Faulkner, in his novel *Requiem for a Nun*, "the past is never dead. It's not even past." This again points to one of the central themes of this book – why do some people continue to view capitalism as being the 'best' system there is, while others recognize it for what it is – another exploitative system replacing its previous one? Yes, it seems to be far, far better than being enslaved of course; you can quit your job at any time, you are not beholden to your enslaver, and you won't get killed for escaping your job. You do receive wages for your work, unlike enslaved workers.

However, for many workers, are these wages enough to live on? Not only to pay the bills but to have enough to pay unexpected expenses like health-related emergencies, or residential evictions? For people who work their whole lives and end up with very little, should they be grateful they were not enslaved to the system? Or were they? The anger among many White workers who know and feel this but feel obligated to be grateful “to people who pay your paycheck and employ you,” and who direct their anger not toward the system of capitalism but at other workers who are not White is a defining ideological social-relational feature of the system. How then do we get these workers to ‘wake up’?:

ME: Since you identify as from a White working-class background, how would you attribute the fact that you and some others from the same background, have become woke, as it were, while others still hold onto these reactionary views? Is it just education or ...?

P3: I don't know what it is. I don't know why I always thought, what's wrong with this picture, you know, I was getting told one thing and I always thought, “what's wrong with this?” Whether it was the Vietnam War or the Civil Rights Movements or what my dad was talking about in the factory. I just always felt like there was something wrong with what I was being told. It didn't make sense to me ... my mom had kind of an alternative view from my dad and maybe there was that “oh yeah, he's full of shit” element in my household kind of led me to question more than I would if my mom had inherited what he said ... In junior high and high school, there were underground newspapers that I would pick up from the headshops in the neighborhood, the *Fifth Estate*, which was put out by John Sinclair and the White Panther Party. The White Panther Party sounds like the KKK thing, but they were ... they created it in conjunction with the Black Panther Party, so they were allies, and John Sinclair sort of headed that up and the MC5 was there as the musical instrument of that, of course, I was into all that stuff. This was a White newspaper, White Marxist newspaper, but very much allied with the Black Panther cause, so I was reading that stuff even in junior high school. But I was reading it because I was trying to figure stuff out, but I remember saying to my friends, 'cause I had a real anger issue as a kid, and ... I remember telling my friends, if I'd been born Black, I wouldn't have lived ... I wouldn't have lived to be 20. I wouldn't live to get out of high school 'cause I was hard to put up with. I wouldn't be able to contain myself with the injustices that Black people faced. I remember people thinking I was weird for saying things like that. So there wasn't a lot of real political lefties in my high school, as I recall. I started finding more people in college along my line of thinking. But it was real working class, but also before I was in college, I started meeting, you know, real working class, factory workers who were super lefty and super pro-Black liberation. White workers who were like, so I never thought of activism, or political lefty, politically minded thinking as being like an elite thing, or an intellectual thing. You know, always to me, seemed like it was

coming from ... that was certainly John Sinclair's presentation was from a real working class, you know, Detroit formed perspective, so I never ... it never felt like anything other than hard working, working class.

The participant underscores three dynamics in his growing awareness of capitalist society. His family situation in which his parents disagreed on sociopolitical issues is a familiar one to many of us who witnessed our parents and other family members arguing at the dinner table over politics, current events, and so on. However, as children, we are shaped by, and react differently to their views of the world. My own reactions growing up were further shaped by the opinions of my friends, classmates, teachers, books, newspapers, and the community. In this age of social media, the exposure to like-minded beliefs and opposing ones has expanded exponentially. In his case, the participant was fortunate to have access to an alternative source of information framed by a racial and classed solidarity that presented the world in a different manner than his father and most likely, his teachers and public school curriculum. And the third root of his becoming woke was the chance of meeting White workers who supported their Black comrades in the



FIGURE 4.1 Sign at a Defund the Police rally, June 2020, Boston City Hall

struggle against the racism that is an indispensable component of capitalism depriving them of their humanity. In this, these workers were overcoming the estrangement from one another and setting an example for people like this participant and others who felt something was “wrong with this picture.” Is the past ever present in our lives? Over 150 years ago, Marx (1976 [1867]) noted that “in the United States of America, every independent workers’ movement was paralysed as long as slavery disfigured a part of the republic. Labour in a white skin cannot emancipate itself where it is branded in a black skin” (p. 414). It is time for the people who cling to their being ‘White’ to finally shed their Whiteness if we are ever going to overthrow capitalism (Figure 4.1).

5

“WORKING FOR THE CLAMPDOWN”

This chapter and the following one feature more people on their views of their communities, jobs, their various positionalities in the economy and society, and the world at large. Some of the issues I raise with the participants include asking them how they perceive their lived experiences in surrounding material spaces embodying societal relations and functions, the ways in which their jobs shape their daily lives, what they think of capitalism, and if they are happy with it and this world. In exploring how their discourses co-construct and enact “the spatial, the social, and the historical dimensions of reality” (Soja, 2010, p. 18), the aim here is the need

to be able to answer the question, “Whose imaginaries are these?” Answering this question requires a person-centered approach ... so that we are talking about the imaginaries of real people, not the imaginaries of imagined people. Studying real people will help counter the tendency to see imaginaries as more homogeneous or fixed than they are.

(Strauss, 2006, p. 339)

In examining the participants’ spoken discourse, I focus on the Bakhtinian discursive dynamics of “what we say is constantly being remembered and repeated by others, and much of what we say consists of reporting words that we or others have uttered in the past” (Jones, 2016, p. 16). Thus, my discourse analytic approach addresses the participants’ dialogical utterances and heteroglossic echoes (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986) of both hegemonic consensual (aka “common-sense”) and counter-hegemonic (“good sense”) discourses (Chun, 2017) that index their various positionings and identifications in the social and cultural relations of the economy. Their views highlight the Gramscian “common-sense” and “good sense” beliefs of the worlds which they inhabit and see. My purpose here has been to explore “how do people’s actual elaborate identities relate to the

complexities of their everyday lives, and how is it possible for these identities to take on more critical forms?" (Devine & Savage, 2005, p. 16).

The following participant (P4) has lived in a rapidly gentrifying and now 'hipsterized' neighborhood in Los Angeles for the past 15 years:

ME: How would you see yourself as?

P4: I would probably identify myself as an artist and a teacher ... Yeah, I think like kind of working class, you know, educated. Umm, let's see, someone who likes to read, and likes to be around other people who are intellectual.

ME: So you identify as part of the working class. Why working class and how would you define that?

P4: So I think as someone – I am educated and highly educated – I have a graduate degree in art, but that has not brought me a significant amount of upward mobility, so I still feel like I have to work and oftentimes take second jobs to make extra money. I live in an apartment that I rent, I can't afford to buy in the city that I live in, so I feel like I'm at the status where I'm sort of unable to move up necessarily, in terms of maybe quality of life. But also that like, working and doing something that is important for my community and being a part of that community is really important, so I consider that sort of working class. And not coming from a wealthy background, not having that kind of privilege and that money that kind of floats you.

This participant frames themselves as working class in a manner that contradicts the conventional notion and common representations of who the working class is in the US. Although the participant has a graduate degree and is a full-time teacher, the fact that they have to "take second jobs to make extra money" but is still unable to buy a home within the city exemplifies the situation in which many people also in their presumably 'middle class' position (as traditionally been indexed by them being a teacher) find themselves. Despite being a full-time employee, the participant having to work other jobs to pay the bills aligns them with, if not actually placing them in what is now known as the "precariat" – people who are seen as the proletariat in precarious (i.e., provisional and insecure jobs). In effect, they occupy a dual positionality as a worker – full-time teacher during the day, and temporary worker at night and on the weekends. Thus, the participant's identifying with and perceiving themselves as working class echoes what Vanneman and Cannon (1987) found in their book *The American Perception of Class*, in which many Americans during the Great Depression jettisoned their self-perception of belonging to the middle class and instead embraced a more working-class identity because of the immense stress and pain they suffered from the collapse of the economy.

As with the participant in Chapter 3 who also is a teacher, both their daily lives in how these are shaped and impacted by their work challenges the hegemonic positioning of them as 'middle class' as measured by their income, education level, and job status. The ideological descriptive term of 'middle' (e.g., Williams, 1985) has attempted to obscure and dismiss the central characteristic of the social and

economic relation of any employee – that of one who *has to* work and is working *for someone else*. The participant also offers an interesting counter-hegemonic definition of working class – as someone who does something for their local community with support in their *working* for it. This stands in stark contrast to the affluent who gentrify neighborhoods in their expelling longtime residents and in doing so, obliterate those local communities built over the years and decades (Stein, 2019).

The conversation continues:

ME: Are you happy with this world?

P4: I'm happy with, like, my California community because here I feel like I'm amongst like-minds. I know that when I go to the voting booth that the majority of people around me are going to be voting for the same people because we have the same belief system. And so in terms of local community I do feel happy with that. I definitely think there could be better things. It makes me unhappy to see so many homeless people. We don't seem to support our fellow community members that aren't as well off as we are ... homeless people, mentally ill, you know, the elderly. So, in that case I would say it makes me deeply unhappy we can't quite figure out how to live together in a more communal, empathetic society.

The participant's response raises an ongoing question that not only many scholars have asked and attempted to define, but also everyday people looking for one to belong to: what comprises a community? For whom? Is it an actual community in which people all know one another, or is it an imagined one (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Balibar, 1991)? How is a community defined and/or perceived along multiple social scales and constructed domains such as race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality? Is it only the people who reply with the same answer to the question, “what are you?” Those who (appear and ascribed to) ‘look,’ speak, act, and think the same as us? And what does thinking ‘the same’ mean in actual contexts across various realms? For example, the percentage of people in this participant's city, Los Angeles, who are registered Democrat voters is currently 59% versus the 15.9% who are registered Republicans. However, would voting as a Democrat necessarily mean sharing all the same beliefs on every political, social, and economic issue? This is unlikely inasmuch as the 2020 US presidential election campaign in which the Democratic candidates who were running for their party's nomination (e.g., Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, and Kamala Harris) all had disparate and diverging views on policies and proposals for the economy and society such as health care, taxing the rich, and military spending.

The participant points out that despite their feeling of sharing the same views with many in their geographically defined neighborhood community, it seems to stop there with the obvious lack of any active engagement with, and materialized support for those fellow neighbors who are suffering. Does this illustrate the one-dimensional hegemonic consent to a system among those who identify as liberal or progressive in which they may vote for politicians who promise a more equitable

and just society, but after these voters cast their ballot, it all ends there at the voting booth? So although their voting for a more progressive political candidate may seem that they are not consenting to the economic disparities and social injustices in their community, city, and nation, I would argue that the absence (on the part of some but certainly not all) of any accompanying action within their community in effect sustains the system that is inflicting pain and suffering on many. This highlights the pressing need for creating spaces in which people in a community can engage with one another in ways that we can learn from and about each other. In writing about the divisional conflicts between some in the Black and Chinese American communities in the Bayview–Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco, Tom (2020) noted that “our communities rarely had actual dialogue about our histories and community conditions” and “both communities were living under structural poverty and fighting each other for small crumbs” (p. 297). The lack of cross-community dialogues and the battling over scraps is obviously not limited to these two particular communities, but rather a fundamental characteristic of capitalist society. The participant then addresses the larger scale:

P4: In terms of the world, I’ll go up one more notch. The United States, not very happy, very upsetting times where I feel like it’s on the verge of a fascist state. I feel like the majority of the people in this country seem to want different things than what I want and have different, a very different belief system, like religious, wanting to take away rights from women, racist, anti-immigration; all of this I cannot understand and that makes me deeply upset on a regular basis. In terms of the world, it’s like such a vast place ... and it’s upsetting to me also to see that there are a lot of very right-wing governments that are now popping up all over the world and that’s deeply troubling. So I wouldn’t necessarily say I’m happy except for maybe more on the local level.

I conducted this interview with the participant in the summer of 2018, a year and a half into Trump’s term as US president. At that point, some might have framed the participant’s remark that they were sensing and feeling the rapid rise of fascism in the US as their being either a bit paranoid in exaggerating Trump’s policies and stances as such, or to use a now-common right-wing discursive disparagement, just a “libtard” and “snowflake” in being repeatedly “triggered” by him. However, it seemed the participant was indeed prescient because on January 6, 2021, thousands of Trump supporters attacked the US Capitol and the people inside in their claiming that the election was stolen from him. When I found out what was happening, I posted on my social media page that it felt like we were living in Germany, circa 1932. These supporters insisted they were only reclaiming *their* country in making America great again. As I watched the live news reporting that were showing the rioters’ faces (many were not wearing anti-viral masks of course), although the overwhelming majority appeared to be White males, there were also a few people of color storming the building along with them. This raises the questions posed by Balibar (1991), “what makes a nation a ‘community’? Or rather

in what way is the form of community instituted by the nation distinguished specifically from other historical communities?" (p. 93).

There has never been a homogeneous society constituted as a 'nation-state' in which everyone purportedly shares the same beliefs as some demagogues have claimed. Is this even possible? The idea held by some on both the Right and the Left have insisted this is achievable. In the context of the US, as addressed in Chapter 4, although many American workers from the 19th century through the mid-20th held the common view they were oppressed along classed lines, this did not ameliorate to any significant extent the divisional divides among workers along racism, gender inequalities, religious beliefs and identities, and who had the 'right' to claim an 'Americanness' even though those who were attributed to being 'foreign' had been native-born citizens and/or living in the country for decades. So when someone utters, "I am an American," what does this signify? What does it actually mean, and to whom? As Balibar (1991) argued, "*every social community reproduced by the functioning of institutions is imaginary*" (p. 93, emphasis in the original). It is imaginary because "it is based on the projection of individual experience into the weft of a collective narrative, on the recognition of a common name and on traditions lived as the trace of an immemorial past ... *only imaginary communities are real*" (ibid., p. 93, emphasis in the original). For some workers in the US, the common name of being an "American" has long taken precedence over sharing the common name of being part of the proletariat. But the affective sense of belonging to a claimed and exclusive nationalized identity that purports to have a singular belief system has also been co-constructed and shaped by scalar dynamics beyond the nation-state:

Globalization seems also to have led to a strengthening of 'local' allegiances and identities *within* nation-states; though this may be deceptive, since the strengthening of 'the local' is probably less the revival of the stable identities of 'locally settled communities' of the past, and more that tricky version of 'the local' which operates within, and has been thoroughly reshaped by 'the global' and operates largely within its logic.

(Hall, 1993, p. 354)

This led to a follow-up question:

ME: So, do you think there would be any chance or opportunity of a dialogue with those people that you said who hold very different political views than you? and if so, what would that kind of dialogue look like?

P4: Just recently I was, you know, my parents are Trump supporters and I was recently hanging out with my friend's dad, who is also that way and it was actually interesting cause we sort of just let him talk and to hear his point of view, coming from a rural town and them having very different needs that need to be met, was actually really interesting. I totally get why he would support someone, or you know like, maybe like anti-immigration or things

like taxes for him and people in rural areas are very difficult, and them maybe not seeing the benefits of that being outside of the city. Just ... like, art museums and things like that, so money is going towards these things that they don't get a benefit from. I definitely see it when you can actually have like a normal dialogue about it ... I'm not sure what that dialogue would look like, but I think maybe more on a community base. I'm in a place where most people believe in this kind of common good and this kind of leftist support, more socialist sort of environment, but I feel like, it there was like, less anger and vitriol involved in it. I mean, if I had my way I would abolish Fox News because I feel like that is brainwashing the Right, too, and it's very vitriolic and very angry, and I think if you could remove that it would probably make things a lot better.

The participant refers to the crucial role of affect in politics. With the anger felt by many people regarding their society in which they live, toil, love, hate, and eventually perish, is this only on one end of the political spectrum though? One discourse is that the anger felt by those who identify on the Right is displaced and misdirected. However, is the anger felt by those on the Left then 'righteous'? How can we on the Left who are angry at society talk with people on the Right who are also angry at society but for different reasons? If we want to challenge hegemonic consensual views, how then can we effectively frame actual alternatives to our social and economic relations in the everyday domains of work, home, neighborhoods and elsewhere in changing our society for the better (as we on the Left would define this)? This is a critical issue because in the context of the US and many other countries in the past 40 years, the failures of politicians who identify as progressive have failed to connect with those voters who have been increasingly angry at their country due to job loss, wage declines and increasing poverty, etc. This failure has enabled their political opponents on the Right to claim the mantle of championing and being on the side of the "common folk" or "the little man," such as the father of the participant's friend.

The participant's mentioning of Fox News and their contempt for it because of their fueling the fire as it were is an example of the journalism that Gramsci (2000b) called "integral" in that it "seeks not only to satisfy all the needs (of a given category) of its public, but also to create and develop these needs, to arouse its public and progressively enlarge it" (p. 383). If the counter-hegemonic aim of those of us on the Left "is not only to create a particular way of life and a particular conception of the world, but also to translate the interests and values of a specific social group into general, 'common' values and interests" (Fontana, 1993, pp. 140–141), how then would you discursively engage with the father of the participant's friend? In the past, the Left has tried to appeal to people's sense of humanity and fairness. How can we address and validate people's legitimate worries and anxieties about their economic livelihoods and futures (or lack thereof) while at the same time, exposing and debunking the right-wing and fascist discourses of the Other stealing their jobs and taking over their communities by moving in? How do we redirect those people's

fears and anger from the Right's customary targets of the Othered towards the real culprits in taking away their livelihoods – those running the economy and their enabling political puppets? One approach would be to change our footing and frame (Goffman, 1974, 1981) in addressing economic, social, and political issues with people who disagree with us. As Goffman (1974) pointed out, "when individuals attend to any current situation, they face the question: 'What is it that's going on here?'" (p. 8). This initially may seem to some of us a simple question to ask in terms of societal problems and issues, but the ways in which people organize their experiences differently necessitates how we need to re-frame these experiences in ways that would connect and resonate with them (ibid.). Of course though, "certainly individuals exhibit considerable resistance to changing their framework of frameworks" (ibid., pp. 28–29). And because of this resistance, since any attempt to frame has to integrate both "the participant's response and the world he is responding to, a reflexive element must necessarily be present in any participant's clear-headed view of events; a correct view of a scene must include the viewing of it as part of it" (ibid., p. 85), our change in the footing "implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (Goffman, 1981, p. 128). Although as Goffman (1974) noted that anyone "who would combat false consciousness and awaken people to their true interests has much to do, because the sleep is very deep" (p. 14), some people have indeed become "woke" in changing their political and social views. So the question remains, how do we wake up more people from their deep sleep?

With this in mind, I asked these last questions:

ME: Can you imagine a world without capitalism? If yes, what would that world look like? If no, why not?

P4: I don't know. All I can think of is like a barter system as something outside of that or like socialism at its best. So, let's say like Scandinavian countries, still somewhat capitalist, but socialist-based where it's community-driven.

ME: So what does socialism mean to you?

P4: (laughs) Socialism to me is a system where everyone is somewhat equal in the eyes of the government, and everyone makes around the same amount, so the class system has been diminished. Everyone's needs are somewhat met, especially their basic needs, and that communities kind of take care of themselves. So, you have your government comes in, they give you this sort of basic, systematic help and then within that you support your community in other ways that aren't being met by the government. I don't know.

In the participant's defining of what socialism means to them, there are several dialogics at play here. The conception and belief (held by some) that everyone is (or should be) "*somewhat* equal in the eyes of the government" (emphasis added) is not only a characteristic and aim of socialist society, but also that of a capitalist society that has called itself a 'democracy.' So what would differentiate a socialist

society from that of a capitalist one if both claim that all people are equal and treated accordingly? Unfortunately I missed the chance to follow up with what the participant meant by people would be "somewhat equal" in a socialist system. Would this pertain to fewer wage disparities across different occupations? This ties into the second idea about socialism, which is that everyone should be paid the same wages; thus leading to a more 'equal' society. However, would getting paid the same money as your fellow workers be adequate? This goes back to the arguments presented in Chapter 1 in which if the workers are still not in charge in collectively deciding who gets what from their labor production, then the claim to being a 'communist' or 'socialist' society is pretty much a sham. As pointed out in *Capital* (Marx, 1976 [1867]), the class system is not defined along income levels from a Marxist perspective, but rather who is in the sole determining position of appropriating and then distributing the surplus value produced by the labor of others. If the government is deciding this on its own, then what is the difference between this system and private individual capitalists?

What socialism means to the participant is an example of polysemy, which is an "infinite range of meanings" (Hebdige, 1979, p. 117). This is but one of the many challenges for those of us on the Left who want to convince others that a socialist society is the only alternative to the horrors of capitalism. How do we present a coherent discourse that characterizes a socialism that all would agree upon? Is this even possible? Given the fact that capitalism likewise has a multiplicity of meanings (e.g., Chun, 2017), it would seem unlikely. However, attempts by numerous anti-capitalists including me have offered a definitive meaning of capitalism – that of the exploitation of our labor by those in charge. Would there be a parallel definitive meaning of socialism? An issue and question of what socialism actually is, with it still being in ongoing formative practices understood and implemented differently? In contrast to capitalism which is a well-established system for over 200 years that does have different surface-level features (e.g., Keynesian vs. neoliberal versions) but has core characteristics, what would be the essential features of socialism that could appeal to those who are either sitting on the fence as it were, or even openly hostile to it because they have seen versions of it as claimed by the former Soviet Union and the present-day People's Republic of China? And because of the legacy of neoliberal discourses in countries such as the US and UK (as well as others of course), the idea of any government 'intervention' in our lives, even with the aim of improving it, is viewed by many as being "the problem" (as Reagan framed it) in our lives and society. Thus, any mention of collocating socialism with the government is bound to have adverse reactions from some people, even though they have benefited from it such as the National Health Service in the UK, and Medicare and Social Security in the US. Importantly, the participant does define socialism as having everyone's basic needs met, and that the nation-state is scaled back with local communities governing themselves. Perhaps this could serve as an entry frame into which more people might be convinced?

The next participant offers their interpretation of capitalism:

ME: How would you define or describe our economy?

P5: Late stages of capitalism, like eating itself, like destroying itself, making people miserable, in some places by a lot, in some places by inches and small gradients and degrading human life, degrading the planet ... we have to find a better, we have to deal with the environmental crisis in a way that ensures the rights and dignity of every human being because everything, as we head towards the catastrophic collapse of our planet, it's gonna be a lot easier to go even, you know, further into a totalitarian type of situations, you know. Our economy is top-down and not centered around human needs, it's around, you know, capital running itself. I mean, it's what's good for markets, you know, as they like to say on NPR. It's market-driven, which is, you know ... corporations are people ... all that crap. The whole thing is, the economy is not run for anybody's benefit but the very few people that are on the top.

P5's pithy and insightful description of capitalism as "eating itself, like destroying itself" is an example of how living utterances "cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 276). The participant's dialogical socio-ideological consciousness of the structural nature of capitalism is apparent in their discursive echoing of *Capital* by Marx (1976 [1867]), which the participant has not read. In contrast to a primary discourse of capitalism that this economic-social system is only the essential enactment and true reflection of our human nature because we are innately greedy and selfish for our own sake, Marx suggested otherwise in that it is the system that co-constructs our behavioral acts of self-interest, which in turn further fuels capitalism because the capitalist "is only capital personified. His soul is the soul of capital" (ibid., p. 342). But what exactly is this "soul" or rather, essence of capital? It is that capital has only "one sole driving force, the drive to valorize itself, to create surplus-value, to make its constant part, the means of production, absorb the greatest possible amount of surplus labour" (ibid., p. 342). It is in this inherent exploiting of our surplus labor in taking it away from workers that the true nature of capital "is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks" (ibid., p. 342).

In comparing the capitalist and the system itself to that of being a vampire, Marx cited his best friend and colleague, Engels, regarding that capitalism will never let go of us workers "while there remains a single muscle, sinew or drop of blood to be exploited" (Engels, 1850, as cited by Marx, 1976 [1867], p. 416). So at what point after every muscle and blood of ours are sucked dry, would capitalism finally start to eat and destroy itself? Or is capitalism doing both at the same time, as Marx (and others as well) pointed out that chronic economic crises are a principal structural dynamic of capitalism. Is it finally time the majority of the world's workers

start to collectively drive the stake through the heart of this vampire before it is too late for the planet because it will soon be degraded and eventually destroyed by capitalism, as the participant noted?

However, this raises another issue that the participant refers to – that not all people are equally miserable from capitalism. If those of us who are not happy but only by “inches” rather than by “a lot” depending on our contextual lived spaces as the participant frames it, then this appears to be another central dynamic of capitalism in that although it systematically exploits all of us who are ‘working for the man,’ these effects are felt much more by some people than others. If you are making more than the median salary in your city and country versus someone making the minimum wage (which in the US is \$7.25 an hour), would you feel exploited to the same extent as a minimum-wage worker? Although the structural position of the above-median income employee would be the same as the minimum-wage one in relation to the employer, the lived affective experiences from the realities of scalar differences in pay disparities and the accompanying access (or lack thereof) to material commodities such as being able to own a home would not be identical. And this would explain in part the failure of *all* working people in uniting against the vampire of capitalism.

The interview continued:

ME: So ... are there any positives about capitalism? You listed the negatives, are there –

P5: Well, I think it's hard for me to say because I don't know anything else, right? My whole life, there is no life, I have had no life without it. Every aspect of my childhood, my life, the way my family ... everything we did is in this system, so if I were to say there's nothing good about it, that would be somewhat ridiculous because we had a nice life. We lived a good, we had everything, you know, we could ever want growing up. And a lot of people have nice lives here in the United States, not all of them, but people have a pretty good thing and I suppose that's a product of capitalism ... the nice side that we've had the privilege of enjoying at the expense of unbelievable horror both here and on the other side of the globe where we're extracting the labor and resources off other people. So, it's really hard for me to say anything positive about capitalism. I don't, but I don't, I can't, I just think it would be silly to not say that it's been, it's been, you know, good, and it's been nice for me in a certain way.

The participant acknowledges an important contradiction – for people like this one, why are they critical of capitalism despite having benefitted in some ways from it? And to ask the obverse question – why have others embraced and supported capitalism even though they themselves have not gained from it to the same extent as the participant has? Is there a paradox between the participant and people like them hating capitalism but admitting they have had a “nice life” in capitalist society? Are they being hypocritical? Compared with the millions and millions of

people who have lived below the poverty line, like this participant I too have had a good life in never having to live in cramped quarters or being homeless and starving from lack of food. And yet I have been critical of the capitalist system since my college days. Part of the reason is that I have had the opportunities to be able to read the literature by those who scrutinized and exposed the realities of this system, which led to my deep engagement with their oppositional stances which prompted critically conscious reflections and activism.

However that is not to say that the people who do not blame capitalism itself for their meager and impoverished lived experiences are necessarily unaware of the system. Many of the people in the US are indeed livid, furious, and miserable in their everyday existences in capitalist-run societies from, among other things, fearing for their survival in this era of declining and stagnant wages, un- and under-employment, and the precarity of work in the post-manufacturing 'service' economy. For those of us who identify as being on the Left in the US – broadly defined here as the spectrum of progressives, democratic socialists, and radicals – have failed many a time to engage directly with the cultural politics of emotions (Ahmed, 2014) of the (under)working, underpaid, and unemployed people supporting capitalism, and when we do, have at times dismissed their feelings due to their ignorance, 'brainwashing,' and 'drinking the Kool-Aid' in being mere 'sheeple.' In this manner, some of us on the Left have embraced the contested notion of 'false consciousness,' in our assumption that "vast numbers of ordinary people, mentally equipped in much the same way as you or I, can simply be thoroughly and systematically duped into misrecognizing entirely where their real interests lie" (Hall, 1988b, p. 44). And enacting this stance of intellectual 'superiority' in dismissing the masses as "dupes of history, 'we' – the privileged – are somehow without a trace of illusion and can see, transitively, right through into the truth, the essence, of a situation" (ibid., p. 44).

In the months leading up to the 2016 US presidential election, a journalist interviewed a blue-collar worker in Ohio who had previously voted for Obama but was now leaning toward casting their ballot for Trump. When asked why, they replied, "No one that's voting knows all the facts. It's a shame. They keep us so fucking busy and poor that we don't have the time" (MacGillis, 2016). This is a good reminder that those of us who have the necessary time as well as getting paid to read, think, and write are indeed extremely privileged compared with many people like this worker who does not have the time and energy to even consider and imagine a world without capitalism. However, it is not only people in their economic and social position who have difficulty doing so:

ME: Can you imagine a world without capitalism? If yes, what would that world look like, and if no, why not?

P5: I have a really hard time imagining things, I'm not like that. No, I can't say that I can, although ... because, only ... all I can think of when I think of a world without capitalism is like going backwards to like, you know, tribal societies and small ... I mean, I think, I don't see a giant, industrialized society as we have now without capitalism. I don't see how the whole like system that we

have, I don't see it being like somehow run by, by workers or anything like that. I've never been able to see that. I certainly didn't see any good examples of that in my life growing up ... I spent time in Eastern Europe and saw how awful that was and that wasn't a good example of anything, so, you know ... you see, Cuba is a good example in many ways, but it's such a small country, like, how could it possibly, what's it gonna look like without ... I can't really, I can't imagine a world with the level of technology that we have that isn't dominated by capitalism. I mean, quite frankly no, I can't. I wish I could but I'm not good at thinking about it like that.

A significant element of hegemony are the ways in which our imagining alternative worlds are constrained, dismissed, and at times are not able to even come into being because we rarely see, if ever, whether it is via education, cultural representations, and the media any parallel or mirroring imaginaries that would sustain and help to co-construct our own. In this manner, it manifests into our non-willing consent, which at first appears to be absurdly incongruous at face value. But in light of P5's aforementioned views stating the horrors of capitalism, the seeming void in their not being able to conceptualize the present and possible future society without capitalism is this very expression of a non-willing resignation. Although this participant has participated in various social and economic justice movements and has never consented to the economic, racialized, and social hierarchies in the US, why then have many people who have done the same failed to co-construct together coherent and consistent discourses and practices of making another world imaginable?

Is it conceivable that a huge industrialized society could be organized in a way that is not capitalist-owned, run, and driven? That all sizeable companies would be publicly owned and shared, and importantly, governed by all employees in a democratically collective mode? There in fact does exist such organizations such as the Mondragon Corporation, which is a corporation of worker cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain and is the seventh largest company in that country. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Roelvink, St Martin, & Gibson-Graham (2015) documented numerous examples of diverse economies around the world including the US in which these alternative work and social spaces of worker cooperatives enact economic imaginaries of both a present and future post-capitalist world. Yet the participant was not aware of these exemplary models but this is not to blame or shame them of course but to point out that many other people also do not know of these workplaces of actual democracy in action. And why would they because these practices of alternatives to capitalism are never introduced in school textbooks and rarely, if ever, in mainstream mass media.

A dialogical discourse interwoven with this emerges from P5's comment on their experience in Eastern Europe during the Soviet era. Although these countries in the Eastern Bloc called themselves a "communist" and/or "socialist" form of governance in alliance with the Soviet Union, as Resnick and Wolff (2002) argued in *Class Theory and History: Capitalism and Communism in the USSR*, the bureaucrats in these self-proclaimed communist regimes simply switched places with the former

capitalist class in their parallel roles in deciding who would get what and how from the surplus labor value produced by the workers. Thus the subjugations of the working class continued as before because what “became a definitive signature of socialism/communism over capitalism” was the act of “replacing markets by collective distributions managed by state agencies” (ibid., p. 7). Especially during the Cold War era, many people in the US denounced the dictatorial system of the USSR and rightfully so, yet what the Soviet and Eastern Bloc governments did in solely determining the wages and benefits the workers would receive from their labor mirrored capitalist-run businesses. Thus, what the participant observed during their time in the Eastern Bloc reinforced the absence of any imaginary of an alternative economic system since what they were witnessing there was essentially what they had experienced back in the US.

However, as Resnick and Wolff (2002) argued, “other formulations (e.g., Lenin, 1969; Sweezy & Bettelheim, 1971) moved this discussion in somewhat different directions” than the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc model because for them, “the key issue was whether effective state power really (and not just formally) lay in the collective hands of workers. Defined as true democracy, that became *the* criterion of genuine socialism” (p. 7). This framing of socialism as an actual democracy is absent in public school curricula in the US. If and when socialism is in fact mentioned, it is dismissed as the next participant related their experience in high school:

ME: How would you define or describe our economy?

P6: How would I put this? (laughs) On a cliff's edge! Umm, obviously the income disparity is increasing, the people who have a lot of money have a lot, people who have a little bit of money have even less, the middle class is dissipating at a rapid rate. Umm, and a lot of our economy is based off the speculation on things that don't have any physical counterpart, which I don't think is the recipe for anything long-term and tasty, so it's not doing so well. The question was how would I describe the economy? Umm, I think because so much of stuff is just based on market value as opposed to human value and what humans need, it depends a lot more on market stuff and it's not really working out for the people that need you know, health care, or like, affordable milk, things like air and water. Yeah, the economy is not, not so great. The capitalist thing is not working out so well for most people.

McCloskey (1985) coined the term “ersatz economics” which she defined as the “untutored economic experience” which is “a bad teacher of economics, just as the unaided eye is a bad teacher of astronomy ... practically everything that you thought you knew about economics before studying it is wrong” (p. 3). By drawing the analogy with how we see gaseous spheres in distant galaxies with how we directly live, think, see, and *feel* the economics of the everyday – be it collection bills, overdue notices, minimum wages, getting fired on the job, rent increases, and now with the pandemic, more eviction notices due to the service worker job losses, McCloskey dismisses people's experiential firsthand knowledge of the effects of the

economy. Many might not know specific economic theories nor have taken economic courses in school but they certainly feel the consequences of capitalism through its practices at their workplaces, communities, and beyond. Are the discourses and "the vocabulary of such ersatz economics, the economics of the man [*sic*] in the street" (ibid., p. 3) that ill-informed and illiterate? The participant P6 in their reply to my question clearly rebuts this ideological construction of an ignorant "ersatz economist" identity, as McCloskey would have it. The descriptive characteristics articulated by the participant of how the economy appears to them is an apt dialogical echoing of how David Harvey (2014) offered a similar summation: "an economy based on dispossession lies at the heart of what capital is foundationally about" (p. 54). And in fact, the participant did study economics in high school:

ME: Do you see any positives about capitalism?

P6: Umm, I don't think it can exist without greed ... it's all just about ... how much money the CEO or upper management wants to make and it doesn't work like it says in the textbooks. I had a class on economics one semester in high school. It was really, really shitty, but basically, it was like, well, this makes sense because the market drives everything and it's all about supply and demand, supply and demand. I don't think that actually is the case at all. It's just about, like, who can cut the most amount of cost from their ... it's easier to make this product with, like 17,000 chemicals that are really like a quarter of a penny to produce versus this one thing that costs like, seven cents. I don't know, so just, whoever can make the most amount of money with using the cheapest resources for them, so they can make the most amount of profit is what seems to be working, it does not have to do with what people want and need really at all, and the market doesn't reflect that. I think it's a naïve, and just propaganda in my textbook basically, high school textbook propaganda. Cause the page they had on communism or anything was like, this doesn't work because ... and they'd only, we had one page and a section on that page was on communism, and that was it. The whole textbook was about maybe 500 pages long.

ME: Can you remember what they said, what doesn't work about communism or why it doesn't work?

P6: I think they gave some examples of like, not even, they didn't even give an intelligent example about like, like why Mao is kind of shitty. They gave like, it doesn't work because people ... I can't remember, I'm sorry! I wish I had the textbook; it was really horrible. Basically, it gave you no concrete information, it was someone's speculation as to why it didn't work. Some right-winger textbook writer wrote half a thought and published it in a book that was unquestioning of capitalism.

What P6 was taught in that economic course was based on the neoclassical approach to economics, as indicated by their saying it was "all about supply and demand." Neoclassical economists have insisted on this notion of supply and

demand as being essential to the so-called ‘free’ market in which they frame the economy as the collection of businesses who succeed or fail based on their own ‘merits’ of being able to meet the demands of consumers. If there isn’t enough of a demand, it’s the fault of the company for not producing what people want. However, if they produce too much of a product, they’ll lose out. So basically neoclassical economists will say it’s your own damn fault for not succeeding because you’re a loser. In keeping with this, they also insist on fewer taxes on the rich so the rich are free to ‘succeed’ in building their businesses and ‘creating’ wealth that will eventually ‘trickle down’ to the rest of us – thus neoliberal discourses of the trickle-down economy is not a new thing but just drew from the neoclassical economic stance that has been going on for well over 150 years.

P6 offers an effective rebuttal to this “textbook propaganda” as they frame it, of the supply and demand view with their pithy commentary on the fundamentals of capital practices – essentially, it always places profit over people. In tandem with this propaganda of course is the textbook’s predictable disdain of, and refusal to engage with alternative economic systems and practices. As the participant related, from a textbook that was 500 pages or so in length, it limited its discussion of communism to one page. With its stance of so-called ‘objectivity,’ the neo-classical economic theory in this textbook and in many others, the denial of the dialogical is evident in that it presents itself as monological “in which the unifying force in discourse becomes intolerant or at least dominant, giving rise to a totalizing point of view” (LaCapra, 1983, p. 313). Is this any different from a Stalinist or Maoist-style quashing of dissent?

Speaking of dissent, this next participant grew up in Detroit during the 1960s–1970s:

ME: If someone asked you, “who are you?” ... how would you identify yourself as?

P7: Well, I’ve always identified as working class since my roots in growing up in a factory household. You know, my father was a union buster as a worker –

ME: (my jaw drops)

P7: I know, he was a total union guy as a worker and then they ... so they promoted him to general foreman and became like the bane of the union. He became like, a total union buster as soon as they promoted him. My dad was proud of his union busting and my mom was always rolling her eyes and saying, “you know, when he was just a worker, he was one of the leading union organizers and now he’s the leading union buster!” He was proud of what he did, and he used to talk about it ... it was like, a sport for him – wandering the factory finding where they were hiding out and sleeping or smoking pot or whatever the hell they were doing. That was his sport. And then, you know, he’d bring the union newspaper home because it was all about him ... and you know, from the newspaper from the plant where he worked, it’d always be articles about him and what he was doing, and then they totally let him down, they totally betrayed him. He was a foreman and then a general foreman, and

he wanted to be supervisor. He was basically told, "no, you're never ... you're not supervisor material. You're never gonna rise above this." And you know, his supervisor gave him a copy of *The Peter Principle* to read, which was basically saying that workers can only rise to their ability and no further and that it's really wise to know when you've ... when you've hit your peak, so it all betrayed him in the end and he took an early retirement ... feeling very bitter about it.

The participant's father becoming a union buster after being promoted is yet another example of capitalists' (and their enablers) classic divide and rule strategy. In this context, not only with race and genders of workers across society, but also here within this workplace hierarchy in which the promotion of the father resulted in him becoming a member of the "subsumed class" (Resnick & Wolff, 2006a, 2006b), who neither extracted nor produced surplus labor. In this role, he became and embraced being a proverbial pawn used as a tool in the divide and rule with becoming an enemy of the very group he had once been a part of – his fellow union workers. However, it should be no surprise that he ended up being thrown out the door after the powers that be had no further use for him. How many times have we seen this happen or experienced it ourselves and yet, why do some of us keep falling for it?

This led to my follow-up question:

ME: So why did ... why ... why did he become a union ... I mean after being in the union and after being promoted to foreman, why did he become a union buster? Was it the ... Why did he take on that role?

P7: Well, that's ... that's the culture. That's the culture, you're ... once you're a foreman, you're against the union. That's expected of you. It's like when a class- or race-conscious person joins the police force ... pretty much, join in or get the fuck out. That is the cu- ... that was the culture of the foreman, was that it's your job to bust those "lazy" union guys and ah ... it was a really interesting upbringing from that standpoint.

(When the participant mentions "those 'lazy' union guys," his prosodic tone and facial expression conveyed an intended sarcasm of his adjectival choice of "lazy," hence my use of the scare quotes to indicate as such.) The participant's explanation highlights again the interanimating and intereffecting dynamics of the social relations with the economic ones. As he draws the parallels with those who might be progressive in their political and social views but eventually shift with their ensuing enculturation in their roles as police members, his father's identity enactments also changed after becoming an overseer of his former allied co-workers.

This is not to shame or blame the participant's father because as his son points out, the culture of the factory workplace demands a specific performativity in this interactional context in which an identity of the foreman is to drive that wedge between and among workers. This role was incisively and brilliantly illustrated in

the film, *The Killing Floor* (Manasse & Duke, 1984), which portrayed the struggles of workers at a meatpacking company in Chicago during 1917–1919 to form an interracial labor union, which was based on actual people and the events happening at that time in Chicago. The film's character of the foreman constantly berates and even fires numerous workers who he perceives as 'undermining' the workplace by their attempts to unionize their fellow workers. However, this culture of divide and rule is obviously not limited to the spaces of a factory workplace. *The Killing Floor* depicts the real-life racial tensions not only at the factory but also throughout Chicago's inner-city neighborhoods because of competition over scarce plant jobs, which led to the Chicago Race Riots of 1919 in which White immigrant workers and residents attacked and killed people in the neighboring Black community who then fought back.

Unfortunately this again demonstrates "the persistence of labor disunity" in which radical union organizations like the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) "lacked the experiential power and coherence to create the embryo of a new working-class 'culture'" (Davis, 1986, pp. 98–99). This was in part due to the ways in which "the working class continued to find its social identity in fragmentary ethnic and racial communities" (ibid., p. 99) rather than forming an alternative social identity of shared classed oppressions. Those White immigrant workers in Chicago circa 1917–1919 enacted a racialized adequation in which their "pursuit of socially recognized sameness" led to "potentially salient differences (being) set aside in favor of perceived or asserted similarities that (were) taken to be more situationally relevant" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004a, p. 383). As Bucholtz and Hall point out, because adequation "denotes both equation and adequacy; the relation thus establishes sufficient sameness between individuals or groups" (ibid., p. 383), these workers rejected class solidarity in favor of embracing the ideological sameness of the wages of Whiteness (Du Bois, 1992; Roediger, 2007, 2017). As such, because adequation "is often taken to be the basis of identity, is not an objective and permanent state but a motivated social achievement that may have temporary or long-term effects" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004a, p. 383), we have seen the results of this adequation of perceived similarity of race over class time and time again in the US.

I continued:

ME: If you recall, have any of your friends or neighbors or people in your working-class community back home, have they ever talked about this idea of ... well, I don't know, for example, back in the day, like in the '60s and '70s during the Cold War, I'm assuming most if not all, correct me if I'm wrong, were saying capitalism is, you know, there's no alternative to it, this is all we've got.

P7: Yeah, I mean, that was a time when capitalism was equated with strong unions, good jobs, good benefits. Those were all part of capitalism. So yeah, certainly in the regions where the factories were king, and it was generational, people worked in these factories, it was hand in hand with, you know, being a strong union advocate. So yeah, what a different landscape than now.

The period in the US lasting almost 30 years following the end of World War II has been named the so-called "the golden age" of American capitalism in which US-based and owned manufacturing industries reigned supreme throughout the world, and many American workers became part of the 'middle class' with higher wages due to unionized efforts in the preceding 50 years or so. Particularly in the 1950s, the "American dream" seemed to be within greater reach for many people, especially in contrast to the years of the Great Depression (1929–1941). It is this ideological time-frame of the lived experiences of those people who had unionized and at the time, held relatively secure jobs that the participant refers to in how capitalism became to mean a different thing than during the depths of the Depression to some people. Again, was it due to some (certainly not all) workers feeling 'grateful' to those giving them jobs and benefits that they felt despite any flaws in capitalism, there was no better system? Because they were getting paid 'decent' wages during the 1950s to mid-1970s, many of these union workers were able to afford to buy a home in the suburbs, a car, a television, new clothes, and still had some left over money to put away in the bank. What else could they ask for since this was a good enough life, and better than their parents' lives in many instances? What some of these workers might not have realized was that this was not going to last forever since economic downturns and crises are the fundamental aspect of capitalism and "since capitalism operates through fluctuations, it *must* have a permanent reserve of workers, except at the very peak of the booms" (Hobsbawm, 2011, p. 94, emphasis in the original). The economic boom of the 1950s and '60s in the US abruptly ended in the 1970s with the rise of the German and Japanese economies, and auto manufacturing factories in Detroit started laying off workers who then joined the industrial reserve army of the unemployed.

This led to my follow-up question:

ME: So even at the height of the '50s and '60s when unionization was like 25% of the workforce, something like that ...

P7: Yeah, I think it was closer to 30 ...

ME: 30, yeah, 30%, right? I mean, was there any conversation, I'd be curious, at that time, where some people would say, you know, why don't we just kind of do this by ourselves? Why don't we just kind of form a workers' co-op, why don't we get together some people and just run our own factory, be our own boss?

P7: I don't remember any talk about grassroots stuff like that. The leftists who I knew, and there was a much stronger left, like when I was in college in the '70s, the late '70s, there was a much stronger sort of communist, you know, there were a bunch of factions, they all hated each other, but they existed, you know, they hadn't been sort of eradicated at that point. I think much earlier, you know, I think in the '30s and pre-World War II 1940s it probably was again a whole different landscape of people with much more radical ideas. I think the unions co-opted a lot of that thinking. The unions were conservative and mob-run, and that was all by design by the '70s. So certainly in college I remember a lot of different communist factions, but their focus was

mostly revolution; their focus was not kind of a, I mean, that's an age-old, or maybe it's not age-old, maybe it's more recent, but it's certainly a common argument now is between trying to do it yourself within a capitalist economy and system, trying to do a worker-run situation where you still need capital to make it happen, and there are a lot of purists who just don't feel like that's worthwhile. But I think that's changing. I think uh, I mean creating alternative economies is uh, I think a lot more has to be done in that arena, and it's tough because that's the first thing they wanna smash. They'd rather have a radical, anarchist organization existing if it's easy to demonize than a group of working-class people with a true cooperative that would actually make it. And be in competition, financial competition with the more top-down corporate situation. It's tough to know how far those things would be allowed to go because they're a bigger threat, I think, at least with the numbers of people interested now, I think that's a bigger threat than an armed revolution with little support among the working class.

The participant's observations of his father and community and their trajectories over time with his father becoming a union buster, and how some in the participant's community of friends and classmates were co-opted by the unions summarized in his pithy remark that it "was all by design by the '70s" reminded me of this song by the Clash – "Clampdown":

The men in the factory are old and cunning
 You don't owe nothing, so boy get running!
 It's the best years of your life they want to steal! ...
 But you grow up and you calm down
 And you're working for the clampdown
 You start wearing the blue and brown
 And you're working for the clampdown
 So you got someone to boss around
 It makes you feel big now.

(Strummer & Jones, 1979)

The histories and cultures of the numerous unions in the context of US have been long, complicated, and contradictory to many of their stated aims and goals (e.g., Davis, 1986). The fact that many unions became not only safety valves but even more so a weapon against substantial challenges and change to the system itself highlights one of the central dilemmas among the Left who have been calling for a revolution – the issue of how and where? In writing about *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels, Hobsbawm (2011) noted one of their forecasts still has not come into being in that "it is now evident that the bourgeoisie has not produced 'above all, its own gravediggers' in the proletariat" (p. 113). Yet, Hobsbawm argued that the *Manifesto* "is not a determinist document" because "the graves have to be dug by or through human action" (ibid., p. 119).

However, this action by specifically whom, where, and how? As the participant regretfully observed, the numerous factions among the Left in the US during the 1970s "all hated each other" because of their debates and disputes on the 'correct' path to revolution. In his words, "there are a lot of purists who just don't feel like that's worthwhile" to pursue changes in their local workplaces and communities but rather embraced the idea that revolution can only happen on a singular front or site of struggle – that of the state, which some have seen as "the simple equation: state = coercive power = class rule" (Hobsbawm, 2011, p. 53). In some ways, this has played into the hands of the capitalists as the participant points out because having an organization that is only spouting radical rhetoric without doing any on-the-ground organizing with workers and their communities is "easy to demonize" much more so than working people doing the hard work of working every day to revolutionize their workplaces. Now while "the ruling class might grant certain demands to forestall and avoid revolution," because of the sociopolitical dynamics of hegemonic consent (Gramsci, 1971), "the revolutionary movement might find itself in practice (though not necessarily in theory) accepting its impotence and might be eroded and politically integrated into the system" (Hobsbawm, 2011. p. 327). This integration is not an inescapable fact however because if the working people's war of position (Gramsci, 1971) would be enacted on multiple fronts (e.g. the political, the economic, *and* the social), indeed this would be "a bigger threat than an armed revolution" in the participant's words. Yes, we need to stop working for the clampdown.

6

WORKPLACES, THE CITY, AND THE WORLD

In a wealthy urban neighborhood in Boston, I had the following conversation with an owner of a small repair store:

OWNER: This store has been in business for 90 years. The original owner was an immigrant. He owned and ran the store for over 40 years. Then my father-in-law took it over and ran it for 45 years. Five years ago, I took it over. After me, I don't know what will happen to this store.

ME: Why? You have no one to take it over from you?

HIM: No, I have no one to train or hire ... no one is interested in learning this trade. Many repair shops like this one are closing.

ME: What, why?! People just buy these things new?

HIM: No, it's because rents are so expensive now and small business owners can't afford to stay open. This is a nice neighborhood as you know.

ME: Wow, yeah of course. Can't you find someone to hire and train so they can take over the shop when you retire?

HIM: Young people around here are not interested in repairing things for a living. I came here as an immigrant, and worked hard my whole life, but many people I see don't seem to want to work hard.

The owner's observation that many people don't want to work hard like he has repeats a well-known common-sense discourse among many immigrants in the US – at least the ones I have known, including my family members, friends, and the adult English language learners I taught in Los Angeles during the 1990s. This discursive narrative frames their relative success in society as a result of having worked relentlessly their whole lives. Their notion of social accomplishments is usually viewed as evidenced by owning and running a small business like this participant, or having a 'steady' job, paying mortgage on a home, and having some

savings in the bank. However, the contradictions between this discourse of capitalism that one can make it in society if only one works ‘hard enough’ and the on-the-ground realities of gentrification impacting small store owners like this immigrant is illustrated in his reply about the increasing difficulty of staying afloat in this neighborhood despite working hard his whole life. Inasmuch as gentrification serves as “a primary source of urban capital accumulation” (Stein, 2019, p. 45), and moreover, crucially, “a ‘spatial fix’ for capitalism’s urban crisis: a way to profit from previous disasters and to find new places for investors to turn money into more money” (ibid., p. 48), what actual choices do small business owners like this one have as their option other than closing up shop in wealthy and gentrifying locales since they cannot afford to buy the buildings their businesses are located in?

However, gentrified and traditionally wealthy urban neighborhoods such as the one this owner’s store is in have become increasingly ‘hip’ and thus a growing tourist attraction. In such neighborhoods there exists a few accorded spaces for ‘diversity’ as emblematic of the primarily affluent White neighborhood residents’ ‘acceptance’ and ‘tolerance’ of the designated few outside their class and race. As discussed in Chapter 4, some immigrant business owners may not be necessarily aware of their commerce spatiality that has been racialized in a ‘positive’ manner such as hegemonically selected ethnicized food restaurants and small trade stores viewed as ‘appropriate’ for immigrants to work in and manage (e.g., local convenience stores, laundries, and repair shops like this one). This is not to say they take this for granted, which would go against their self-narrative of having made it because they worked their fingers to the bone. In many instances, their views of others who have not ‘succeeded’ have instead been shaped by their lived experiences to some extent in their communities prior to immigrating to the US.

Many of my adult English language students in 1990s who had emigrated from Korea had no idea about the history of Black Americans other than they were enslaved for centuries. Not having gone to university, they had not read about US history and had trouble understanding why some Black Americans were angry at them, which my students saw as themselves having no culpability for the historical and current oppressions of Black Americans. This despite some Korean immigrants’ racist beliefs and acts against the Black community including the killing of 15-year-old Latasha Harlins by Soon Ja Du, a convenience store owner who shot Harlins in the back of her head as she was leaving the store because Du claimed Harlins was trying to steal orange juice even though the video camera footage showed she was not. In conversations with my students in class, especially the ones who were running small businesses in the predominantly Black neighborhoods of South Central Los Angeles, their engagements with Blacks were mainly limited to only in-store interactions with the latter’s role solely as customers coming into the store to buy something. None of the students lived in those neighborhoods and when I had asked them if they knew their customers outside the context of their store interactions, they replied they never engaged with the local residents in other communal spaces such as churches, schools, and parks that would have enabled other identities to emerge in these spatial encounters.

In response to his comment that people “don’t seem to want to work hard,” I offered this story in my attempt to reframe the narrative of the homeless:

ME: You know, the other day I read in the *New York Times* about an immigrant from Turkey who moved to New York back in the 1980s and soon became homeless, but was able to eventually become an owner of several pizza shops, thanks to a small shop owner giving him a job and letting him sleep in the shop overnight. He now donates pizza to homeless people in his neighborhood. What about if you could find a homeless person down on their luck and train them how to repair?

HIM: Well, I see a lot of homeless in this neighborhood, just up the street, and many seem to be just sitting there all day asking for handouts ... some look very young and healthy, they just don’t want to work! You know, they can get a job at Amazon, they’re always looking for workers; and Massachusetts has a minimum wage guarantee of 12 bucks an hour! They just use the money to go drinking. I’m not saying all of them are like that, but many are. I’ve worked hard all my life and didn’t ask for handouts, they just don’t want to work hard.

I related the *New York Times* story about Hakki Akdeniz (Wilson, 2019) in part to encourage the store owner to continue the business after he retires. However, his reply appeared to be a dialogic response to the Othering discourse of immigrants – here, in his positioning as someone who never depended on the government to help him, he not only distanced himself from the poor and the homeless (aka ‘the less fortunate’), but also through this interactional engagement, sought a seeming solidarity with me, perhaps because he viewed me as the ‘model minority’? In his example of how hegemony works via a Gramscian lens, Ives (2004) argued that “by complaining about ‘immigrants,’ a speaker can create a commonality between themselves and whoever they are talking with (assuming they do not take themselves to be ‘immigrants’ even if they have actually immigrated)” (p. 7). In this parallel situation, the script was flipped as it were, with an immigrant complaining about the homeless he viewed as slackers in trying to establish common ground with me.

In his heteroglossic framing of people being homeless and begging for money because of their laziness, the store owner echoed what I often heard from my father when I was growing up. As my family would travel via car into the neighborhood of Chinatown in the Lower East Side of Manhattan from the outer New York City borough of Queens where we lived, my father would point out to me and my sisters the homeless men sitting on the streets of the adjacent neighborhood to Chinatown known as the Bowery. These men, who were called the “Bowery Bums” back then, would come up to our car at the stoplight and try to wipe the windshield with torn-out pages from newspapers for money. My father would wave them off without giving them a dime and remark to us, “you see, this is what happens when you don’t study and work hard; do you wanna end up like them?” My father, like this participant, was also an immigrant who eventually owned and

managed a small business – a Chinese food restaurant – and was able to later own a home in the suburbs. He never saw himself as being ‘fortunate’ to have made it in society because all that he had was from working his ass off his whole life. When this store owner was dismissing my suggestion of hiring a person ‘down on their luck,’ I could not help but remember my father’s reaction to the homeless. Indeed, it reminded me again what Jones (2016) wrote in referring to Bakhtin’s (1981, 1986) work, that “pretty much *all* that we say is a repetition of what others have said in the past, appropriated by us and adapted to our own specific purposes” (p. 16, emphasis in the original).

This heteroglossic discourse of the immigrant attempting to escape from being the Other by indexing other marginalized people instead as another Other elicits of course different dialogic responses. In a taxi ride back to my apartment from Boston’s Logan Airport in late March 2017 (two months after Trump was inaugurated as the 45th US president), I started a conversation with the driver. After asking him if there was heavy traffic on the way:

HIM: Why? Are you in a rush? (asked with a chuckle)

ME: Kinda, I just got off the red-eye flight from Seattle and I didn’t sleep at all, so I want to go straight to bed.

HIM: Oh, OK. Well, I got no problem sleeping, I can sleep anywhere, anytime. I even slept standing up when I was in the US Army.

ME: Wow, that’s great ... My dad was in the Army too.

HIM: Yeah, but I was in it a long time ago.

ME: So was he – he served at the end of World War II.

HIM: Wow, yes, that’s when they saved the world, those guys were the best.

ME: Yes, they were ... (after a few moments of silence) ... Are you a Boston native?

HIM: No, I’m originally from the Middle East but I’ve been here for over 60 years. My parents immigrated to Boston and I came here as a kid.

ME: My father also immigrated as a kid to New York –

HIM: But you know, someone wants to get rid of all the immigrants and blames us for all the bad things, that we’re stealing jobs. This country was built by immigrants and slaves, dammit. We’re the ones who did it ... sorry if I offended you, if you voted for that guy.

ME: Are you kidding me, do I look like I would vote for that guy?!

HIM: Hey you never know, believe me, I’ve met people you would never suspect voted for him –

ME: Believe me, I know, I know –

HIM: You know, it’s OK if you’re an immigrant and serve in the Army and are willing to die for our country but that’s not good enough for him, he still wants to kick you out. Dammit, no matter how long I’ve lived here, almost my whole life, and even though I’m an Army veteran, some people still look at me like they want to kill me ... others smile at me but behind my back, say the same thing.

ME: Yes, I know ... I know. (we pull up to my apartment building)

HIM: Well, I feel sorry for you and your generation and everyone younger. I'm almost at the end of my life, so I'm almost out of here, but for you guys, you're going to have to fight!

ME: Yes, I know, we will and we are. (I pay and exit the cab)

HIM: Take care, brother.

ME: You, too.

The taxi driver's response to Trump's rhetoric of blaming manufacturing job losses and declining wages on "those people" – the Them who are responsible for "stealing jobs" directly addresses and thus highlights several dominant discourses that have long been in social circulation in the US. One discourse is the "permanent or forever foreigner." This ascribed identity of the selected people who look 'different' – i.e., not White as it has been racially co-constructed – and thus continually viewed by some people as being foreign to 'their country' (as claimed by some White Americans) despite the fact that these so-called 'forever foreigners' were either born in the country like myself, or like this taxi driver, who came as a child. This discourse held by some White Americans (and those aligning themselves with this positionality) is an example of "generating a subject that is endangered by imagined others whose proximity threatens not only to take something away from the subject (jobs, security, wealth), but to *take the place* of the subject" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 43, emphasis added). As the driver mentioned his living in the US almost his whole life, he has felt repeated hostility from these people positioning him as the imagined forever foreigner threatening to take the place of those who see themselves as being the 'real' Americans.

This is another example of the estrangement in which this person has been made to feel unwelcome in his home country throughout his life. Why? Is it only based on his visage that indexes him to some people as being the unwanted forever foreigner or are there other factors in play? I did not ask him a follow-up question to find out the specific contexts in which people looked at him as if they wanted to kill him, or the others who smiled but felt and said the same thing behind his back. Would his classed indexicality that was perhaps noticed and ascribed by people in these encounters have been a factor? If he were an investment banker or wealthy manufacturer, would he have been positioned as the forever foreigner in the same manner? I raise these questions because it is vital to explore if and how a particular discourse is directed at and enacted by whom toward a specific person depending on the ways in which the ascriptive identities of the person are positioned in an encounter. As Ahmed (2014) argues, "hate does not *reside* in a given subject or object. Hate is economic; it circulates between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement" (p. 44, emphasis in the original). From the discourses used by Trump and many others like him that have blamed immigrants for "stealing jobs" from ('real') Americans, these jobs are always either implied or directly mentioned as manufacturing and service-oriented ones. I have not seen any references to high-paying occupations such as bankers, realtors, and company owners being 'stolen' by immigrants. Although a rich investor or banker who is an

immigrant to the US may have also experienced being positioned as the forever foreigner, would they face the same level of harassment or possible violence as the immigrants who are working at minimum wage (and in many instances, even less than this) jobs? It would seem unlikely because of their economic and social status that protects them in some ways from this selected immigrant blaming and shaming. This points to how a discourse is embedded on multiple scales both on the micro- and macro-level and how these interact and effect one another. And if someone of this status did experience this discourse, without dismissing their reaction, would they feel pain to the same extent as this taxi driver, given the fact they are in a position in many ways that they can simply ignore it, unlike the driver?

This person grew up in a poor working-class neighborhood in the greater Boston area that has now been gentrified:

ME: Do you feel that Boston as a whole has gotten better or worse in any way?

P8: It depends on, I think ... your financial situation, you know? Half of my life I was in the projects, you know, due to my family's situation, and you know, if you live today in Boston, most of the construction that's going around is condos and who can afford to pay for condos? Well-off people, you know? There's not much housing for working-class people anymore, so, I think it's a tale of two cities. You have your haves and your have-nots.

The participant's heteroglossic reference to the title of Charles Dickens's novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, recontextualizes the framing of my question about his city – as he points out, better or worse *for whom?* As in every city – or at least the ones I've either lived in or visited around the world, there does exist at least two 'cities' as the participant points out. I lived in Hong Kong from 2013 to 2015 while I was on the faculty at City University of Hong Kong. The first time I took the subway there, I was astonished to see this public transportation system divided into first class cabins and 'regular' passenger ones. Only once did I 'treat' myself to ride in the first class car and I felt a bit of the impostor syndrome. My feelings weren't due to any insecurity but rather stemming from my lived experiences looking over the other side of the fence. Do rich people ever walk around, dine, and socialize in the poor neighborhoods of the city in which they live? Aside from having to work in their city's wealthy areas servicing the elite, do poor people ever mingle with others in those neighborhoods? These differing domains of these everydayness that help shape how we perceive the worlds around us is evident in this person's perception. Indeed, in our worlds of the "your haves and your have-nots," would this not also be an apt description of how the economy known as capitalism takes from one (workers) to give to the other (capitalists)?

Although the participant's utterance of "two cities" was specifically addressing the changes to his hometown, it can also be viewed as echoing the discourse of the politicians who love to brag in taking credit for the economy improving under their leadership, and delight in attacking other politicians for their failure to do so. Ronald Reagan's famous question to American voters in the 1980 US presidential

debate with President Jimmy Carter, “are you better off than you were four years ago?” was in reference to the rising inflation and stagnant employment rates under the Carter administration. It was clear that Reagan’s victory was a result largely due to his voters hoping their lives would improve with his leadership. However, in contrast to the framing of “two cities of the haves and have-nots,” Reagan’s discourse presented the image of the US as a “shining city on a hill ... teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace.” The discordance of this representation of all people living in harmony and peace in the mythological city known as the US with his acknowledging the majority of working Americans as having suffered economically speaks to a central contradiction in the common narrative of capitalism. If everyone is supposed to be pulling themselves up by their bootstraps to make a better life for them and their families, would this striving to gain over others leading to an ultra-competitive behavior co-constructed and endlessly encouraged by capitalist culture result in one “living in harmony and peace” with fellow Americans?

The conversation continued:

ME: Yeah, it was interesting because when I walked through your old neighborhood for the first time, I saw a very interesting contrast.

P8: Well you know, it has really been gentrified now. Back when I was a kid that was a working-class neighborhood, you know? And now you have, you know, your organic bars and fancy restaurants and stuff like that. But yeah, that was a working-class neighborhood ... back in the 1950s and early '60s, they had a gang war going on back then ... yeah, very different times, you know? There’s a Dunkin’ Donuts there now but back then it was a restaurant and it got so bad that they put a blue light high on a pole on top of the restaurant and the waitresses could flip the blue right on and that would let the cops know that there was a fight going on inside. It was almost like a Batman call. Different world then, you know? And that’s all gone now because that’s a really gentrified town. And with the subway line extension going into that neighborhood, I think it’s really gonna force some people out who are hanging on now but I think wherever, if you look around the world ... wherever like, public transportation comes in, behind it comes gentrification and the rents go up and the working class poor are forced out.

The participant’s example of these “two cities” with the contrast of restaurants in his old neighborhood illustrates Lefebvre’s (1991a, 1991b, 2002) concepts of how daily life, everydayness, and the everyday interact with the production of spaces in capitalist society with his phrase, “different world then, you know?” Although the participant’s account is obviously historical in his recounting of the neighborhood changes since his childhood, our “human world is not defined simply by the historical, by culture, by totality or society as a whole, or by ideological and political superstructures. It is defined by this intermediate and mediating *level*: everyday life” (Lefebvre, 2002, p. 45, emphasis in the original). Our everyday life comprises

“need and desire, pleasure and absence of pleasure, satisfaction and privation (or frustration), fulfillments and empty spaces, work and non-work” (ibid., p. 45). His memories of his neighborhood mirror many of us who have witnessed similar changes to the areas we grew up in and have lived for many years. Those spaces that we enjoyed that have now vanished in its transformation to another space in which we may not feel welcome or even afford to be in becomes an empty space for us, which contributes to diminishing our sense of belonging in (this) society.

Another feature of the discursive narrative of capitalism is that it is always about ‘progress’ in making our world(s) more enjoyable and nicer with freshly appealing and inviting spaces of consumption popping up in the old ‘hood. What is conveniently omitted in this discourse is the accompanying integral capital movements, flows, and circulations of co-constructing and creating these new spaces of ‘greater enjoyment’ of our daily life consumptions of food and drink, which are the consumptions by the powerful of real estate property to build more ‘suitably’ aesthetic buildings to match these new daily consumption sites. This of course leads to tenant evictions with the higher rents to finance these property purchases. As the participant notes, the state policymakers partner with capitalists in enabling these reconfigured urban spaces with greater transportation access by using public tax money to expand subway lines for the ‘public good.’ However, these extended subway lines often only go into more affluent neighborhoods and central locations of businesses. The gentrification creating these now ‘new’ streets which have no memory for those who lived there for a long time abolishes any traces of the past in the present, which leads to empty spaces for some. Thus, “space *internalizes* the contradictions of modern capitalism; capitalist contradictions are contradictions *of* space” (Merrifield, 2000, p. 173, emphasis in the original).

I continued:

ME: So, how do you see the larger economy? And how would you define our economy?

P8: It’s good for your well-educated people and it’s good for the investments and the Wall Street crowds but it never trickles down to the ones in the bottom, which is where I am, you know? You never see that. So I think for the ones in the bottom it’s getting worse instead of better. Like I said, I had to apply for Social Security disability, which I get, so it’s not much, I’m barely surviving, but, you know, Boston is like the third or fourth most expensive city in the country, you know? I, myself, I’ve thought about moving south. I don’t know anybody down south but I know the rents are cheaper down there. I don’t know, I’m just thankful I’ve got a roof over my head.

In contrast to the small store owner’s heteroglossic utterance of people not succeeding because of their lack of desire to work hard enough, this participant’s indexical use of the phrase “never trickles down” in describing the US economy references “trickle-down economics,” aka “Reagonomics.” This is the policy – which although has been described as “neoliberal,” has existed for well over 120 years – that by

reducing taxes on big business and the wealthy, they would use their extra money to create more jobs and raise wages, and thus presumably, ‘trickle down’ to the rest of us. The American humorist Will Rogers had this to say about the economic policies of US President Herbert Hoover, who was a Republican and whose policies helped lead to the 1929 Great Depression:

They [Republicans] didn’t start thinking of the old common fellow till just as they started out on the election tour. The money was all appropriated for the top in the hopes that it would trickle down to the needy. Mr. Hoover was an engineer. He knew that water trickles down. Put it uphill and let it go and it will reach the driest little spot. But he didn’t know that money trickled up. Give it to the people at the bottom and the people at the top will have it before night, anyhow. But it will at least have passed through the poor fellow’s hands. They saved the big banks, but the little ones went up the flue.

(Quoted in Gill, 2015)

The participant exhibits the Gramscian good sense in positioning himself as someone who has not benefited from the economic system. What does it say about our capitalist society when we have to feel “thankful” for having a roof over our heads, food on the table, and a job? Why must we be grateful for these things as if a home and the necessities to survive were seen as being allocated to those of us ‘lucky’ enough to receive them from our masters – the capitalists?

Following his observation on the economy never trickling down to people like him, the participant continues to illustrate the ideological dynamics of heteroglossia in that all our “utterances necessarily contain the ‘voices’ of other people” (Jones, 2016, p. 50):

ME: Do you think there’s a way to change this so that the majority of people don’t have to live paycheck to paycheck?

P8: You know what, if you look back, I’m 55, if you look at the government, they’re continually throw money at a problem like poverty and public schools and that’s been going on since the ’60s. And all the money that they’re throwing at that problem, I don’t see any remarkable advancement about the school system and I think a lot of that, myself personally, I think a lot of that starts at home with the parents. If you have a good foundation you probably get a better shot at life other than kids who only have one parent and the parent is working like two or three jobs and the kids are on their own. It definitely could be better, but I really don’t know ... the government does try, I mean they do have programs, but it seems to me like they’re throwing money down a black hole.

Although the participant offered an implicit critique of Reaganomics with his use of the phrase, “trickle-down,” here he takes up another (in)famous discourse used by Reagan that the “government isn’t the solution; government is the

problem!” His apparent support of this discourse in contrast to the former is an illustrative example that “there are ... many different types of ideological articulation within capitalism itself, and they operate as factors legitimizing the capitalist order, even in opposing ways” (Filippini, 2017, p. 13). The participant’s framing of his government throwing money (away) to address inequities echoes the decades-long hegemonic attitude in promulgating the idea that you have no one to blame for your dire circumstances, be it unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and/or poor education but yourself because you did not work hard or care enough to do so. This has been attributed to neoliberalism for this particular discourse, enacted by politicians such as Reagan and Thatcher, but as I argued in Chapter 1, this stance has long been central to supporting the capitalist system. Concurrent with his view of public tax money being thrown down “a black hole” (in the participant’s words) in the effort to alleviate poverty, the participant echoes this stance of taking responsibility for one’s situation by attributing the fault to parents. What he might not have realized was the contradiction of his blaming the parents for their children’s lack of success in school with his observation that many single-parent families struggle precisely because the economic demands are on one person that forces them to work multiple jobs to pay the bills. Yet again, the ideological inconsistencies demonstrate that “a class will always have its spontaneous, vivid, but not coherent or philosophically elaborated, instinctive understanding of its basic conditions of life and the nature of the constraints and forms of exploitation to which it is commonly subjected” (Hall, 2016, p. 166).

He continued:

P8: Nothing is really changing to me, nothing’s really changed since I was a kid. I mean, like, my old neighborhood, it’s becoming, that’s really gentrified now, you’ve got your high-income crowd that’s moved in there now, it’s not blue collar anymore ... I don’t know what the key is, I wish I had the answer for that key because uh, I think a lot of these inner-city kids ... well I think it probably boils down to education. I mean, if you grow up in a wealthy town you have a good school system and you get a better education, which in turn probably affords you more opportunities than somebody growing up in the inner city. If you don’t have that education, I think that it really limits your opportunities unless you wanna get into a trade. I mean, my son was a carpenter, union carpenter, he was making damn good money, you know? But the trades too, you’re using your body. I always tell my son, too, you’d rather use your mind than your body. You know, I used my body on my feet for 8, 10, 12 hours a day and I’ve got back problems and feet problems, but you know, that’s life.

His regretful reflection that nothing has really changed since his childhood in seemingly contradictory tandem with the significant changes to his neighborhood which is now upscale indexes a familiar resignation among many people that is signified in the now-often heard utterance, “it is what it is” that seems to have replaced his concluding remark, “that’s life.” Both these common phrases echo what Hall noted:

fate just deals you the old rough, raw deal you always knew was coming your way. And what happens? Fate. It's the language of a class without any command on history. It's the language of a class to which things happen, not of a class which makes things happen.

(Hall, 2016, p. 10)

The participant's resignation apparent in his saying "that's life" in attributing this as an unalterable and eternal reality to his experiential trajectories and lived situations is a common fatalistic discourse held by many in US society. Would saying in its place, "that's capitalism" be the same in framing this as an inescapable fortune or call into question these 'misfortunes' by naming it as such?

The following participant is from the Hubei province of China:

ME: How would you describe the economy of your country?

P9: I know there are a lot of poverty in China. But to be honest, from my own perspective, I feel that we have a lot, people are very affluent, like, every, in terms of have a lot, in terms of material stuff, it's very abundant. Like, that's why actually there's a lot of food waste in my community or in the communities that I've experienced. I would say it's very good, but I don't know where it's going.

ME: What does capitalism mean to you?

P9: No government intervention. In a sense, you play, like everyone is equal, it's a fair game. If you're good enough then you survive, if not then you just, you will go out of business.

What the participant is describing about their country's economy – "a lot of poverty" and "a lot, people are very affluent" echoes the previous participant's phrase, "your haves and have-nots." Although China has proclaimed itself the "People's Republic" since the 1949 revolution in which the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Tse-tung promised to create a socialist society, these party leaders merely replaced the previous ruling caste. This divide between extensive poverty among many Chinese (estimated to be at least half its population of over 1.4 billion) and the very wealthy should be a familiar picture to those of us living in the US. However, the way this participant frames the definition and practice of capitalism as having "no government intervention" is aligned with the dominant discourse of the Communist Party in justifying their power in claiming the mantle of "socialism/communism." Since the Party in its role as the sole governing agent is able to decide whatever they want to do, their discursive enactments attempt to demonstrate that they are the opposite of capitalism because they are intervening in society.

But the participant's adopting the discourse of no intervention from the government is of course also drawn from the neoliberal advocacy of the 'free market' in its dismantling of the social welfare state. In this vein, the participant's use of the phrase, "a fair game" mirrors this in that once again, you are supposedly 'rewarded' in a capitalist society only if you are "good enough" to survive. The interview continued:

ME: Are there any negatives about it?

P9: It depends on the context, which country are we in and what's the situation like there? I don't know 'cause I never experienced it, I think.

ME: You never experienced what, negatives?

P9: Capitalism.

ME: You never experienced capitalism? Why?

P9: 'Cause I haven't start my own business, I never been an entrepreneur, I don't know how the market works. I haven't.

ME: But you had a job as a teacher working for a private school.

P9: A private educational institution.

ME: Ok, so wouldn't that be, being part of capitalism, as a worker?

P9: I haven't thought about it that much. But when I was working my job is really free 'cause I'm a teacher, I don't need to deal with their parents. My job is just to teach and then I get paid based on what I, the hours, so I get paid by hour, like we have a minimum wage, like your monthly salary but on top of that salary you also get your hourly salary based on how many hours you teach per week.

The participant uses a hegemonic frame of capitalism as being an exterior bounded body that does not involve anyone who is not a business owner or worker as defined as being not a 'professional.' This notion of the exteriority of capitalism which the participant feels as having never experienced it because they have not run a business speaks to an everydayness in which this sense of a system does not involve them. And because this system is not viewed as being applicable or relevant to their lived experiences and identities, this is one of the dynamics that sustain the dominance of capitalism with it being seen as irrelevant and literally immaterial to one's daily concerns and routines. If capitalism is of no importance to those of us who are not owning a business, all the better for it to continue in the shadows as it were. This is evident in the participant framing their job as a teacher as being "really free" and "just to teach." As I addressed this in Chapter 3 with the participant who is also a teacher, the idea that teachers are somehow not your ordinary worker because their teaching workload ends when school lets out at mid-afternoon is part of this exteriority of capitalism discourse. But the fact the participant relates that they get paid an hourly wage only for the hours they teach but does not mention if they get financially compensated for their time spent on preparing lessons, grading assignments, and consulting with students after class further perpetuates this identity of a teacher as not being your 'average' worker in a capitalist-run business. I followed up on this by asking:

ME: Are you happy with your salary?

P9: I think I am 'cause before (their current place), I worked in the same institution in that time it was very, it was not so good actually. I worked 10 hours per day just because my hourly rate is cheaper than other teachers, which was good because I got the experience but it was also very bad because I'm exhausted, like physically, 'cause sometimes, I mostly do one-on-one lessons

and you know from one-on-one lessons you can't just let the students do homework, you have to, it's a communication. Like, sometimes it lasts for ten hours and sometimes I have to work two weeks in a row without any, like, breaks and even if I present them my, like, my hospital, like, 'cause I was sick and I can't even get a break because, although I deserved. I got paid really well as a graduate but at the same time it is very exhausting. But things have changed the second time because they already know me. They gave me, they actually just appointed me as a group leader and I got ... yeah, my salary was good, and I don't need to do that much, I don't need to teach 10 hours. Relatively more reasonable the second time.

The participant's sharing of their workday at their private educational institution in which they had to work 10 hours a day because of their meager salary leading to their being exhausted from non-stop work – “two weeks in a row without any ... breaks” is indeed an apt description of the overwhelming majority of us who have to sell our daily labor to live. The person is clearly living under capitalism despite the fact they think or feel they have never experienced it. However again, many of us might feel this same way because of how capitalist society frames our lives in ways that deny the existence of such a system with its negative and destructive features – working all the time just to survive – while also celebrating itself as the pinnacle of freedom because we have the choice to quit our jobs if we don't like it. The fact that the participant had to work and could not get a break even though they were ill would seem to be a shared work experience with many other workers who had suffered the same ‘fate’ at their workplaces. And although the participant's second job at the same place was an improvement over their first, did this fundamentally change their relations of production in any way? Or was the meager allowance of a bit less time for a bit more money enough for one to be satisfied or kept complacent with this system so that it can continue as before, as many of us have felt this way? This prompted me to ask:

ME: Can you imagine a world without capitalism and if so, what would it look like?

P9: Would you mind defining capitalism for me?

ME: Let's go with what you perceive it to be.

P9: Hmm ... see, I don't know because I never ... hmm, you have to be influenced by it to be able to judge whether it's needed or not, no? I've never, I haven't grown up in the US, I don't really know how things work there. But if it is a good way for the US then it should exist, I think so.

ME: Just a follow up question on that ... you know, your country (China) has called itself communist, right? So, what does communism mean to you then?

P9: Hmm ... communist, umm, communist ... I think it means that you get distributed things. You don't get what you earned, but rather you get distributed things, like, you work and then all the benefits go to, say, like headquarters or something and then they distribute it back to you, something like that?

ME: OK, so how is that different from capitalism in your view?

P9: Capitalism is if you work you get what you spent effort on, like if you spent effort on this, then you get ... you get, there's no middleperson maybe, that's why. Yeah, I really don't know much about it.

The participant's views of what communism and capitalism means to them aligns with a common-sense discourse that has been prevalent for decades now. What is interesting here is that their definition of communism, "you don't get what you earned," is the Marxist characterization of capitalism – producing much more than what you receive in return (e.g., wages). Indeed, their comment that "all the benefits go the headquarters ... and then they distribute it back to you" is the central feature of capitalism. Although the participant is describing what they think communism is, it is in fact an accurate portrayal of how their country, the People's Republic of China, is actually run. In the similar manner as the former Soviet Union, the Communist Party bureaucrats have controlled the means of production including being the sole decision makers in who gets what and how much. The people who produce the surplus value have no say and have to accept what they are given. Is this any different from capitalism?

The participant's definition of capitalism is ironically what Marx and fellow socialists since then have advocated for – as workers we should get what we "spent effort on." However, the intent here is not to shame the participant's view of communism and capitalism; rather it is to highlight that in fact, they are simply taking up the common-sense discourses of both. A discourse of capitalism has always been about you get the salary that you 'deserve' for 'working hard for it' and congruently, those who are getting paid less is only because they did not work hard enough. A hegemonic discourse about the evils of communism that has been dominant in the US for decades is that under that system, workers don't get what they deserve because someone else is in charge. Hence, there is no freedom in that system. But our not getting what we deserve from the surplus value we produce from our daily labor because someone else is making all the decisions – sound familiar?

The following participant grew up in Hong Kong:

ME: How would you identify your community in Hong Kong?

P10: I would say middle-class, first of all, and umm, I wouldn't say I'm extremely privileged but I think I am privileged, like more privileged than a lot of people. For example, at least my family members, as in my parents or my other family members are able to pay the rent so we don't need to live in like public housing or extremely small flats. By extremely small flats I mean a flat that is around 200 square feet.

ME: Yeah, for poor people.

P10: Yeah, it's pretty small. But my flat, I was living with my grandma and my aunt when I was in Hong Kong. So our flat was like 400 something square feet for three people. In Hong Kong that's big. Yeah, so I would say I'm ... so for that part I would say I'm privileged because I don't have to worry about anything.

In a similar fashion as P8's being thankful for having a roof over their head, this participant expresses feeling grateful they and their family members can afford to pay rent. What is involved with us having to feel the need to be thankful and 'lucky' that we have a 'decent' job that pays enough money for us to live in an adequate-sized residence? The perceived spatial dimension for having enough room for us is relative of course because by US standards, a 400 square foot apartment for three people would be considered tiny by wealthy Americans who could afford to pay for much more space to live. An article in *The New York Times* entitled "Life, death and grief in Los Angeles" (Santos, 2021) documented how several impoverished neighborhoods that are predominantly Latinx and immigrant communities in Los Angeles including Boyle Heights and Huntington Park have suffered because of their crowded residences much higher rates of COVID-19 infections and deaths than the extremely affluent mainly White areas such as Bel Air and Beverly Hills where the people there live far apart from one another. In the neighborhoods such as Huntington Park, several family generations all have to live in the same small one-bedroom apartment because they cannot afford a larger space, and thus self-isolating from the pandemic becomes impossible. In the context of the US, this is an example of what Massey and Denton (1993) termed as the "American apartheid" in which "racial segregation and ... ghetto are the key structural factors responsible for the perpetuation of ... poverty in the United States" (p. 9). So although the urban geography of Los Angeles is larger than Hong Kong's – 503 square miles (1302 square kilometers) versus 428 square miles (1108 square kilometers) – the poor in both cities are forced to live in crowded conditions. The productions of these urbanized spaces of poverty and their relations to other spaces and experiences will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 7. The conversation continued:

ME: What kind of role do you see yourself playing in Hong Kong society?

P10: That's a difficult question. I think since I was a lecturer, so a lot of people see that as you are a teacher, you're supposed to, you know, teach the younger generation and make sure that you spread the right values. Umm, so that was also what I tried to do but I think there were a lot of constraints because I think, and the reason is there are a lot of censorship, like self-censorship and other censorship from the institutions from the government, so sometimes, not sometimes, very often I will just stick to my teaching materials and not talk about any other things even though I know that there are some issues, social issues, political issues that are very much discussed among people. So I think in that sense I'm not really fulfilling my role as a teacher because I have to be very careful, like very sensitive about what I'm talking about.

This interaction took place in late 2018, about seven months before the pro-democracy protests re-emerged in Hong Kong following the Umbrella movement in 2014. Hong Kong has had a long and complex history of being occupied by foreign powers. It was colonized and controlled by the British empire following the First

Opium War with China in 1842 until World War II, when the Japanese drove out the British and took it over from 1941 to 1945. After the war, the British resumed as colonial masters until the 1997 handover. This transfer of sovereignty between the UK and China was based on the so-called principle of “one country, two systems” in which Hong Kong was supposed to be granted almost near autonomy from the Beijing government until 2047. Following the years after World War II, Hong Kong became an international financial and manufacturing center.

The Umbrella Movement (also known as Occupy Central echoing the Occupy Wall Street movement) was named after the student activists who had to protect themselves with umbrellas when police tear-gassed them without any warning or provocation. It began in late September, 2014 and lasted until mid-December that year at the various sites of Causeway Bay and Admiralty on Hong Kong island, and the Mong Kok neighborhood on the Kowloon peninsula. The Umbrella Movement was a non-violent civil disobedience movement without any formal leadership comprising a united coalition of activists, students, workers, religious leaders, and the general public who called for fair and free elections. The primary demand of the movement called for democratically choosing the chief executive by the Hong Kong public in a general election, instead of the mere majority of the designated 1200-member committee who have been increasingly appointed and selected by Beijing. The perception held by many Hong Kongers is that the ruling elite of Beijing has already taken over the city well before the official handover is supposed to take place in 2047.

It is in this context in which the participant mentions feeling the pressure and need to self-censor oneself in the classroom to not address with the students the political and social issues in Hong Kong society. However, this is not unique to Hong Kong as there are parallels to how teachers as well as professors in the US have had to refrain from expressing their political beliefs and avoiding any conversations in the class that could lead to ‘controversy’ with parents and administrators (e.g., discussing the Black Lives Matter movement, or Trump’s immigrant policies). Especially now with social media, there have been educators who have been named and shamed by the alt-Right for stating their views. Despite universities in the US endorsing academic freedom, some professors have been disciplined by their institutions for naming and critiquing societal and global injustices with some even losing their jobs. In what Althusser (1971) called the “ideological state apparatuses” of which he argued the education system – “the School” has become the dominant ideological state apparatus replacing the Church with “an ideology which represents the School as a neutral environment purged of ideology” (p. 156). This purportedly ‘neutral’ environment does not allow such discussions of politics, race, economic, and other social issues in the classroom. This ideologically-constructed space is where teachers feel the need to be respectful of “the ‘conscience’ and ‘freedom’ of the children who are entrusted to them by ‘their’ parents ... open up for them the path to the freedom, morality and responsibility of adults by their own example, by knowledge, literature and their ‘liberating virtues’ (ibid., pp. 156–157).

Are our roles as educators to monotonously employ a banking model approach (Freire, 1970) with our students in which we merely ‘deposit’ sanctioned forms of knowledge deemed acceptable and thus safe? The many teachers I have known and worked with in the past 30 years are quite aware of this banking model pedagogy they continually enact in their classrooms because of institutional pressures as the participant noted, leading to their own self-imposed teaching practices. The participant acknowledges this conflict between the at-times non-willing consent of teachers in sustaining hegemony and those who “attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they ‘teach’ against the ideology, the system and the practices in which they are trapped” (Althusser, 1971, p. 157):

ME: Those issues sometimes come out in the classroom from students or?

P10: Yes, because I was teaching a course called Public Speaking, so it was under the general education program, so in that course all students must give three speeches in the semester and they have the freedom to choose the topic. Of course we have some other criteria that they have to fulfill but for the content they are free to choose whatever they want to ... because the course was university wide, so umm, like all majors would have to take that course, so from time to time we had some students from, let’s say political science, they would pick some topics which would relate to social issues or political issues and those issues came up, I would be able to comment on that from the angle of public speaking, but not, like, their views or their arguments. So I was still able to talk about them but I have to be very careful that I’m not giving my students a feeling that I’m expressing my own opinion but I’m sticking to commenting on how they construct their speech. So, it’s difficult, yeah. Or for example, when I taught, let’s say, organization patterns I had to make sure the examples that I use are very much politically correct. So usually I won’t touch on anything that is relating to social aspects. I’ll just talk about something else, like the supermarket, or, umm, yeah, I think nowadays, I don’t know whether it’s just me, but we have a lot of self-censorship, so we try not to be touching the political side at all.

The participant’s pressure to focus solely on the genre moves and register of what is perceived as ‘good’ and ‘appropriate’ public speaking in this university course again mirrors what other teachers around the world do in their classrooms. However, by only concentrating on how a student constructs and organize their speeches, to what extent is this self-disciplining by teachers in avoiding commenting on the students’ argument framing of whatever issue they are speaking about, whether political and/or social, so technical that it ends up not helping students at all? In other words, with these intertwined self-induced and pressure from above teaching practices separating form and content in classroom contexts, does this not result in lessening the ability of students to improve their public speaking repertoires? In the end by helping to preserve the hegemony, we as educators as well as our students will continue to be trapped in the practices and system of the powers that be.

The interview continued:

ME: Are there parts of your life that are not affected by your job?

P10: Not affected? Hmm, I would say no because once you have a full-time job, it takes up time so that means you have less time for other people in your life. So yeah, so in that sense there would be no part of my job, like no part of my life that is not affected by my job because when you're very busy at work you probably won't have time for your friends and your family or other hobbies. Yeah.

The participant's description of the demands of a full-time job is an apt portrayal of how capitalism shapes and impacts our lives beyond the workplace. This is another illustration of our estrangement from one another inasmuch as this is not just feeling the need to compete with others but our literally not having the time to connect with and enjoy the company of people we care about and love. This could explain in part some people's seeking much-needed distractions from the stress of working all the time by over-consuming alcohol and drugs in the attempts to alleviate their anxieties and stress caused by their jobs. From this perspective of the participant's reflection on how their job overwhelms their daily life, it is clear that capitalism infiltrates us 24/7. This led me to ask the next question:

ME: Are you happy with this world? Why or why not?

P10: I'm not happy with this world because I think we have a lot of resources in this world, and I think theoretically all the resources, I mean the resources that we have should be adequate for everybody. But because we have a distribution problem – and that's why we have this wide gap between the rich and the poor – the rich have everything while the poor, they don't have anything ... not because we don't have enough resources but only because resources are not distributed to them. And I think this problem, yeah, cannot be solved.

ME: Cannot be solved, why?

P10: I think it cannot be solved because I think, umm, I think, I think it's right to say ... let me put it this way, I agree with the saying that socialism is a very good idea in principle, but in real life everybody is greedy, like to a large or a small extent. And since we have this thing called greed we always want to get more. I mean, of course, we also want to help people, but part of us also want to get more for not just ourselves but our friends or our families or the people that we know, and with this idea in mind, like consciously or subconsciously, we can never distribute everything equally. Yeah, that is why I think this problem cannot be solved.

The participant points out a fundamental characteristic of capitalism with those who have everything and those who have nothing despite the abundance of resources. However, they take up two Gramscian common-sense interrelated discourses that are often used to explain away the possibilities of any alternatives to

capitalism (e.g., socialism). One such discourse is the notion of ‘human nature’ – specifically in this case, that we are inherently avaricious and selfish and so socialism could never work. I have heard this discourse countless times in my life when talking with family members, friends, colleagues, students, and strangers about alternatives to capitalism. It is another emblematic dynamic of capitalist hegemony for many to ignore again how the economic effects the social and the social effects the economic. Yes, some of us may be greedy and selfish but wouldn’t this be from the capitalist economy that co-creates the socialized situations in which we feel we have to be this way in order to survive? By being so, it compels others to respond in similar fashion so they can try to stay alive in society too. And in turn, this aspect of our ‘human nature’ further perpetuates the competitive culture of our economic system. There is also another aspect in that part of the appeal of this discourse lies in the resignation some have with being overwhelmed by the system that they can see no way out. And this forms the basis of the second discourse, which is a self-defeating one. As I addressed this in Chapter 2, this discourse that “this problem cannot be solved” in the words of the participant is basically the dialogical echo of “it is what it is” – in other words, what can we do about it because it is here to stay for good. But if “there is no alternative” then what?

ME: So where, then, do you see our world, or where do you see your society in 10, 20, or 50 years from now? Better or worse?

P10: I think worse because ... because after Hong Kong has returned to China, somehow, well, I don’t have any evidence, but I think it’s a general feeling that Hong Kong is more corrupted, not just in terms of money, but in terms of the mind. So, it’s getting more competitive but in a bad way. For example, instead of competing for things based on your ability it’s more like based on your social capital, like what people you know. Or a lot of jobs are not done in a way that they should be done because people are less concerned about the outcome but more concerned about like, “I should just save my effort” because I’m getting this amount of money per hour anyway. So, we can see that a lot of infrastructures, they are not built in a good way, like, they couldn’t meet the standard ... so this is worrying, yeah. So, I think if politics doesn’t affect people’s life that much, I think normally people won’t pay attention to what they think it’s politics. But when this idea of politics affects their life, for example, the buildings they are living in are of poor quality, the bridges that we have built or are building are of poor quality, or let’s say we keep exceeding the budget, or using a lot of taxpayer’s money, then people will start to care about what they think is politics. And they think about all these counselors or senators not doing their job because they’re having a lot of money anyway. Or for example, instead of letting, or I don’t know how the system works, but instead of hiring Hong Kong companies to do the job now they’re hiring companies from mainland China. And if they’re doing a good job people probably can’t say anything, but since they’re not doing a good job, then people will think that the government is not doing a good job and

our lives are affected in a bad way and people are always grumpy and discontent and when you're not in a good mood, many of the things you do will also be affected negatively, so it's like a vicious cycle. That's how I think society will go worse.

The participant's narrative of how Hong Kong has changed for the worse in their opinion describes not only their own society, but also other capitalist-dominated ones such as the US. Although they attribute the increasing corruption in Hong Kong to China's takeover, this discourse of fraud and racket has also become more common in the US. Part of the appeal of Trump's 2016 US presidential election campaign was his promise to "drain the swamp" of the US government with its implication that the elected politicians were all in the pockets of their corporate benefactors. Since this did contain more than a grain of truth, many voters hoped that he would return the government to the people. We saw how that worked out. The participant's point about people in Hong Kong becoming more disillusioned because their "counselors or senators not doing their job because they're having a lot of money anyway" is a mirror image of how many people feel in the US about their representatives, which leads to people in both societies feeling "grumpy and discontent" in P10's words.

Is the participant's framing of Hong Kong becoming more competitive "in a bad way" in the past 20 years or so be viewed solely as a result of Beijing's influence and dominance, or can it also be seen in the broader domain of not only the fundamental feature of capitalism but also how capitalist economies such as the ones in the US and UK have increasingly shorn themselves of the social-welfare state governance? When the participant argues that competition is no longer based on ability but on "what people you know," hasn't this always been the case in capitalist societies? Those who have the access the forms of capital including social and cultural that work in conjunction with accumulating economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984)? And the lack of quality in both publicly and privately-funded infrastructures such as residences and transportation for the general public that the participant points out – again, is this much different from the US? It is in this vein that the participant astutely observes the mutual intereffectivity (Amariglio & Callari, 1989) of the economic and social in their concluding remark, "when you're not in a good mood, many of the things you do will also be affected negatively, so it's like a vicious cycle." Although the participant was referring to the shortcomings of their government's policies and actions (and lack thereof on behalf of the public good), I would extend these vicious cyclical effects on people to this government's (and many others') enabling partner-in-crime – capitalism, what else?

ME: OK, so how would you describe your economy then, the economy in Hong Kong?

P10: I don't know really how to describe it, but I only know that when I was in school we have, I learned the phrase, "active intervention." So in Hong Kong the government has always like, was always very proud of this free market

thing. But, what I can see is the economy is not good because the government is using free market as an excuse very often. For example, I think, a lot of people think that the government should control the housing market a bit because now the prices of houses have gone up so much that people cannot afford it. We think that obviously free market is not the best choice for the majority, but the government obviously doesn't think so. So that's why we still have this free market for the housing market. And because people are spending so much money for some housing that they can't afford, that's why they don't have money to spend on some other aspects. So, I think, in my personal perception, I think the economy is very imbalanced, because when you are spending a lot of money on only one thing but, so that you don't have enough money to spend on other things, actually, you're affecting the other businesses ... so they are not earning money, so, to a certain extent I sympathize with them because unless you are the big companies or you are the developers, otherwise you're not having an easy time in Hong Kong right now, so that is not good. But then for big developers, even though you are working for them you don't get any benefits from the so-called better economy. It's only the owners of those big companies who are making the money.

What the participant is basically describing is the neoliberal phase of capitalism with its well-known discourse of the 'free market' as being the oracle of how a society should be governed. The housing situation in Hong Kong that the participant discusses is quite common across the world with not only the increasing burden of paying rent or mortgage on a residence, but also the rising rates of evictions and ensuing homelessness. As the participant notes, someone is making a profit from other people's miseries. While some of the participant's other comments suggest they support capitalism, this is a Gramscian good-sense assessment of it.

ME: So the last question I would ask then is what does capitalism mean to you?

P10: I would say capitalism is benefiting only a certain amount of people who know how to play the game but for the majority or for the other people who don't know how to play the game, it's, it's, they're not benefiting anything from the game, like from this thing. But then, if I compare capitalism to socialism or communism then I would say ... actually, again, the same thing, or similar things would happen. Because again, on paper they are all good. But in real life there are many factors, many variables, and human beings is a very big variable, and when you add human beings to all these things then, again, you can't have an ideal solution for everybody ... my friends and I always joke that in China they say that they have this Chinese-style socialism. Again, on paper it sounds very nice, you know, the government would take care of everybody. But again, if you look at China there are so many instances of injustice, like people are exploited. So yeah, so for me, I would say capitalism should work, but it will not work, because again, we have human beings who have different preferences. Am I making sense?

ME: Yes.

P10: I would say capitalism, yeah, maybe I would say capitalism would work when people have more integrity.

Here, the interesting framing of capitalism as knowing how to play the game implies why who is winning and who is losing. Those knowing how this game is rigged have benefited time and time again. Yet, even for those of us who know how this game is played, would we have any chance of ‘winning’? This circles back to the participant’s earlier comment that success is based on what people you know. And perhaps this is what led them to compare the capitalist system with communism as it has been practiced by the former Soviet Union and China – the private and state-run versions of capitalism with only a few people profiting from being in the sole authoritative position to make their rules for the game they are playing. The long historical legacies of how the governments of the former USSR and the current People’s Republic of China continued dictatorial regimes while doling out pittances to the people have had a lasting impact on how many people including this participant, while being critical of capitalism, cannot see a real way out of it. While they offered insightful critiques of capitalism throughout this interview, whether explicitly or implicitly, when comparing it with the communism as practiced by the two aforementioned governments, they return to the idea that capitalism “should work” and would only work “when people have more integrity.” Unfortunately I did not ask a follow-up question on what the participant meant by people having integrity and how that would make capitalism work for everyone rather than for the few since the system itself has no integrity, as the participant noted several times throughout the interview.

7

THE SOCIO-SPATIALITIES OF CAPITAL

Urban landscapes and alternative imaginaries

Drawing upon Lefebvre's (1991a) conceptual triad of representations of space, representational spaces and spatial practices, and Soja's (1989, 2010) notion of the "socio-spatial dialectic," this chapter explores the visual topographies of capitalism in the residential designs, store signage, public art, and graffiti that depict and enact the social dynamics of the economy; be it commodity culture, consumer lifestyle, and critiques or celebrations of capitalism. In using a visual ethnographic approach (Pink, 2013), I address how economic discourses are instantiated in the material world by examining the ideological visualities of selected cities mirroring and displaying various social semiotics of capitalism. Part of the chapter will address the linguistic landscapes of cities in the US and UK in which urban spaces are defined and shaped by these landscapes of capital, and the co-constructions of counter-hegemonic and anti-capitalist imaginaries and practices in public and commercialized spaces.

Drawing upon a data collection consisting of photographs I have taken to document changes in selected neighborhoods in Los Angeles, London, and Boston, I examine how various spaces attempt to interpellate local residents, newcomers, tourists, observers, and the gentrifying class in either perpetuating or challenging hegemonic discourses of society and the economy in these societies. How are the mundaneness or creativity of such spatial practices enacted in the ways in which they counter-pose their immediate surroundings with their messages in words and images? To what extent do the creativities of counter-hegemonic signs subvert the usual urban narrative of progress in the context of soaring home property prices and rent increases in these cities? In asking these questions, I explore how such spaces including linguistic landscapes that have been at times transient can now enter into academic (such as here) and archival spaces including social media prompting further reflection, discussion and possible action.

The social-spatialities of the urban

Situating the city in the context of capitalism is crucial because “the metropolis has always been the seat of money economy because the many-sidedness and concentration of commercial activity have given the medium of exchange an importance which it could not have acquired in the commercial aspects of rural life” (Simmel, 1903, p. 12). However, what constitutes and defines a metropolis? Is it merely the population size and/or density and the demographics thereof? The geo-spatial boundaries that have been officially named at a point in time? How do cities come to acquire their perceived cultural identities and accompanying characteristic behavioral acts of inhabitants? For example, in the US there is a common perception that people are friendlier in Los Angeles than those in Northeastern cities such as New York and Boston. As far as I know, there has not been any ethnographic research done to document and verify this in terms of the comparative numbers of how many people make eye contact with, and/or smile at and talk with strangers on the streets in these cities. Other than anecdotal encounters, what would account for this idea and affective sense that some cities are more ‘welcoming’ than others? In conjunction with this, what actually contributes to cities having a certain ‘vibe’ to them, be it the feeling one has of the energy on the streets, which in part is fueled by their landscapes including architectural designs and histories, the densities of buildings, signage, and graffiti? How do these myriad spaces of a city create the sense of belonging or estrangement at times, and for whom? These questions comprise part of the dynamics of what Soja (1989) termed as the “socio-spatial dialectic” of the city. Soja’s fundamental premise is “that social and spatial relations are dialectically inter-reactive, interdependent; that social relations of production are both space-forming and space-contingent” (p. 81). Soja’s concept builds upon Lefebvre’s work on space, in which Lefebvre (1991a) argued that “space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)” (p. 83).

These social and spatial relations would be apparent to most people when they are in spaces with which they are unfamiliar and a stranger to; for example, for those of us who do not identify as ‘upper class’ or ‘upper middle class,’ would we feel comfortable and at ease when entering the lobby of a five-star hotel and talking with the staff? Similarly, what about if you happened to go into a store selling clothing apparel of which the cheapest was being sold for US\$2,000? Once, I went into a men’s clothing store in a shopping mall in Hong Kong because the suits featured in the window display were quite beautiful. I went up to one suit and touched it and then noticed the price tag on its sleeve – it was US\$5,000! Somehow, the salesperson who was standing close by knew not to ask me if I wanted to try it on. I quickly left the store, feeling a bit ashamed and embarrassed. This is an example of what Lefebvre (1991a) termed as “spatial practices” that are enacted in “the trivialized spaces of everyday life; and in opposition to these last, spaces made special by symbolic means as desirable or undesirable, benevolent or malevolent,

sanctioned or forbidden to particular groups” (p. 288). In this situational context, it was clear that this retail space supposedly open to everyone was forbidden to the likes of me.

These spaces in which social relations and accompanying identities are enacted or not can lead to the proverbial ‘impostor syndrome’ that those of us feel as in the aforementioned example. In addressing the urban experience, Harvey (1989) observed that “residential areas (neighborhoods, communities) provide distinctive milieus for social interaction from which individuals to a considerable degree derive their values, expectations, consumption habits, market capacities, and states of consciousness” (p. 118). It is these states of consciousness acting in tandem with social-spatial interactional dynamics that give rise to our sense of belonging or not. And it is precisely these “patterns of residential differentiation (that) reflect and incorporate many of the contradictions in capitalist society; the process creating and sustaining them are consequently the locus of instability and contradiction” (*ibid.*, p. 118) as Harvey pointed out. The patterns of residential differentiation are perhaps most apparent in neighborhoods that have been undergoing gentrification in which the appearances of the older residences stand in stark contrast to the newly built ones that are visually signifying the gentrifying processes. In this, the “architecture follows and translates the new conception of the city. Urban space becomes the meeting place for goods and people, for exchange” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 10). Consequently, how a city is retranslated into a new conception as well as self-presentation is part of the ever-changing urbanized capitalism that is both invigorating in some ways and enervating in others. It is this “urban reality, simultaneously amplified and exploded, thus loses the features it inherited from the previous period: organic totality, belonging, an uplifting image, a sense of space that was measured and dominated by monumental splendor” (*ibid.*, p. 14).

An illustration of this urban reality in which a historical monumental splendor has been replaced and resemiotized into a different type of ‘splendor’ with the display of wealth is the luxury condominium called The Lucas in the South End, Boston (Figure 7.1). I happened to be walking in the Boston neighborhood of South End when I noticed this peculiar-looking architectural design. At first I thought this church, which had been built in 1874, had been renovated with the new structure on top of it for an updated and expanded space for daycare and/or schooling. In fact, this former church known as Holy Trinity German Church did serve as a shelter for at-risk youth years ago. Perhaps an obvious question here is why had the condominium developers have the street-facing façade of the church preserved while building what is now called the ‘cheese grater’ design (describing a monolithic style) of the condominium units on top of it? Was their intention to merely keep part of the historical legacy of the church with its remaining design intact? Or was it to recontextualize this space of a religious and community-supporting one to a reconfigured space worshipping a different god such as Plutus, the god of wealth in ancient Greek mythology? The representation of space (Lefebvre, 1991a) of this building has shifted from a religious reverence and devotion to that of a display venerating consumer wealth, thus rather than glorifying the hierarchy



FIGURE 7.1 The Lucas, South End, Boston

of the religious ruling elite, it now celebrates the secular elite. Viewed from this perspective, ideology “*per se* might well be said to consist primarily in a discourse upon social space” (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 44, emphasis in the original).

The socio-spatial dialectic (Soja, 1989) would not just apply to the semiotic representation of this bizarre rebuilding on top of a former church, but also embodied and enacted by the inhabitants who have bought these condominium units and reside there. Would living there be indexical of one being seen as a wealthy ‘hipster’ or ‘bohemian’ in its perhaps attempt at acknowledging an ironic ‘sacrilege’ in a sense, at least for some? Rather than living in a well-established and longtime affluent neighborhood with a residential space that has been traditionally designed and viewed as a mundane exhibit of wealth and status, the residents at The Lucas might feel that their milieu carries with it the cultural capital of hipster gentrifiers who not only live in formerly diverse and working-class neighborhoods but also in residential buildings that speak to this very identity of urban hipness. This urban hipness comprising part of the socio-spatial dialectic is obvious (Figure 7.2).

The disparities of the social spaces behind The Lucas are quite evident. As you can see from the photo, there is another ‘cheese grater’ design condominium building nearby, also notable for what has been conceptualized as “visuality.” Visuality is “not composed simply of visual perceptions in the physical sense, but



FIGURE 7.2 Behind The Lucas, South End, Boston

is formed by a set of relations combining information, imagination, and insight into a rendition of physical and psychic space” (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 3). The socio-spatial relations co-constructing this physical and psychic space shown in Figure 7.2 are illustrated with an adjoining building and one nearby. The building between these two condominiums, with graffiti adorning it is an actual church called the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. The other building close by, in the lower right corner of the photo, is an Asian supermarket, C-Mart, which has catered to the local residents for several decades. The store design is a traditional one with Chinese characters alongside an English word of the name of the store. On the Google map reviews of this supermarket, a number of customers have complained that the staff are unfriendly and rude to “outsiders,” in this context, apparently affluent White residents new to the neighborhood. This seems to be an affront to the privilege a wealthy person would feel living nearby that a local store and its staff are not kowtowing to them for patronizing this store instead of Whole Foods supermarket, which is three blocks away. This exemplifies that “the spatiality of whatever subject you’re looking at is viewed as shaping social relations and societal development just as much as social processes configure and give meaning to the human geographies or spatialities in which we live” (Soja, 2010, p. 4). Thus, the visuality in these physical and psychic spaces involves how “the right to look is strongly interfaced with the right to be seen” (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 4). In other words, in the context of wealthy new residents who are offended by a local store staff member not being friendly to them or ignoring them, *how dare you treat me this way – this is my neighborhood now!*

The linguistic landscapes of capitalist society

In my research examining the landscapes of two cities in which I have lived – Los Angeles (for almost 23 years) and Boston (for the past 5 years), and a city I have recently visited on several occasions, one of which lasted a month – London, I used a method that Blommaert and Maly (2016) called an “ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis” (p. 198). This approach offers “a more maturely semiotic approach, in which the signs themselves are given greater attention both individually (signs are multimodal and display important qualitative typological differences) and in combination with each other (the landscape, in other words)” (ibid., p. 199). In tandem with this methodology, I also drew upon a visual ethnography, which “does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should aim to offer versions of ethnographers’ experiences of reality ... the embodied, sensory and affective experiences, and the negotiations and inter-subjectivities through which the knowledge was produced” (Pink, 2013, p. 35). Because of this rejection of any ‘objective’ account of urban realities, but rather my own ideological perspectives of how I view any city, “the ethnographicness of any image or representation is contingent on how it is situated, interpreted and used to invoke meanings, imaginings and knowledge that are of ethnographic interest” (Pink, 2013, p. 35). In doing so, my focus on the selected linguistic landscapes stems from how the language displayed in their signages index the interanimating relational domains of economy and society contextualized in gentrifying neighborhoods.

As Shohamy (2017) has pointed out:

while languages in public spaces seem random, research in LL (linguistic landscape) has shown that LL is in fact systematic and anchored in theories of politics, policy, economics, geography, law, linguistics, migration, urbanism, bodies, architecture, education, culture, justice, power, and change.

(Shohamy, 2017, p. 44)

Thus, my analysis draws on not only the research done on linguistic landscapes (e.g., Blackwood, Lanza, & Woldemariam, 2016; Blommaert, 2013; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010; Pütz & Mundt, 2019; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009), but also incorporates a multimodal social-semiotic discourse and visual studies analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006; Mirzoeff, 2011, 2015) in the context of the urbanization of capital. Blommaert and Maly (2016) highlighted the significance of linguistic landscape studies (LLS), which “compel us towards *historicising* sociolinguistic analysis ... LLS can detect and interpret social change and transformation on several scale-levels, from the very rapid and immediate to the very slow and gradual ones, all gathered in a ‘synchronic’ space” (p. 198, emphasis in the original). This historicizing analytic approach maintains that all signs can be analyzed along three axes: Signs pointing toward the past, the future, and the present. These three axes and their functions

turn LLS into an *ethnographic* and *historical* project, in which we see signs as indices of social relationships, interests and practices, deployed in a field which is replete with overlapping and intersecting norms – not just norms of *language* use, but norms of conduct, membership, legitimate belonging and usage; and not just the norms of a here-and-now, but norms that are of different orders and operate within different historicities. The linguistic landscape has been turned into a social landscape, features of which can now be read through an analysis of the public signs.

(Blommaert & Maly, 2016, p. 200, emphasis in the original)

Thus, an ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis as Blommaert and Maly argue, “enables us not just to identify with a very high degree of accuracy the demography of the neighborhood – who lives here? – but also the particular dynamic and complex features of the social fabric of a superdiverse neighborhood” (*ibid.*, p. 200). Now, while Blommaert and Maly contend that we can “see the local ways in which people organize indexicals of social mobility and identity around the deployment of specific semiotic resources – we see, in other words, emergent orders of indexicality and patterns of enregisterment giving shape to the neighborhood” (*ibid.*, p. 214), Lefebvre asserted that

although there may be a language of the city (or language in the city), or urban discourse and ‘writing,’ and therefore the possibility of semiological research, the city and the urban phenomenon can’t be reduced either to a single system of signs (verbal or otherwise) or to a semiology.

(Lefebvre, 2003, p. 50)

Furthermore, “does language – logically, epistemologically or genetically speaking – precede, accompany or follow social space? Is it a precondition of social space or merely a formulation of it?” (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 16). In the following sections, I will address these questions.

What do we see on the streets?

“We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice” (Berger, 1972, p. 8). It doesn’t take an academic ethnographer these days to notice the number of people walking on the streets in any major metropolitan area who are looking at only one thing – their mobile phones. How often have those of us who prefer to walk without obsessively glued to our phone screen had to move out of the way to avoid bumping into a person who is looking downward at theirs? And while David Harvey (1989) wrote this before the advent of widely used mobile cellular communication, his question is still pertinent today in challenging researchers in “finding an interpretative frame within which to locate the million and one surprises that confront us on the street” (p. 1). This not only pertains to researchers conducting urban linguistic landscape ethnographies by observing and noticing

signage both old and new, how these signs appear via not only in language forms, font styles and colors, but also how these changes are perceived by people who I am calling ‘everyday ethnographers.’ These are the people who either live in the neighborhood and have seen it in constant perpetual change; at times imperceptible and other moments which seemingly occur overnight, or those who are new to an area, be they recent transplants, tourists, or just passing through. How and what do they see? Or rather, do they see anything at all, other than the screens on their phones? When we do notice old and new signs on stores, how do some of these signs co-construct a certain sense of a neighborhood ‘feel,’ while others signify a local vicinity as being on the move with both local and global flows of passersby? Berger (1972) argued that “when we ‘see’ a landscape, we situate ourselves in it” (p. 11), but do we situate ourselves in all urban landscapes, especially ones that are unwelcoming to us in terms of wealth, class status, and racial positioning? We do position ourselves but not necessarily *in* an urban landscape but rather in relation to it.

As passersby from within the neighborhood, or around the city and the world, “when we walk the streets – whether as guides, tourists, or inhabitants – we are at once invoking a host of competing spatialities, not a straightforward spatialized reference with a correspondent true meaning” (Keith & Pile, 1993, p. 8). The competing spatialities of the city in capitalist society, as in the aforementioned example of the luxury condominium The Lucas, involve the co-constructing of people’s identities depending on who they are interacting with, and being positioned by others in a particular space. As Walter Benjamin wrote in describing the emergence of high-end shopping malls in 19th century Paris and how this re-shaped social relations:

Trade and traffic are the two components of the street. Now, in the arcades the second of these has effectively died out: the traffic there is rudimentary. The arcade is a street of lascivious commerce only; it is wholly adapted to arousing desires. Because in this street the juices slow to a standstill, the commodity proliferates along the margins and enters into fantastic combinations, like the tissue in tumors. The flâneur sabotages the traffic. Moreover, he [*sic*] is no buyer. He is merchandise.

(Benjamin, 1999, p. 42)

The flâneur would not exist without an audience on the streets of the arcade because it is this very urbanized space in which this particular identity emerges and is enacted. Thus it is not only the visual semiotics of the structure of the arcade itself on display indexing ‘high’ commerce, but also the inter-effecting presence of the flâneurs co-creating an urban reality one perceives and distinctly experiences in this differential space. It is in this manner that the street is “more than just a place for movement and circulation ... in the street, a form of spontaneous theater, I become spectacle and spectator, and sometimes an actor. The street is where movement takes place, the interaction without which urban life would not exist” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 18).

Figures 7.3 and 7.4 are illustrative examples of the differential spatialities and their interactional dynamics with our becoming both spectator and spectacle. In November 2018, I took these two photos of buildings located in Granary Square in the Kings Cross neighborhood of London. This neighborhood has become increasingly gentrified in the past twenty years or so. My first visit to Kings Cross



FIGURE 7.3 “Coal Office” 1, Kings Cross, London



FIGURE 7.4 “Coal Office” 2, Kings Cross, London

was thirty-six years earlier, in January 1982. Back then it appeared to be a largely abandoned post-industrial district seemingly devoid of any fancy stores. I saw numerous sex workers and drug dealers on the streets both day and night. So when I returned to this neighborhood several decades later, I immediately noticed the drastic changes. When I came upon the building pictured in Figure 7.3 and saw the sign, “Coal Office,” judging by not only the façade of the structure but also the font style of the sign which is spray-painted onto the brick building, I assumed it was a former coal manufacturing company. I then saw the second building (Figure 7.4) that is nearby, with the identical words, “Coal Office,” but with an obviously much different presentation. My initial thought was that the company had moved to a new location and updated itself to be seen as 21st century as the hi-tech companies that have been setting up offices in major cities. However as I looked more closely, I realized it was a high-end restaurant. So why the name, “Coal Office” since this restaurant was neither producing nor selling coal to consume? Finding that interpretative frame to locate the surprise on the street (Harvey, 1989) that I felt seeing this was challenging. I did not enter the restaurant and ask the staff why the restaurant was named as such but my take was that the owner(s) was being ironic and/or acknowledging the history of the neighborhood. And naming this restaurant as such seems to be an attempt to appeal to an affluent urban ‘hipster’ audience who also find the name ironic and amusing in enacting themselves as a spectacle to others by eating there and displaying their consumer predilection for these types of places.

The meaning of this two-word phrase, ‘Coal Office,’ shifts from it signifying an actual location of a manufacturing company to that of multiple interpretations depending on the contexts in which customers and passersby like myself would position ourselves in relation to this sign. This is one example of how the bricolage (Hebdige, 1979) of gentrifying signs such as ‘Coal Office’ in the re-semiotizing enact and interact with “the spatial, the social, and the historical dimensions of reality” (Soja, 2010, p. 18) in urban capitalist society. And this is how “the urban core becomes a high-quality consumption product for foreigners, tourists, people from the outskirts and suburbanites. It survives because of this double role: as place of consumption and consumption of place ... they become centres of consumption” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 73). The patrons at the Coal Office restaurant are not only consuming the food; they are also consuming the signifiers of its sign.

However, the ways in which “streets provide the principal visual scenes in cities” (Jacobs, 1961, p. 378) are not limited to architectural designs, commerce signage, and people but also of course the street art and graffiti that adorn many a space depending where; for example, you would not see graffiti painted on the façade of government buildings or high-finance centers for obvious reasons. It is usually found elsewhere in urban spaces deemed to be ‘inner-city’ or ‘run-down.’ Because “space and the politics of space ‘express’ social relationships but react against them” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 15), there are numerous types of graffiti including explicitly political ones such as the one shown in Figure 7.5.

I saw this writing on a sidewall in an alleyway in Camden Town, London in October 2018 during the ongoing national debates on Brexit at the time. My



FIGURE 7.5 Graffiti 1, Camden Town, London

interpretative framing of this was that because the Tory Party led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson had advocated Britain's exit from the European Union, the person who wrote this viewed this and the other policies of the Tories (going back to at least the Thatcher era) as serving only the 1%. By using the word, "Satan," it clearly signifies the Tories' policies as being evil to the greater public. But was this graffiti also indexing the government's urban policies enabling and funding gentrification that has been going on in Camden Town? While one can speculate about this situated connection, this next graffiti sign (Figure 7.6), also in Camden Town, directly addresses it. The word, "simulated" indexes how the rampant gentrification that has been happening has changed and appropriated the traditional working-class character of this neighborhood, which is also indicated by the phrase, "come back soon to spend again."

Both of these pictorial examples demonstrate how "in the urban context, struggles between fractions, groups and classes strengthen the feeling of belonging" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 67) – or not. The alienation and estrangements discussed in Chapter Two are not limited to our engagements and lack thereof with one another, but also operate in another domain – that of the interrelated urban landscapes of the neighborhoods we either feel a sense of belonging to, or being estranged from. This has been evident in the many recent Black Lives Matter protests in urban areas in the US which "have the city as their battleground, their stake" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 67). This is also illustrated in the photo I took in



FIGURE 7.6 Graffiti 2, Camden Town, London

November 2018 in the neighborhood of Kentish Town, which is adjacent to Camden Town (Figure 7.7).

As you can see, this huge graffiti sign, “Homelessness?” adorns an abandoned building for sale. In the lower right corner of this building, there is someone’s personal belongings stored there. The graffiti obviously raises the ongoing issue in many cities of emptied buildings due to either residential or business tenants being



FIGURE 7.7 Graffiti 3, Kentish Town, London

evicted or leaving because of high rents. With the increasing number of buildings of this kind is the parallel rise of homelessness in cities such as London, New York, and Los Angeles. In this context, this sign literally illustrates what Lefebvre (1991a) in his book, *The Production of Space*, asked: “what is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose vocabulary and links it makes use of, and whose code it embodies?” (p. 44).

The marked reminders of what these graffiti signs are saying of what has been going in these neighborhoods of Camden Town and Kentish Town are examples of Lefebvre’s (1991a) notion of “representational spaces,” which are “linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life” (p. 33). Any representational space “overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects” (ibid., p. 39), and thus, is “directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’ ... this is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (ibid., p. 39). However, one question in these contexts is to what extent are the language and discourses in these graffiti signs that are appropriating their spaces will be able to change the larger space of these neighborhoods for the better beyond pointing out what may be obvious to some people walking by? In other words, do these spaces in which graffiti is ‘allowed’ to appear (for at least a period of time) function as a kind of release valve for the local residents to vent and articulate their anger that is safely contained and limited within these very spaces? Or would political graffiti like these be a prompt for further action for longtime residents to save their neighborhoods from being overtaken by financial capital?

The monological uniformity of gentrification

During the 1970s, the term, ‘gentrification,’ which originated in the context of London, began to be used to describe the changes in New York, which involved “the process by which central urban neighborhoods that have undergone disinvestments and economic decline experience a *reversal*, *reinvestment*, and the *in-migration* of a relatively well-off middle- and upper middle-class population” (Smith, 1998, p. 198, emphasis added). Moreover, in the gentrifying urban neighborhoods in which the longtime residents have been mainly working-class people of color, the in-migration of an affluent population displacing these residents have been largely White (Hwang & Sampson, 2014), which again is another example of the racial-class dynamic of capitalist society. In the context of New York, gentrification has often been framed and championed in the media by “urban boosters (who) welcomed it as a potential sign of cultural and economic reversal after decades of apparent urban decline” (Smith, 2006, p. 194). However, by the 1990s, state policy makers started adopting the term “urban regeneration” as an ideological euphemism for ‘gentrification’ (Smith, 2006). But gentrification is not a relatively new urban phenomena because it has always been an essential component of a capitalist economy:

‘Improvements’ of towns which accompany the increase of wealth, such as the demolition of badly built districts, the erection of palaces to house banks, warehouses etc., the widening of streets for business traffic, for luxury carriages, for the introduction of tramways, obviously drive the poor away into even worse and more crowded corners ... the influx of people into the metropolis grows, and finally in proportion as house rents rise owing to increases in urban ground rent.

(Marx, 1976 [1867], pp. 812–813)

As implied by his use of scare quotes around the word, *improvements*, Marx had astutely observed the multiple dimensional processes of gentrification – the targeting of specific neighborhoods in which “the circulation of capital” with its “geographical movement in time” (Harvey, 1989, p. 19) leads to evictions of the poor in the name of ‘progress.’ Long before the term of gentrification was used, its reconfigurations of our neighborhoods were already quite obvious to us as illustrated by Marx.

The urbanization of capital leading to gentrification involves many factors including what Harvey (1989) called an “evolving labor market geography” (p. 19), due to the “spatial competition for command of favorable locations” (ibid., p. 20), resulting in both “the spatial division of consumption” and “the spatial division of labor” (ibid., p. 21). These processes of gentrification raise the question posed by Harvey: “in whose image and to whose benefit is space to be shaped?” (ibid., p. 177). Again, it seems clear to many of us who have seen and lived in neighborhoods that have been rapidly gentrifying that the new images of reconfigured spaces are reflected by “their cultural products ... by richer people and their preferred aesthetics and amenities” (Stein, 2019, p. 41). Stein (2019) observed that these “neighborhoods and, eventually, cities become places only the rich can afford, with environments designed according to their desires” (p. 42).

The following three photos demonstrate how “the right to the city is an empty signifier” in that “everything depends on who gets to fill it with meaning” (Harvey, 2012, p. xv). However, it is not only who gets to populate the streets with intended meanings via their written textual signs, but also how we as spectators attribute a particular connotation to them. I took a photo of a building that is in the Shawmut neighborhood of Boston, named 345 Harrison, which houses an apartment rental agency along with its rental units (see Figure 7.8). The first time I saw this building, I simultaneously noticed its typical architectural style designating the blandness of urban gentrification as well as the sign adorning it, “Apartments Designed For Living.” This is an example of the vacuousness of linguistic landscapes in hyper-gentrified neighborhoods – an apartment that is “designed for living” as opposed to merely inhabiting or occupying it? My reaction upon reading this sign was that there is an intended ellipsis after the word, “living” in this context – the owner(s) left it to those who would know how to fill in the blank – apartments that are designed for living ... *the high life*. To me, that would explain why the choice of the phrase, “designed for living” was used because we don’t use the phrase ‘inhabiting the high



FIGURE 7.8 345 Harrison, Shawmut neighborhood, Boston

life,' do we? However, this raises another question because it would seem clear to many a spectator on the street that the inhabitants of this luxury building are living the high life, so why bother stating the obvious other than to literally show off in provoking envy and/or feelings of resentment?

The signage on 345 Harrison illustrates that “one consumes signs as well as objects: signs of happiness, of satisfaction, of power, of wealth, of science, of technology, etc. The production of these signs ... plays a major integrative role in relation to other productive and organizing social activities” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 115). It is this manner that 345 Harrison’s sign in this urban context “is bought and sold; language becomes exchange value. Under the appearance of signs and significations in general, it is the significations of this society which are handed over to consumption ... as integrally consumable: as exchange value in its pure state” (ibid., p. 115).

Another example of a language displayed in a sign as exchange value for consumption is the next photo (see Figure 7.9). This monolingual one-word sign of a butcher shop called “Meatland” is in what has been a historically diverse and predominantly working-class neighborhood called Jamaica Plain in Boston. The sign “Meatland” indexes the gentrification that has recently been going in this area. Instead of a more modestly font-sized multi-colored sign saying ‘So-and-so’s Butcher Shop’ as was the case before (or at least in the neighborhoods I grew up in), the word “Meatland” is in big bold font in white against a black background, which to me signifies a (White) ‘hipster’ identity for a store selling various animal meats. And perhaps the



FIGURE 7.9 “Meatland,” Jamaica Plain neighborhood, Boston

omission of the word “butcher” from the store signage serves to alleviate any feelings of guilt from the highly educated affluent White people new to this neighborhood because of what is being butchered?

In the midst of this decreasingly diverse neighborhood of Jamaica Plain, the butcher shop’s sign of “Meatland” displays what I am calling a “monological uniformity.” By replacing the phrase, ‘butcher shop,’ with this one-word sign which has a seemingly identical meaning, it can be viewed as dialogical in that “in an obvious Bakhtinian sense, projects of erasure are dialogical because they are responding to those previous utterances and texts they are designed to replace” (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 3). However, “the monologic imagination often takes the form of denial or dismissal, refusing to take up the other expression in a meaningful way” (ibid., p. 3). With its almost generic sounding name of “Meatland,” this store’s use of its sign mirrors and enacts the growing uniformity of an increasingly less diverse neighborhood with the influx of affluent White in-migrants.

There are other signs though that are clearly dialogical, with another condominium building (see Figure 7.10) in the Boston neighborhood of South End, which has been gentrifying for the past 25 years or so (Tissot, 2015). Much like the “Coal Office” sign of that London restaurant, this sign re-semiotizes and thus re-contextualizes a meaning of what ‘revolution’ would be to some people. One question would be, why use the word, ‘revolution’ to name an expensive apartment complex? Revolution in what sense? In this



FIGURE 7.10 Condominium, South End neighborhood, Boston

context, would it mean ‘revolutionizing’ the neighborhood and if so, for whom and what purposes? My interpretation of the sign’s font style which is in large bold blue against the red background is in the same social-spatial semiotic vein as both the “Coal Office” and “Meatland” signs – that of an ironic and knowing wink as it were appealing to the new inhabitants of these neighborhoods who enjoy this form of spectacle in having their gentrified living locations as being distinct from the traditional urban sites of the rich which had – and still have – long-established places of consumption designated with the usual conventional signage. This illustrates that the “changing use of space and processes of restructuring do not produce radical breaks in spatial patterns but develop within and against existing spatial structures. In principle, capitalist space is characterized by homogeneity *and* fragmentation” (Ronneberger, 2008, p. 137, emphasis in the original). But whether it is an extremely affluent urban residential area like Fifth Avenue on the Upper East Side in Manhattan, or a gentrified one like this neighborhood in Boston, do the differing signs on their local residences and stores make any difference to those of us who cannot afford to live in either place? These signs, be they customary or now ‘hip’ and ‘edgy’ definitely serve as a reminder to the rest of us – as spectators walking by – that we do not belong there but *you are welcome to enjoy our show (of wealth), now go home!*

Two neighborhoods in Los Angeles ... now one?

“The ultimate world-historical significance – and oddity – of Los Angeles is that it has come to play the double role of utopia *and* dystopia for advanced capitalism” (Davis, 1992, p. 18). I left New York City in August 1987 to move to Los Angeles to be with the person I was seeing at the time. We first lived in Hollywood, only a few blocks away from the famous Hollywood Walk of Fame along Hollywood Boulevard with the landmark Chinese and Egyptian Theatres. It was a culture shock for me being a native New Yorker forever in love with New York City because other than this tourist site of a few blocks along Hollywood Boulevard that attracted visitors from around the world, all the other major street arteries in Los Angeles seemed to be nearly devoid of any pedestrians. Being used to seeing scores of people on the streets in Manhattan at all hours of the day and night throughout the week, it was astonishing for me to see almost no one else walking in Los Angeles. At first I thought this was either my imaginary and culture shock reaction to living in a new city, or perhaps it was due to it being late summer and the locals escaping the heat to be at the beaches. However, my perception proved to be accurate because one early afternoon, I was walking along Sunset Boulevard in my Hollywood neighborhood and I noticed a police car driving slowly behind me with both officers looking intently at me. Puzzled, I looked around and saw no one else on the sidewalk. My take on this was that the cops thought I might have been someone looking to either buy or sell drugs since I was only person on the sidewalk. Despite having lived in Los Angeles off and on for 30 years, I would agree with the critical geographer, the late Edward Soja’s (1989) assessment of the city that it is “is exceedingly tough-to-track, peculiarly resistant to conventional description ... its spatiality challenges orthodox analysis and interpretation, for it too seems limitless and constantly in motion, never still enough to encompass, too filled with ‘other spaces’ to be informatively described” (p. 222).

A year and a half later, I moved to a neighborhood called Silver Lake, which is further east of Hollywood. Although the named area covers the street I lived on, it actually refers to the much more affluent stretch of homes north of Sunset Boulevard, closer to the Silver Lake reservoir. In my immediate neighborhood, just south of Sunset Boulevard, during the late 1980s throughout the 1990s, I would hear the almost daily noise of gunfire late at night by the local gangs and the inevitable police helicopters hovering overhead with their light beams illuminating the darkness. After doing my doctoral degree at the University of Toronto from 2006–2010, I returned to the same apartment in late summer 2010. In just the four years that I had been away, I was astonished to see how much the neighborhood had changed. I no longer smelled the whiff of gunfire but instead the stench from the local vape shops now permeating the neighborhood. Homeless encampments now abounded, next to high-priced stores that sold products I had no idea about.

One such example is the store “The Social Type” (see Figure 7.11). When I have shown this photo to my students, I ask them what they think this store sells based on the sign. The students will invariably reply, “coffee?,” “cupcakes and



FIGURE 7.11 “The Social Type,” Silver Lake neighborhood, Los Angeles

tea?,” “it’s a pub?,” and “weed?” (marijuana was legalized in California in 2016). What would you think this store sells? When I returned to the same neighborhood again in 2016 for the summer, and saw this store while walking on the other side of the street, I also assumed it was a gathering place of some kind, be it a high-end café or a restaurant. Curious, I crossed the road and entered the store. It sells calendars, appointment books, and greeting cards. That’s it. So instead of saying ‘stationery store’ as is, or at least was the custom for this retail type of place, it strives to be more of an ‘in-the-know’ space of consumption indexed in the similar manner as the aforementioned examples with a huge font style and vivid contrasting backgrounds.

The aforementioned store signs (see Figures 7.4, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, and 7.11) are all examples of what Trinch and Snajdr (2017) termed as “distinction-making signs” of these types of stores which by indexing the gentrifying changes in a neighborhood become, as one life-long resident the authors cite, “almost like a secret club. And if you don’t already know what’s inside ... then you don’t need to know or belong there” (p. 82). Thus, the urbanization of capital known as gentrification further fuels our estrangement because of these “compartmentalizing different spheres of activity, zoning things here and there, creating functional spaces, but despoiling everyday life at the same time, turning people inward, not outward, turning them away from each other” (Merrifield, 2002b, p. 81).

In contrast to these distinction-making signs are the “old school vernacular” signs (Trinch & Snajdr, 2017) of stores that are barely hanging on in a gentrifying neighborhood with rapidly rising rents and landlords wanting to sell their buildings

for huge profits because those spaces will be torn down for much bigger places of consumption. The stores (see Figure 7.12) are also in my Silver Lake neighborhood and had been in business since I moved there in 1989. However, during one of my visits back to the neighborhood during the winter of 2019, two of these stores were boarded up (I had taken the photo the year before). As you can see, the building in which these stores are located is relatively old for Los Angeles, and quite run down, unlike the neighboring buildings that have been either recently built or renovated. This building along with its retail tenants is indeed old school because it mirrored the demographics of the nearby community living in the immediate area, which was predominantly working-class Latinx. The ongoing and drastic changes in this neighborhood have of course changed its character from being that of an ethnically diverse and somewhat bohemian area back in the late 1980s and early 1990s to a very affluent White locale.

In the summer of 2018 when I was back in the neighborhood, I interviewed a former neighbor who had moved there in the early 2000s:

ME: How would you describe the neighborhood you live in?

PARTICIPANT: My neighborhood is amazing. It's changed quite a bit over the years. It was originally kind of, a little bit more edgy and umm, you weren't able to walk around at night as much as you can now. It's kind of transitioned and gentrified, so it's quite wonderful. Lots of restaurants to walk to ... I still



FIGURE 7.12 Traditional stores in Los Angeles

have some friends in the neighborhood, but a lot of people have been priced out. I have cheap rent, so it's a little bit different, so most of my friends live, most of the artists live kind of out from this area.

As someone who had moved into the neighborhood as it was beginning to become gentrified, the participant offers a common framing of gentrification from those who have not lived in the area their whole lives. From this person's perspective, gentrification involves both the pros and cons in that their neighborhood feels safer (for whom?), and there are more places to shop and eat at. However, they also point out that it is no longer affordable for their friends. How many people who have lived in their urban neighborhoods for a long time would find this account accurate in describing the changes they have also seen?

Los Angeles has never been "La La Land" to me. The Los Angeles I have known for over 30 years is a far different place than is usually depicted in Hollywood movies and TV shows. It is a city where over 20% of the city's population lives below the poverty line. It ranks first in the US in its homeless population. There are areas in this city that if you did not know it was Los Angeles, you might have guessed it was a typical post-industrial Rust Belt state. For many tourists who visit the city, it is a whirlwind of places whizzing by in the bubble of one's car or tour bus on the freeway and the boulevards with pit stops at the famed shopping malls and tourist attractions. But beyond this, if one just takes a walk along the streets in many neighborhoods, it should become quickly apparent if you are actually 'seeing,' that this city is now approaching a 'Third World' one in which the obscene disparities of wealth have manifested in countless homeless encampments everywhere with abandoned emptied buildings waiting to be bought by international capital. So much for "La La Land" (see Figures 7.13 and 7.14).

The living past (and present) of Boston

I moved to Boston in the late summer of 2016 after having lived in Sydney, Australia for a year and Hong Kong before that for two years. I had only been to the city once before, over 30 years earlier and remembered the only impression it left on me at that time. Being from New York City, I was surprised to see that there seemed to be only two skyscrapers at the time – The Prudential Tower (749 feet/228 meters high) and what was then called the John Hancock Tower (790 feet/240 meters high). The city's skyline, compared with New York and Hong Kong, looked more like a large town rather than a major city. Although it may be unfair to compare Boston with those two metropolises due to its much smaller population size – less than 700,000, which is one-tenth the size of both New York and Hong Kong – the locals themselves view Boston as being just as cosmopolitan as their perceived rival, New York, which many Bostonians seem to be obsessed with. Yet, when you talk to the New Yorkers I know, they hardly ever think about this city.



FIGURE 7.13 Echo Park Lake, Los Angeles



FIGURE 7.14 Sign near City Hall, Los Angeles

However, when I was 16 years old, I certainly thought about Boston because during the Boston busing crisis in 1976 (discussed in Chapter 4), the assault of Ted Landsmark, a Black lawyer and civil rights activist made the front page of major newspapers in the US including the *New York Times*. I was shocked when I saw the Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph by Stanley Forman, “The Soiling of Old Glory,” in which it captures the moment a White teenager, Joseph Rakes, attempting to hit Landsmark with a flagpole bearing the US flag – known as ‘Old Glory.’ Rakes was taking part in the anti-busing protests that were prevalent in Boston at the time. Landsmark happened to be walking past the protest when Rakes saw him and swung his flagpole at him. The photo confirmed what many believed to be true about Boston – its ongoing legacy of racism despite its claim as a progressive city. In a 2017 report on racism, the *Boston Globe* conducted a national survey among Black Americans on which city they felt was the most unwelcoming to them. Boston was ranked as the most racist city with 54% of those polled (Johnson, 2017).

In the past year since the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, in addition to the daily protests over the continuing police and racist killings of Black lives, there have been numerous demonstrations against certain historical monuments and statues, with some being defaced and decapitated. Within the sprawling landscapes of major cities in the US, urban spaces that are ever increasingly commodified and ‘White-washed’ of histories that do not fit the dominant narratives of White colonialist legacies bringing ‘civilization’ to the natives may appear to tourists and casual passersby to be uniformly hegemonic and coherent. In Boston’s North End (a predominantly Italian American neighborhood), the statue of Christopher Columbus was beheaded and the city has removed it as of June 2020 pending a decision whether to restore or permanently get rid of it. It was reported in the news that some in the Italian American community have insisted it be repaired and remounted because they view Columbus as a symbol of the contributions they have made to the US in the past 140 years. However, this raises a question – why would some choose or promote Columbus as representative of the Italian American communities not only in Boston but also in other cities such as New York? He did not serve Italy in his conquests because Italy was not a nation at the time; he was employed by the Spanish Empire. In addition, he committed genocide, rape, and plunder of the Indigenous peoples inhabiting islands off the coast of the continent. To commemorate the contributions of Italian immigrants in helping to build the cities to which they immigrated, why not then have statues of workers, or at least some well-known Italian Americans such as Fiorello La Guardia, a Mayor of New York City who revitalized the city during the Great Depression? So it does seem that

even when he is not wealthy the city dweller reaps the benefits of past glories and enjoys a considerable latitude of initiative, the make-believe existence of his environment is less fictitious and unsatisfactory than that of his suburban or new-town counterpart; it is enlivened by monuments ... forming part of his everyday experience.

(Lefebvre, 1984, p. 123)

However, due to the colonizing and genocidal legacy of people like Columbus and others like him, “the monument is essentially repressive ... Any space that is organized around the monument is colonized and oppressed” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 21). Following the protests against the police killings of innocent Black lives, and the beheading of the Columbus statue in the North End, Boston, in June 2020, the statue of John Endecott (see Figure 7.15), considered as one of “Founding Fathers” of New England and longtime governor of the area that became Massachusetts, was spray-painted with the following hash-tag inscription, #LandBack. Endecott had waged wars with the Indigenous peoples including the Pequot community which was completely annihilated despite they had been relatively peaceful with the colonizers who were taking over their lands and destroying their way of life. There were calls for the city and state government to remove this statue, but in the end they only removed the spray-painted demand. What had been the new linguistic landscape of this protest was turned back to the past.



FIGURE 7.15 Graffiti on statue of John Endecott

The social semiotics of gender, class, and race

I took the photo shown in Figure 7.16 in the Terminal 2 building at Logan International Airport, Boston in November 2019. I was walking to my gate when I came upon these two images. My first reaction was literally, ‘what the fuck?!,’ because the two representations seem to be out of the past, as in 50 or 60 years past. The images are extremely retrogressive in an age of gendered-neutral restrooms that are now in many public spaces. The archaic portrayals of gendered stereotypes are apparent in the figure on the left in which the person is wearing what seems to be a high quality ‘fashionable’ dress, high heels, and a hairstyle that was popular in the 1950s to the 1970s in the US. The person on the right appears to be wearing a suit. Both are walking in a particular manner suggesting a sense of their command of space and propriety. Embedded within these gendered images are the enacted identities of social class, as indexed in their apparel and physical movements. And both images seem to portray these people as White, judging by their hairstyles and stances.

The living past is not necessarily confined to historical statues and monuments of past presidents, conquerors, and traitors (aka, ‘rebels’ in the US context). These images attempt to resurrect socially constructed and accepted (by some) norms of gender, race, and class that were prevalent before the feminist and LGBTQ movements began to overturn them. So why now? Were they placed there in a



FIGURE 7.16 Terminal 2, Logan International Airport, Boston

prominent space at an international terminal to provoke conversation about our past? Was it intended to be a parody of gender stereotypes? Or was it aimed to trigger reactions among those who are called ‘snowflakes’ – progressive people who are easily upset by ‘political incorrectness’ as the right wing frames it? When I posted this on my social media page, one friend commented that they do not fit either representational description, so if they were there, they would urinate in the drinking fountain between the two figures. Thus, this is another illustration of the socio-spatial dialectic (Soja, 1989) in which we become estranged from particular spaces of practice.

Subversive linguistic landscapes?

Despite the gentrification of diverse, multilingual neighborhoods in cities, there continues to be spaces, albeit on smaller scales, in which alternative narratives are claimed and featured, dissent is voiced, and critiques of everyday life are creatively framed, as we have seen with the graffiti in Camden Town, London. These spaces naming and challenging the various dimensions of capitalist-run societies are not limited to only words and images on buildings, but also on sidewalks, bridges, lampposts and walls. Now one might expect that these signs and art containing subversive messages would be ‘allowed’ to exist in urban spaces that are not on full display and thus not visible to everyone (e.g., alleyways, inner courtyards, abandoned buildings on less-frequented streets). Yet there at times these messages appear in urban spaces that are in full view to the public because of the centrality of these spaces.

There were several murals (see Figures 7.17 and 7.18) prominently displayed in Pershing Square, a small public park in downtown Los Angeles. I took these photos in late December 2019 and given the historical context in which Trump had been in office for almost 3 years at that point, perhaps these displays were both a reference to his administration’s policies benefiting the 1% and the system itself which it has always done. The first mural is a dialogical echo of the famous quote that has been attributed to the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who said during Reign of Terror period of the French Revolution, “when the people shall have no more to eat, they will eat the rich.”

The second mural below refers to the famous photograph taken in 1937 by Margaret Bourke-White that featured Black Americans who had suffered from a flood in Kentucky and were lining up outside a relief agency under the banner referenced in the mural: “World’s highest standard of living: There’s no way like the American way.” In this contextual signage, the words “there’s no way like” is crossed out. The message is quite clear with the homeless person who is depicted holding a sign right under “the American way.” Both these murals were displayed on a wall in the east side of the park. I have not been able to find out who authorized the murals as it seemed clear, given their prominence alongside several other murals that seemed to be by the same artist, that this was not graffiti in the sense of being transgressive (i.e., illegal), but rather sanctioned or given approval by the local government as a form of public art that voices dissent.

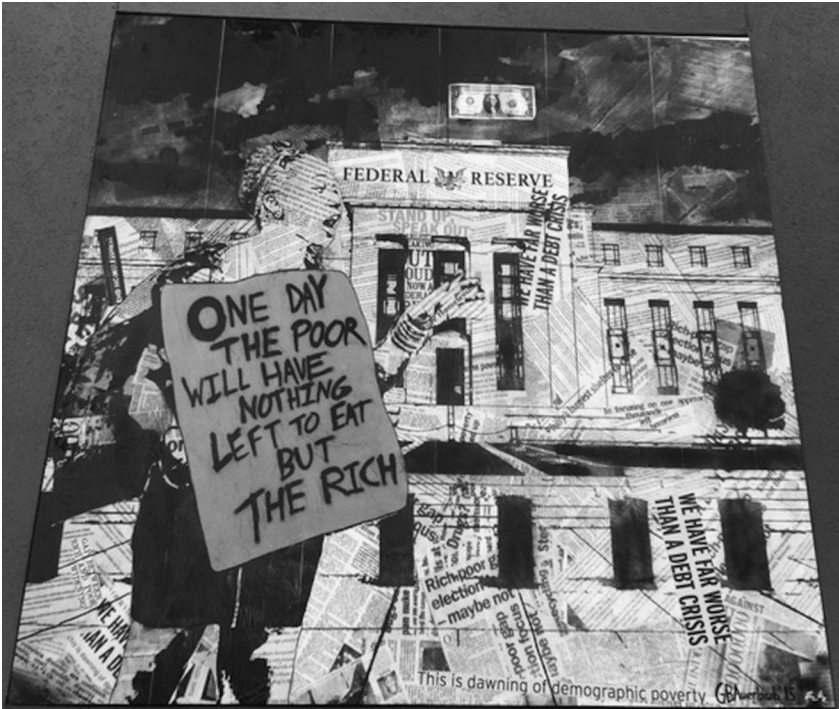


FIGURE 7.17 Mural 1, Pershing Square, downtown Los Angeles

So one obvious question is: why would the local city government allow these murals be on display with their critiques of capitalist society? Would it be because of the city political leaders who are in support of advocating for a more just world? Was it to prompt discussions and debates among the public on how our economy and society should be structured and governed? Or perhaps, to take a 'cynical' view, was it merely to allow dissenting voices to blow off steam in a safe space such as this? Is it an either/or question though? In another urban context, the graffiti shown in Figure 7.19 is on a prominent public space in that it was viewable to all the passengers who ride on the Orange Line subway in Boston. This wall is before the stop at Jamaica Plain. When I noticed it the first time, I was quite surprised and pleased that someone was quoting the last line from *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels in a graffiti sign. I got off at the next stop and took the subway train back the other way so I could take a photo of it. Several weeks later, it was still there. Why hadn't the local officials had someone remove this subversive message, given the long anti-communist rhetoric in the US going back to the Cold War era (and of course before that as well)? To reiterate the question, was it because it was in a so-called 'safe' space in that it was on a decrepit-looking wall which is part of the disintegrating public transportation system that



FIGURE 7.18 Mural 2, Pershing Square, downtown Los Angeles

very few affluent people take on this particular subway line? And was it deemed to be allowed because it was not featured in a prominent central area of the city that is the domain of high finance and other corporate main offices?

I ask these questions because the last featured photo (Figure 7.20) also shows the dialogic reference to the attributed Rousseau saying on a similar dilapidated wall along the train tracks of the Heathrow Express traveling from Heathrow Airport to Paddington Station in central London. I first saw this sign in October 2018 and a year later when I returned to London, it was still there. The local government had obviously left it there even though the message was clear.

Is this another example of a selected urban space functioning as a safety valve for opposition to the ruling elite? But in doing so, what would be the ways in which people who have not seriously thought or considered these issues addressed in the aforementioned murals and graffiti be stirred by these messages into thinking and rethinking how our economies and societies work, and for whom? More research needs to be done on this, particularly interviewing people who view these signs and their interpretations of it.

Conclusion

The linguistic landscape of public street art is important in this age of people constantly and almost only looking only at their mobile phones while walking busy city streets. Many walk past the richly detailed human-created landscapes of the city without noticing how these social semiotic environments aim and help to connect us to the city and at times, one another. The semiotic spaces of signage, graffiti, and public street art are important for this very reason – by compelling us to look at something out of the ordinary; for example, art displayed on public utility boxes, on a bridge underpass or tunnel, alleyways – we may stop, look, and perhaps engage with not only the art but also with one another in commenting on what we both see. In this manner, the city truly becomes alive as it is meant to be – a communal and dialogic space for all. As Jane Jacobs (1961) wrote in her landmark book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, “cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody” (p. 238). The murals and graffiti signs featured in this chapter is the first step toward all of us creating a city in which everyone will be a part of.

8

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

As I write this in late May 2021, it has been just over a year since the police killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd and the murder of Ahmaud Arbery that have added to the countless Black lives killed by police and Whites for decades and centuries in the US. In addition, in the past year there have been over 6,600 reported cases of hate crimes against Asian Americans fueled by the discursive rhetoric of Trump’s “Kung Flu” and the “Chinese virus” in stoking racist violence in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Chun, 2020). In the immediate wake of the deaths of Floyd and Taylor, there were daily protests organized by Black Lives Matter activists across the US. At the protests I have joined in Boston, I have witnessed my fellow protesters comprising all ages and genders, Black, White, Latinx, and Asian, kneeling and marching together in solidarity against the police and what they represent – the hammer of structural racism and a tool of the 1%. At one protest, I was moved to tears because I viewed the assembled people around me embodying and enacting a better world that those of us on the Left have imagined and been fighting for since the 1800s in the US and around this planet – a society without the enabling social divisions of racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia that have been integral for capitalism to function. At the numerous protests I have participated in for over 30 years, I have often heard the chant, “the people united shall never be divided!” But many people have continued to be divided throughout history, and thus, to state the obvious, these ongoing divisions have enabled those who rule over us to continue appropriating and plundering our labor, time, space, health, identities, and lives. How can we overcome these divisions once and for all to unite against the 1% in overthrowing capitalism? As Adamovsky asked:

Capitalism is an unjust social organization that causes enormous suffering for the majority of people: it produces poverty and exploitation, requires humans to be passive and limits their abilities, creates many forms of discrimination,

feeds violence and fear, violates basic rights and pollutes the planet. Anti-capitalists have pointed this out for many years. Then, why don't we change things?

(Adamovsky, 2011, p. 36)

So what will it take to finally overcome the socially constructed and systemically implemented divides among us? In the context of US society, how can those of us Americans who profess to love our country – and whose *'our'* has always been defined as belonging to the racially, socially and historically constructed 'Whites' in US history – finally unite across these destructive divisions to co-construct and reconstruct a society that is free from all oppressions and exploitations? In his book, *Gramsci's political thought*, Coutinho (2013) summarized Gramsci's main argument thusly:

We must remember that, for Gramsci, the task of philosophy of praxis as a superior, coherent and organic ideology is to criticise conceptions of the world that are still confused, contradictory, marked by 'egotistic-passional,' corporatist and individualist elements; to foster an 'intellectual and moral reform' that spreads among the masses a new, radically secular and immanentist high culture, one that contributes to the creation of a new collective subject from the proletariat – thus converted into the national hegemonic class – that promotes and furthers the radical transformation of society. If ideology is decisive for the practical orientation of men [*sic*], then ideological critique – cultural battle – becomes a decisive moment in the struggle for bringing together a new 'collective national-popular will' in the struggle to overcome an old relation of hegemony and to build a new one.

(Coutinho, 2013, p. 72)

As researchers, educators, and activists, how can we engage with "the difficult process of *cultivating subjects* (ourselves and others) who can desire and inhabit non-capitalist economic spaces" (Gibson-Graham, 1996, p. x)? That is, "how do we become not merely opponents of capitalism, but subjects who can desire and create 'non-capitalism'?" (ibid., p. xvii). Part of the problem is the prevalence of certain discourses of capitalism that have held sway over us in schools, communal spaces, media, and our mediated embedded sense of it being the 'pinnacle' of humanity:

The world of capitalist civilization is a polarized and polarizing world. How then has it survived this long? This is where the public debate over the balance sheet has come in. What has preserved the system thus far has been the hope of incremental reformism, the eventual bridging of the gap. The debate has itself fed this hope doubly. The assertion of the virtues has served to persuade many of the long-term benefits of the system. And the discussion of the vices has made many feel that they could thereby organize effectively to bring about political transformation. Capitalist civilization has not only been a successful civilization. It has above all been a seductive one. It has seduced even its victims and its opponents.

(Wallerstein, 2011, p. 137)

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the US and the ensuing wars waged by the US government in the Middle East, the author and filmmaker Michael Moore published a book in 2003 entitled *Dude, Where's My Country?*. In it, he seemingly alludes to Gramsci's (1971) notion of common and good sense when he argues that the term 'liberal' has gained too many negative connotations in the US context (e.g., raising taxes, excessive government spending), and thus proposes an alternative term: "common sense majority" (Moore, 2003, p. 180). Moore asked:

Is it *common sense* to have 75 million people go without health insurance for most, if not all, of the past two years? Of course it isn't; that makes *no sense*. Is it *common sense* to let just five companies own all the major sources of information and news in America? Absolutely not. Is it *common sense* to see that every person has a job and makes a livable wage? You bet – that makes *good sense*. What decent person wouldn't be for these things? We need to set the common-sense agenda and start calling the shots.

(Moore, 2003, p. 180)

Moore, in the following pages, gives advice to the reader on "how to talk to your conservative brother-in-law." Among other things, he counsels that one should "first, and foremost, assure your conservative friends or relatives that you do not want their money" (ibid., p. 187); that "every political argument you make must be about *them* and for *them*" (ibid., p. 187, emphasis in the original); "tell them what you *like* about conservatives" (ibid., p. 188), such as how dependable they are, they can fix things, and they are "organized, on-time, efficient, well-groomed, and consistent" (ibid., p. 189); and "admit that the left has made mistakes" (ibid., p. 189). This engagement through discussing politics with people who hold opposing or differing views is not a new concept. As Coutinho (2013), in discussing Gramsci's political ideas and strategies, noted that "the battle of ideas – dialogue and cultural confrontation – assumes a decisive importance in the fight for hegemony" (p. 45). And yet, it seems that the Left has failed to follow Gramsci's strategies and suggestions, whereas people like none other than Margaret Thatcher were politically brilliant in doing so, as Stuart Hall pointed out:

Thatcherism is hegemonic because it is able to address the identities of a variety of people who have never been in the same political camp before. It does that in a very complex way by always attending, through its political, social, moral and economic program, to the cultural and ideological questions. Always mobilizing that which it represents as already there. It says 'the majority of English people.' 'The majority of the British people' ... It does not have yet a majority. It is summoning up the majority and telling you that it is already a majority. And in the majority are a variety of people, people from different classes, people from different genders, people from different occupations, people from different parts of the country. That's what the Thatcherite majority is. Next time round it will not be exactly the same. It cannot

reproduce itself. It is not the essential class subject. That is not the politics of Thatcherism. Indeed, far from it; my own view is that no-one understands Gramsci better than Mrs. Thatcher. She has never read it but she does know that politics nowadays is conducted through the articulation of different instances. She knows that politics is conducted on different fronts. You have to have a variety of programs, that you are always trying to build a collective will because no socio-economic position will simply give it to you. Those things she knows. We read Gramsci till the cows come home and we do not know how to do it.

(Hall, 1997, pp. 66–67)

Perhaps why many intellectuals on the Left (or at least those who self-identify as ‘leftists’) do not know to apply Gramscian strategies is because they have either forgotten their own conditions of work histories and experiences, or have been removed from the daily grind of worrying about their paycheck (at least for tenured academics)? Engels (1845) pointed out that a knowledge of “proletarian conditions is absolutely necessary to provide solid ground for socialist theories, on the one hand, and for judgements about their right to exist, on the other; and to put an end to all sentimental dreams and fancies pro and con” (p. 34).

Michael Moore’s advice on how to talk to conservatives is interesting for its several assumptions, or rather, confusions. The first seeming confusion – although this discourse is quite common in the US – Moore makes is that he conflates liberalism with “the left.” This is in the context of US politics in which policies attempting to alleviate the worst aspects of economic inequalities by advocating a raise in the federal minimum wage (which has been the same since 2009 – US \$7.25 an hour), promoting universal health care, and raising taxes on the 1% are deemed by those on the Right as ‘socialist.’ This misattribution of ‘socialism’ in describing these policies and those who support it is quite common and by design. The efforts to fix capitalism’s systemic excesses – periodic economic crises resulting in depressions which lead to widespread unemployment and resulting increase of poverty – was originally proposed by the British economist John Maynard Keynes in the 1930s during the depths of the Great Depression affecting many countries including where it originated, the US, and then spreading to the UK and Europe. His book, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, published in 1936, advocated direct government intervention in remedying the economic depression by increasing deficit government spending in funding state-sponsored programs to hire workers in building infrastructure for the public good. In the ensuing years of the social welfare state, this policy was enough to sustain the economic growth for the majority of the population. However, with the inevitable downturn in the US and UK economies in the 1970s, this gave rise to neoliberalism embodied in the Reagan and Thatcher discursive framings of Keynesian policies as ‘socialist.’ Yet Keynes was no socialist and neither was any of the politicians who implemented his policies. As Resnick and Wolff (2013) astutely observed:

Most current leftist solutions to capitalism's crisis – including many that are labeled Marxist – are actually Keynesian combinations of reforms, regulations, and state deficits. Having little to do with moving beyond capitalism, their solutions are little different today from what they were in the 1930s, establishing an economy capable of providing its workers with full employment at good real wages and benefits. Laudable aims, but they hardly amount to Marx's legacy. The overriding purpose of Marxism today and yesterday remains much the same: not one of constraining or expanding investments and jobs but rather one of eliminating class exploitation from our lives. To say the same thing in much simpler terms, Keynes is no Marxist.

(Resnick & Wolff, 2013, p. 155)

Thus, liberals ain't no leftists.

The second assumption Moore makes is his characterization of conservatives as “organized, on-time, efficient, well-groomed, and consistent.” This inadvertently plays into the neoliberal discourse that in order to become an entrepreneur of oneself in the individuating of society, one must be efficient in multi-tasking, producing ever more “outputs” (in academic parlance now appropriated from corporate-speak), organized, and of course, on time for whatever it is – your job, appointments, and presumably even meeting up with friends and family members. So people on the ‘left’ (pun intended) are disorganized, habitually late, incompetent, inconsistent, not dependable, and haven't had a haircut in years? This seems to evoke the proverbial image of the hippie from the 1960s – the layabout sponging off their parents while castigating the government and society.

The first ‘trigger’ topic that seems to ignite conservatives' fears and anxieties is the notion that liberals love to tax people – seemingly though not the 1%, but rather the ‘ordinary’ working person who, like most of us, live from paycheck to paycheck – or now in our digital age, direct deposit to direct deposit. Moore implicitly draws on the neoliberal discourse (which has become hegemonic since the 1980s due to politicians such as Thatcher and Reagan) that liberals want to bleed working people dry with onerous and in some people's opinion, superfluous taxes. To counter this notion, he counsels the reader who identifies as liberal that one should “first, and foremost, assure your conservative friends or relatives that you do not want their money” (p. 187). This ideologically instilled fear of higher taxes advocated by a liberal social-welfare state has led to many working Americans to embrace the tax cuts espoused and implemented by the Right. In the past years they may have received a modest amount of tax refunds on their income (usually no more than a few hundred US dollars); however, what has gone up are their health insurance annual premiums since the US, as most people know, does not have universal health care for people under 65 years of age. These insurance premium increases have effectively negated any tax refund so that Americans are paying more out of their pocket than in years past. Moreover, the tax cuts that have been far higher relative to the 1%'s income in the past 35 years or so have led to crumbling infrastructure of highways and public transportation, defunding public education, and the closing of public libraries.

So, instead of repeating and perpetuating the neoliberal trope that the government “is not the solution, it is the problem” (in Ronald Reagan’s famous campaign speech) because it only wants your (tax) money, how about instead re-framing it that it is not the government that wants your money, but the system known as ‘capitalism’? Ask your conservative family member or friend if they feel they are getting “a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work”? If they say yes, then ask, “OK, do you know how much the CEO (chief executive officer) of your company makes?” If they don’t know, tell them the average salary of a CEO in the US is now over 300 times the ‘rank-and-file’ worker’s salary. Now ask, “Do you think that CEO works 300 times harder than you to deserve that kind of salary? Is he (and it is almost always a ‘he’) worth that much more to the company? He’s worth more than 300 of you and your co-workers?”

This could open up a dialogue on how people view their workplace. If you ask Americans if they believe in democracy, I believe most would say “of course!” Perhaps you could then ask how they define ‘democracy’:

OK, then what is democracy to you? Just showing up every year or two to vote at a polling place only to have many elected officials disregard the majority of our voices? Or is it something more? How about your workplace? Is democracy happening there, where every worker has a democratic say and vote in how much everyone including your boss should get paid? Collectively deciding on how much bonus workers would share from the profits brought in from their surplus labor value production? Does everyone have a vote on who gets promoted or how much time off for workers during the year? In connection with your workplace, could your community collectively and democratically decide what is best for everyone; for example, in terms of the environmental factors of the local workplace, how its pollutants might affect your community? If all this sounds good to you, then you believe in a democracy at the workplace.

Mouffe (2019) maintained that “democratic values still play a significant role in the political imaginary of our societies. Furthermore, their critical meaning can be reactivated to subvert the hegemonic order and create a different one” (p. 40). Would this attempt to redefine democracy in the context of the workplace be able to subvert the hegemonic order of capitalist society? Forty years earlier, Mouffe (1979), drawing on Gramsci’s philosophy, argued, “ideological struggle in fact consists of a process of *disarticulation-rearticulation* of given ideological elements in a struggle between two hegemonic principles to appropriate these elements; it does not consist of the confrontation of two already elaborated, closed worldviews” (pp. 193–194).

However, in any effort to disarticulate and rearticulate what democracy means and should be, should those of us on the Left “try to provide a different vocabulary in order to orientate those demands towards more egalitarian objectives” (Mouffe, 2019, p. 22)? What discourse and/or word would we use instead of ‘democracy’? If your conservative friend and/or family member agreed with the aforementioned suggestions of democratizing their workplace, would it then be feasible to say, “Cool, and by

the way, this idea of a democracy at the workplace actually has a name – it’s called socialism. Yeah, that’s right, socialism. Forget about what you heard about it from the media or your high school textbooks. Socialism literally means the ‘social’ – that is, you and me working together to make our world work for you and me and not the 1%.” Is it possible to reframe the word ‘socialism’ so that it becomes a new meaning, or rather the original intended meaning by Marx and many others? Hall (2016) observed that “often, ideological struggle actually consists of attempting to win some new set of meanings for an existing term or category, of disarticulating it from its place in a signifying structure” (p. 152). Scholars such as Wolff (2012) have attempted to disarticulate ‘socialism’ from its Cold War ideologically signifier (e.g., equating it with the authoritarian state of the USSR and PRC) by reframing it as democracy at the workplace. The importance of how we find ways in which to disarticulate and rearticulate hegemonic and counterhegemonic discourses was illuminated by Ursula Le Guin in her speech at the 2014 National Book Awards:

We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings. Resistance and change often begin in art, and very often in our art, the art of words.

(Cited in Martinelli, 2018)

In the mid-1930s, the writer George Orwell researched, worked, and lived with several working-class communities in the industrial north of England for his book project, *The Road to Wigan Pier*. One of his many poignant observations stemming from his sociological work is that “the ordinary decent person, who is in sympathy with the *essential* aims of Socialism, is given the impression that there is no room for his kind in any Socialist party that means business” (Orwell, 1937, p. 182, emphasis in the original). Orwell attributed this to the at-times condescending attitude of some liberals and leftists towards those who disagree with them. He wrote, “possessing a technique which seems to explain everything, [Marxists] do not often bother to discover what is going on inside other people’s heads” (ibid., pp. 186–187). And perhaps not much has changed since then because 60 years after *The Road to Wigan Pier* was published, Stuart Hall said pretty much the same thing:

It is critical intellectuals, locked into their own kind of cultural elitism, who have often succumbed to the temptation to give an account of the Other – the masses – in terms of false consciousness or the banalization of mass culture, etc. ... But the politics which follows from saying that the masses are nothing but a passive reflection of the historical, economical and political forces which have gone into the construction of modern industrial mass society, seems to me historically incorrect and politically inadequate. I would say quite the opposite. The silent majorities do think; if they do not speak, it may be because we have taken their speech away from them, deprived them of the means of enunciation, not because they have nothing to say.

(Hall, 1996, p. 140)

On this, I would concur with Michael Moore's (2003) advice that one should "admit that the left has made mistakes" (p. 189).

I also agree with Moore's important piece of advice to liberals: that in making any political arguments to conservatives, in order to appeal to them you must frame it as being "about *them* and for *them*" (ibid., p. 187). However, this raises the question of who exactly is "them"? This is where the main confusion lies, for not only those who identify as liberals, but also those who identify as leftists or socialists. A good part of this confusion around who is "them" is due to the problematic notion of who are the 'middle class' and who are the 'working class,' as I discussed in Chapter 3. The "them," or rather, the "us" – whether one identifies as 'conservative,' 'liberal,' or 'leftist' – is the overwhelming majority of people who need to sell their labor on a daily basis to pay their bills for food, housing, and all the other reproductions of everyday life in order to live. But this notion of 'middle' class has divided those working people who identify as such from their fellow workers who have been 'working' class their whole lives. Thus, let us move beyond this division of 'middle' and 'working' class because as Orwell (1937) put it so brilliantly, "it directs attention away from the central fact that poverty is poverty, whether the tool you work with is a pick-axe or a fountain pen" (p. 229).

In conclusion, I will share the following encounter I had with someone whom Gramsci (1971) called an "organic intellectual." When I was in Baltimore for the TESOL Convention in April 2016, I was having a drink at my hotel bar one night. A guy takes a seat next to me and asks if I minded if he asked the bartender to change the television channel to a college basketball game. I said sure, and then we got to talking about sports and what we were doing in Baltimore. He's a life-long resident of upstate New York and was in town for a manufacturing equipment convention. I told him what I do. After the introductions and the small talk about sports, I asked him a question that I think is important in any democratic society: "So, (his name), are you interested in politics at all?" He replied, "Oh sheesh, ahh, nah." But of course, like all people, he was. He went on, "You know, Christian, I'm a small business guy but nobody gives a damn about me ... I've been a Republican as far as I can remember, but I hate Trump, Cruz is an asshole, and Rubio is an idiot. I don't like Hillary (Clinton) either. Sanders, I don't know. My son likes him a whole lot and is trying to get me to vote for him. I dunno." I replied, "You're right, none of these politicians gives a damn about you, with maybe Bernie as an exception, but we'll have to see about that." We talked some more about how the infrastructure of our country was falling apart, the roads, the highways, the airports and so on, and how hard it was to stay afloat these days. Toward the end of the evening, he turned to me and said, "You know, I'm Irish (he meant Irish American but some people in the US identify their ancestral background only) but my grandson is half-Vietnamese, how about that?" I responded, "Well, my godfather was Irish American, so there you go." He replied, "Isn't that what's great about our country?" I said, "Yes it is!" This encounter reminded why I continue the good fight for people like him and all the others who do give a damn in making society work for all. As Grace Lee Boggs (2012) wrote, "we are the leaders we are looking for" (p. 178).

REFERENCES

- Adamovsky, E. (2011). *Anti-capitalism: The new generation of emancipatory movements*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Agha, A. (2007). *Language and social relations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Ahmed, S. (2014). *The cultural politics of emotion* (2nd ed.). Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.
- Albert, T. (Prod.), Ramis, H. (Prod.), & Ramis, H. (Dir.). (1993). *Groundhog Day* [motion picture]. Los Angeles, CA: Columbia Pictures.
- Alexander, M. (2012). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.
- Alim, H. S., Rickford, J. R., & Ball, A. F. (Eds.). (2016). *Raciolinguistics: How language shapes our ideas about race*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Allen, T. W. (1994). *The invention of the White race: Volume 1, Racial oppression and social control*. London: Verso.
- Allen, T. W. (1997). *The invention of the White race: Volume 2, The origin of racial oppression in Anglo-America*. London: Verso.
- Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy and other essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Althusser, L. (1977). *For Marx*. London: Verso.
- Amariglio, J., & Callari, A. (1989). Marxian value theory and the problem of the subject: The role of commodity fetishism. *Rethinking Marxism*, 2(3), 31–60.
- Amariglio, J., & Ruccio, D. F. (1999). The transgressive knowledge of “ersatz” economics. In R. F. Garnett (Ed.), *What do economists know? New economics of knowledge* (pp. 19–36). London: Routledge.
- American Association of University Professors. (n.d.). Background facts on contingent faculty. Retrieved from www.aaup.org/issues/contingency/background-facts.
- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. New York: Verso.
- Anderson, P. (1976). The antinomies of Antonio Gramsci. *New Left Review*, I(100), 5–78.

- Antaki, C., Billig, M., Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (2002). Discourse analysis means doing analysis: A critique of six analytic shortcomings. Retrieved from <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/daol/articles/open/2002/002/antaki2002002-paper.html>.
- Anthias, F. (2005). Social stratification and social inequality: Models of intersectionality and identity. In F. Devine, M. Savage, J. Scott, & R. Crompton, (Eds.), *Rethinking class: Culture, identities and lifestyles* (pp. 24–45). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anthias, F. (2013). Intersectional what? Social divisions, intersectionality and levels of analysis. *Ethnicities*, 13(1), 3–19.
- Arnaut, K., Blommaert, J., Rampton, B., & Spotti, M. (2016). Introduction: Superdiversity and sociolinguistics. In K. Arnaut, J. Blommaert, B. Rampton, & M. Spotti (Eds.), *Language and superdiversity* (pp. 1–17). New York: Routledge.
- Arnesen, E. (2001). Whiteness and the historians' imagination. *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 60, 3–32.
- Atkinson, W. (2015). *Class*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Rabelais and his world*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Baldwin, J. (1972). *No name in the street*. New York: Vintage.
- Baldwin, J. (2017). The Negro and the American promise. In R. Peck (Ed.), *I am not your Negro: From texts by James Baldwin*. New York: Vintage International.
- Balibar, E. (1991). The nation form: History and ideology. In E. Balibar & I. Wallerstein, *Race, nation, class: Ambiguous identities* (pp. 86–106). London: Verso.
- Balibar, E., & Wallerstein, I. (1991). *Race, nation, class: Ambiguous identities*. London: Verso.
- Benjamin, W. (1999). *The arcades project*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Benjamin, W. (2008). *The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility and other writings on media*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bennett, J. (2012). 'And what comes out may be a kind of screeching': The stylisation of *chav*speak in contemporary Britain. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 16(1), 5–27.
- Bennett, J. (2013). Moralising class: A discourse analysis of the mainstream political response to Occupy and the August 2011 British riots. *Discourse & Society*, 24(1), 27–45.
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of seeing*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books.
- Bernstein, B. (1971). *Class, codes and control Vol. 1: Theoretical studies towards a sociology of language*. London: Routledge.
- Billig, M. (2003). Critical discourse analysis and the rhetoric of critique. In G. Weiss & R. Wodak (Eds.), *Critical discourse analysis: Theory and interdisciplinarity* (pp. 35–46). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Blackwood, R., Lanza, E., & Woldemariam, H. (Eds.). (2016). *Negotiating and contesting identities in linguistic landscapes*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Block, D. (2014). *Social class in applied linguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Block, D., & Corona, V. (2014). Exploring class-based intersectionality. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 27(1), 27–42.
- Block, D., & Gray, J. (2016). 'Just go away and do it and you get marks': The degradation of language teaching in neoliberal times. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 37(5), 481–494.
- Block, D., Gray, J., & Holborow, M. (2012). *Neoliberalism and applied linguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Blommaert, J. (2013). *Ethnography, superdiversity and linguistic landscapes: Chronicles of complexity*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

- Blommaert, J. (2017). Superdiversity and the neoliberal conspiracy. Retrieved from <https://alternative-democracy-research.org/2016/03/03/superdiversity-and-the-neoliberal-conspiracy/>.
- Blommaert, J., & Maly, I. (2016). Ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis and social change: A case study. In K. Arnaut, J. Blommaert, B. Rampton, & M. Spotti (Eds.), *Language and superdiversity* (pp. 197–217). New York: Routledge.
- Blommaert, J., & Rampton, B. (2016). Language and superdiversity. In K. Arnaut, J. Blommaert, B. Rampton, & M. Spotti (Eds.), *Language and superdiversity* (pp. 21–48). New York: Routledge.
- Boggs, C. (1984). *The two revolutions: Gramsci and the dilemmas of Western Marxism*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Boggs, G. L. (2012). *The next American Revolution: Sustainable activism for the twenty-first century*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bondi, L. (1993). Locating identity politics. In M. Keith & S. Pile (Eds.), *Place and the politics of identity* (pp. 84–101). London: Routledge.
- Bonnett, A. (1998). How the British working class became White: The symbolic (re)formation of racialized capitalism. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 11(3), 316–340.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1987). What makes a social class? On the theoretical and practical existence of groups. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 32, 1–17.
- Bourdieu, P., & Eagleton, T. (1994). Doxa and common life: An interview. In S. Žižek (Ed.), *Mapping ideology* (pp. 265–277). London: Verso.
- Brenner, N., Peck, J., & Theodore, N. (2010). After neoliberalization? *Globalizations*, 7(3), 327–345.
- Bucholtz, M. (2016). On being called out of one's name: Indexical bleaching as a technique of deracialization. In H. S. Alim, J. R. Rickford, & A. F. Ball (Eds.), *Raciolinguistics: How language shapes our ideas about race* (pp. 273–289). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bucholtz, M. (2018). White affects and sociolinguistic activism. *Language in Society*, 47(3), 350–354.
- Bucholtz, M. (2019). The public life of white affects. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 23(5), 485–504.
- Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2004a). Language and identity. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 369–394). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2004b). Theorizing identity in language and sexuality research. *Language in Society*, 33(4), 469–515.
- Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2005). Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies*, 7(4–5), 585–614.
- Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2008). All of the above: New coalitions in sociocultural linguistics. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 12(4), 401–431.
- Buck, P. D. (2001). *Worked to the bone: Race, class, power and privilege in Kentucky*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Buttigieg, J. A. (1990). Gramsci's method. *boundary 2*, 17(2), 60–81.
- Cameron, D. (2000). Styling the worker: Gender and the commodification of language in the globalized service economy. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 4(3), 323–347.
- Cameron, D. (2005). Language, gender, and sexuality: Current issues and new directions. *Applied Linguistics*, 26(4), 482–502.
- Campbell, A. (2005). *The birth of neoliberalism in the United States: A reorganisation of capitalism*. In A. Saad-Fiho & D. Johnston (Eds.), *Neoliberalism: A critical reader* (pp. 187–198). London: Pluto Press.

- Chang, G. H. (2019). *Ghosts of Gold Mountain: The epic story of the Chinese who built the Transcontinental Railroad*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Chun, C. W. (2009). Contesting neoliberal discourses in EAP: Critical praxis in an IEP classroom. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 8(2), 111–120.
- Chun, C. W. (2013). The ‘neoliberal citizen’: Resemiotizing globalized identities in EAP materials. In J. Gray (Ed.), *Critical perspectives on language teaching materials* (pp. 64–87). Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chun, C. W. (2014a). Mobilities of a linguistic landscape at Los Angeles City Hall Park. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 13(4), 653–674.
- Chun, C. W. (2014b). Reflexivity and critical language education in Occupy L.A. In J. B. Clark & F. Dervin (Eds.), *Reflexivity in language and intercultural education: Rethinking multilingualism and interculturality* (pp. 172–192). London: Routledge.
- Chun, C. W. (2015). *Power and meaning making in an EAP classroom: Engaging with the everyday*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Chun, C. W. (2016). Exploring neoliberal language, discourses and identities. In S. Preece (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Identity* (pp. 558–571). London: Routledge.
- Chun, C. W. (2017). *The discourses of capitalism: Everyday economists and the production of common sense*. London: Routledge.
- Chun, C. W. (2018a). Critical pedagogy and language learning in the age of social media? *Brazilian Journal of Applied Linguistics/Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada*, 18(2), 281–300.
- Chun, C. W. (2018b). Neoliberalism, globalization and critical discourse studies. In J. Flowerdew & J. E. Richardson (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies* (pp. 421–433). London: Routledge.
- Chun, C. W. (2019). Language, discourse, and class: What’s next for sociolinguistics? *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 23(4), 332–345.
- Chun, C. W. (2020). The return of the ‘Yellow Peril’: The fear of getting sick from the Other. *Journal of Language, Culture and Society*, 2(2), 252–259.
- Chun, C. W. (2022). Organic intellectuals or traditional intellectuals – critical discourse for whom? In C. W. Chun (Ed.), *Applied linguistics and politics*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Chun, E. W. (2016). The meaning of *ching-chong*: Language, racism, and response in new media. In H. S. Alim, J. R. Rickford, & A. F. Ball (Eds.), *Raciolinguistics: How language shapes our ideas about race* (pp. 81–96). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Clarke, M., & Morgan, B. (2011). Education and social justice in neoliberal times: Historical and pedagogical perspectives from two postcolonial contexts. In M. R. Hawkins (Ed.), *Social justice language teacher education* (pp. 63–85). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Colás, A. (2005). Neoliberalism, globalisation and international relations. In A. Saad-Fiho & D. Johnston (Eds.), *Neoliberalism: A critical reader* (pp. 70–79). London: Pluto Press.
- Collins, K. (2012). Citizen Bunker: Archie Bunker as working-class icon. In M. K. Booker (Ed.), *Blue collar pop culture: From NASCAR to Jersey Shore, Volume 2: Television and the culture of everyday life* (pp. 34–50). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
- Cotter, W. M., & Valentinsson, M-C. (2018). Bivalent class indexing in the sociolinguistics of specialty coffee talk. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 22(5), 489–515.
- Coupland, N. (Ed.). (2016). *Sociolinguistics: Theoretical debates*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Coutinho, C. N. (2013). *Gramsci’s political thought*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Crul, M. (2016). Super-diversity vs. assimilation: How complex diversity in majority-minority cities challenges the assumptions of assimilation. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42(1), 54–68.

- Curtis, F. (2001). Ivy-covered exploitation: Class, education, and the liberal arts college. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. Resnick, & R. D. Wolff, (Eds.), *Re/presenting class: Essays in post-modern Marxism* (pp. 81–104). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Davis, A. Y. (1981). *Women, race & class*. New York: Random House.
- Davis, M. (1986). *Prisoners of the American dream: Politics and economy in the history of the US working class*. London: Verso.
- Davis, M. (1992). *City of quartz: Excavating the future in Los Angeles*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Davis, M. (1998). *Ecology of fear: Los Angeles and the imagination of disaster*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Day, G. (2001). *Class: a new critical idiom*. London: Routledge.
- Day, G. (2006). *Community and everyday life*. London: Routledge.
- Devine, F. (2005). Middle-class identities in the United States. In F. Devine, M. Savage, J. Scott, & R. Crompton, (Eds.), *Rethinking class: Culture, identities and lifestyles* (pp. 140–162). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Devine, F., & Savage, M. (2005). The cultural turn, sociology and class analysis. In F. Devine, M. Savage, J. Scott, & R. Crompton (Eds.), *Rethinking class: Culture, identities and lifestyles* (pp. 1–23). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Devlin, B. (1969). *The price of my soul*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Dickens, C. (1854/1988). *Hard times*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Dong, J. (2018). Taste, discourse and middle-class identity: An ethnography of Chinese Saabists. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 22(4), 432–453.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1992 [1935]). *Black reconstruction in America: 1860–1880*. New York: Atheneum.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (2018). Socialism and the Negro problem. In P. M. Heideman (Ed.), *Class struggle and the color line: American socialism and the race question 1900–1930* (pp. 118–121). Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Duchêne, A., & Heller, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Language in late capitalism: Pride and profit*. London: Routledge.
- Dussel Peters, E. (2006). The Mexican economy since NAFTA: Socioeconomic integration or disintegration? In D. Plehwe, B. Walpen, & G. Neunhöffer (Eds.), *Neoliberal hegemony: A global critique* (pp. 120–138). London: Routledge.
- Eagleton, T. (1996). *The function of criticism: From The Spectator to post-structuralism*. London: Verso.
- Ebert, T. L., & Zavarzadeh, M. (2008). *Class in culture*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Eckert, P. (1989). *Jocks and burnouts: Social categories and identity in the high school*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.
- Eckert, P. (2000). *Linguistic variation as social practice*. London: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Engels, F. (2009 [1845]). *The condition of the working class in England*. London: Penguin Books.
- Ehrenreich, B. (2001). *Nickel and dimed: On (not) getting by in America*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Fairclough, N. (1992a). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (Ed.). (1992b). *Critical language awareness*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. New York: Longman.
- Fiennes, S. (Prod.), Holly, K. (Prod.), Rosenbaum, M. (Prod.), Wilson, J. (Prod.), & Fiennes, S. (Director). (2012). *The pervert's guide to ideology* [motion picture]. United Kingdom: P Guide Productions.
- Filippini, M. (2017). *Using Gramsci: A new approach*. London: Pluto Press.
- Filippini, M. (2020). On the productive use of hegemony (Laclau, Hall, Chatterjee). In D. Cadeddu (Ed.), *A companion to Antonio Gramsci: Essays on history and theories of history, politics and historiography* (pp. 114–123). Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.

- Fiori, G. (1973). *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a revolutionary*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Firth, A., & Wagner, J. (1997). On discourse, communication, and (some) fundamental concepts in SLA research. *Modern Language Journal*, 81(3), 285–300.
- Flores, N. (2013). The unexamined relationship between neoliberalism and plurilingualism: A cautionary tale. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47(3), 500–520.
- Flowerdew, J., & Richardson, J. E. (Eds.). (2018). *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Fontana, B. (1993). *Hegemony and power: On the relation between Gramsci and Machiavelli*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Foucault, M. (1988). Technologies of the self. In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. H. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16–49). Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*. New York: Picador.
- Fraser, N. (1995). From redistribution to recognition? Dilemmas of justice in a ‘post-socialist’ age. *New Left Review*, 1, 212, 68–93.
- Fraser, N. (2019, April 23). Mass psychology of crisis: For a structural analysis of financialization and against the use of ‘fascism’ as a scare tactic. *Public Seminar*. Retrieved from www.publicseminar.org/2019/04/mass-psychology-of-crisis/.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Gal, S. (1989). Language and political economy. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18, 345–367.
- Gardiner, M. (1992). Bakhtin’s carnival: Utopia as critique. *Utopian Studies*, 3(2), 21–49.
- Gardiner, M. (2000). *Critiques of everyday life*. London: Routledge.
- Gee, A. (2017, September 28). Facing poverty, academics turn to sex work and sleeping in cars. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/sep/28/a-djunct-professors-homeless-sex-work-academia-poverty.
- Gibbons, A. (2018). *City of segregation: One hundred years of struggle for housing in Los Angeles*. London: Verso.
- Gibson, K., & Graham, J. (1992). Rethinking class in industrial geography: Creating a space for an alternative politics of class. *Economic Geography*, 68(2), 109–127.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (1996). *The end of capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2005). Dilemmas of theorizing class. *Rethinking Marxism*, 17(1), 39–43.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K., Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (2000). Introduction: Class in a poststructuralist frame. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick, & R. D. Wolff, (Eds.), *Class and its others* (pp. 1–22). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K., Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (2001). Toward a poststructuralist political economy (pp. 1–22). In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick, & R. D. Wolff, (Eds.), *Re/presenting class: Essays in postmodern Marxism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J.K., & Ruccio, D. (2001). “After” development: Re-imagining economy and class. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick, & R. D. Wolff, (Eds.), *Re/presenting class: Essays in postmodern Marxism* (pp. 158–181). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Gill, K. E. (2015, January 30). Will Rogers on “trickle up” economics. *WiredPen*. Retrieved from <https://wiredpen.com/2015/01/30/will-rogers-trickle-economics/>.
- Goldin, F., Smith, D., & Smith, M. S. (Eds.). (2014). *Imagine living in a socialist USA*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Goffman, E. (1951). Symbols of class status. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 2(4), 294–304.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

- Goffman, E. (1981). *Forms of talk*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goodwin, C. (1994). Professional vision. *American Anthropologist*, 96(3), 606–633.
- Goonewardena, K. (2005). The urban sensorium: Space, ideology and the aestheticization of politics. *Antipode*, 37(1), 46–71.
- Goonewardena, K. (2008). Marxism and everyday life: On Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, and some others. In K. Goonewardena, S. Kipfer, R. Milgrom, & C. Schmid (Eds.), *Space, difference, everyday life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (pp. 117–133). New York: Routledge.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell-Smith, Trans.) New York: International Publishers.
- Gramsci, A. (1996 [1975]). *Prison notebooks, Vol. II* (J. A. Buttigieg, Ed. & Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gramsci, A. (2000a). Intellectuals and education. In D. Forgacs (Ed.), *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected writings, 1916–1935* (pp. 300–322). New York: New York University Press.
- Gramsci, A. (2000b). Philosophy, common sense, language and folklore. In D. Forgacs (Ed.), *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected writings, 1916–1935* (pp. 323–362). New York: New York University Press.
- Gramsci, A. (2007 [1975]). *Prison notebooks, Vol. III* (J. A. Buttigieg, Ed. & Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hadley, G. (2015). *English for Academic Purposes in neoliberal universities: A critical grounded theory*. New York: Springer.
- Hale, C. R. (2002). Does multiculturalism menace? Governance, cultural rights and the politics of identity in Guatemala. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 34(3), 485–524.
- Hall, S. (1988a). *The hard road to renewal: Thatcherism and the crisis of the Left*. London: Verso.
- Hall, S. (1988b). The toad in the garden: Thatcherism among the theorists. In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 35–73). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Hall, S. (1993). Culture, community, nation. *Cultural Studies*, 7(3), 349–363.
- Hall, S. (1996). Introduction: Who needs ‘identity’? In S. Hall & P. Du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity* (pp. 1–17). London: Sage.
- Hall, S. (1997). Old and new identities, old and new ethnicities. In A. D. King (Ed.), *Culture, globalization and the world-system* (pp. 41–68). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hall, S. (2016). *Cultural studies 1983: A theoretical history*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hartmann, T. (2013, January 15). The Second Amendment was ratified to preserve slavery. *Truthout*. Retrieved from www.truth-out.org/news/item/13890-the-second-amendment-was-ratified-to-preserve-slavery.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The urban experience*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Harvey, D. (1990). *The condition of postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Harvey, D. (1993). Class relations, social justice and the politics of difference. In M. Keith & S. Pile (Eds.), *Place and the politics of identity* (pp. 41–66). London: Routledge.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2010). *A companion to Marx’s “Capital”*. London: Verso.
- Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel cities: From the right to the city to the urban revolution*. London: Verso.
- Harvey, D. (2014). *Seventeen contradictions and the end of capitalism*. London: Profile Books.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture: The meaning of style*. London: Routledge.
- Heller, M. (2003). Actors and discourses in the construction of hegemony. *Pragmatics* 13(1), 11–31.
- Heller, M. (2010). The commodification of language. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39, 101–114.
- Heller, M., & McElhinny, B. (2017). *Language, capitalism, colonialism: Toward a critical history*. North York, CA: University of Toronto Press.
- Higgins, C. (2010). Gender identities in language education. In N. H. Hornberger & S. L. McKay (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language education* (pp. 370–397). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Hilgers, M. (2013). Embodying neoliberalism: Thoughts and responses to critics. *Social Anthropology*, 21(1), 75–89.
- Hill, J. H. (1998). Language, race, and White public space. *American Anthropologist*, 100(3), 680–689.
- Hobsbawm, E. (2011). *How to change the world: Reflections on Marx and Marxism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Holborow, M. (2006). Ideology and language: Interconnections between neo-liberalism and English. In J. Edge (Ed.), *(Re-)Locating TESOL in an age of empire* (pp. 84–103). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Holborow, M. (2007). Language, ideology and neoliberalism. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 6(1), 51–73.
- Holborow, M. (2012a). What is neoliberalism? Discourse, ideology and the real world. In D. Block, J. Gray, & M. Holborow, *Neoliberalism and applied linguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Holborow, M. (2012b). Neoliberal keywords and the contradictions of an ideology. In D. Block, J. Gray, & M. Holborow, *Neoliberalism and applied linguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Holborow, M. (2013). Applied linguistics in the neoliberal university: Ideological keywords and social agency. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 4(2), 229–257.
- Holborow, M. (2015). *Language and neoliberalism*. London: Routledge.
- Hopkins, C. T. (2017). Mostly work, little play: social reproduction, migration, and paid domestic work in Montreal. In T. Bhattacharya (Ed.), *Social reproduction theory: Remapping class, recentring oppression* (pp. 131–147). London: Pluto Press.
- Hudis, P. (2018). Marx's concept of socialism. In M. Vidal, T. Rotta, T. Smith, & P. Prew (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of Karl Marx*. Oxford Handbooks Online. Retrieved from www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190695545.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190695545-e-50?print=pdf
- Hwang, J., & Sampson, R. J. (2014). Divergent pathways of gentrification: Racial inequality and the social order of renewal in Chicago neighborhoods. *American Sociological Review*, 79(4), 726–751.
- Hymes, D. (1980). *Language in education: Ethnolinguistic essays*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Hymes, D. (1996). *Ethnography, linguistics, narrative inequality: Toward an understanding of voice*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Ibrahim, A. (1999). Becoming black: Rap and hip-hop, race, gender, identity, and the politics of ESL learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33(3), 349–369.
- Ignatiev, N. (1995). *How the Irish became White*. London: Routledge.
- Ignatiev, N. (2003). Whiteness and class struggle. *Historical Materialism*, 11(4), 227–235.
- Ives, P. (2004). *Language and hegemony in Gramsci*. London: Pluto Press.
- Jacobs, J. (1961/1992). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Jaffe, A. (2007). Codeswitching and stance: Issues in interpretation. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 6(1), 53–77.

- Jaffe, S. (2018, January 18). Why did a majority of White women vote for Trump? [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://newlaborforum.cuny.edu/2018/01/18/why-did-a-majority-of-white-women-vote-for-trump/>.
- James, C. L. R. (1980). *Spheres of existence: Selected writings*. Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Co.
- James, P. (2019). The social imaginary in theory and practice. In C. Hudson & E. K. Wilson (Eds.), *Revisiting the global imaginary: Theories, ideologies, subjectivities: Essays in honour of Manfred Steger* (pp. 33–47). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jameson, F. (2011). *Representing "Capital": A reading of Volume One*. London: Verso.
- Jardina, A. (2019). *White identity politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Jaworski, A., & Thurlow, C. (Eds.). (2010). *Semiotic landscapes: Language, image, space*. London: Continuum.
- Jenks, C. (2017). English for sale: Using race to create value in the Korean ELT market. *Applied Linguistics Review*.
- Johnson, A. (2017, December 10). Boston. Racism. Image. Reality. *Boston Globe*. Retrieved from <https://apps.bostonglobe.com/spotlight/boston-racism-image-reality/series/image/>.
- Johnstone, B. (2016). Enregisterment: How linguistic items become linked with ways of speaking. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 10, 632–643.
- Jones, R. H. (2016). *Spoken discourse*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Jones, R. H., & Norris, S. (2005). Discourse as action/discourse in action. In S. Norris & R. H. Jones (Eds.), *Discourse in action: Introducing mediated discourse analysis* (pp. 3–14). London: Routledge.
- Katch, D. (2015). *Socialism...seriously: A brief guide to human liberation*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Katch, D. (2017). *Why bad governments happen to good people*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Keith, M., & Pile, S. (Eds.). (1993). *Place and the politics of identity*. London: Routledge.
- Keith, M., & Pile, S. (1993). Introduction Part 1: The politics of place. In M. Keith & S. Pile (Eds.), *Place and the politics of identity* (pp. 1–21). London: Routledge.
- King, M. L. (1963, April 16). Letter from a Birmingham jail. Retrieved from www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.
- Kipfer, S. (2008). How Lefebvre urbanized Gramsci: Hegemony, everyday life, and difference. In K. Goonewardena, S. Kipfer, R. Milgrom, & C. Schmid (Eds.), *Space, difference, everyday life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (pp. 193–211). New York: Routledge.
- Kipfer, S., Goonewardena, K., Schmid, C., & Milgrom, R. (2008). On the production of Henri Lefebvre. In K. Goonewardena, S. Kipfer, R. Milgrom, & C. Schmid (Eds.), *Space, difference, everyday life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (pp. 1–23). New York: Routledge.
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London: Arnold Publishers.
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (2nd ed). London: Routledge.
- Labov, W. (1966). *The social stratification of English in New York City*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- LaCapra, D. (1983). *Rethinking intellectual history: Texts, contexts, language*. London: Cornell University Press.
- Lee, E. (2015). Doing culture, doing race: Everyday discourses of 'culture' and 'cultural difference' in the English as a second language classroom. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 36(1), 80–93.
- Lefebvre, H. (1976). *The survival of capitalism: Reproduction of the relations of production*. London: Allison & Busby.

- Lefebvre, H. (1984). *Everyday life in the modern world*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Lefebvre, H. (1987). The everyday and everydayness. *Yale French Studies*, 73, 7–11.
- Lefebvre, H. (1988). Toward a leftist cultural politics: Remarks occasioned by the centenary of Marx's death. In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 75–88). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991a). *The production of space*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991b). *Critique of everyday life, Vol. 1: Introduction*. London: Verso Books.
- Lefebvre, H. (1996). *Writings on cities*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lefebvre, H. (2002). *Critique of everyday life, Vol. II: Foundations for a sociology of the everyday*. London: Verso.
- Lefebvre, H. (2003). *The urban revolution*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Lefebvre, H. (2008). *Critique of everyday life, Vol. III: From modernity to modernism. Towards a metaphilosophy of daily life*. London: Verso.
- Lefebvre, H. (2013). *Rhythmanalysis: Space, time and everyday life*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Leitner, H., Sheppard, E. S., Sziarto, K., & Maringanti, A. (2007). Contesting urban futures: Decentering neoliberalism. In H. Leitner, J. Peck, & E. S. Sheppard (Eds.), *Contesting neoliberalism: Urban frontiers* (pp. 1–25). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Lemke, J. L. (1995). *Textual politics: Discourse and social dynamics*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Lerner, S. (2020, March 13). Big pharma prepares to profit from the coronavirus. *The Intercept*. Retrieved from <https://theintercept.com/2020/03/13/big-pharma-drug-pricing-coronavirus-profits/>.
- Levine-Rasky, C. (2011). Intersectionality theory applied to whiteness and middle-classness. *Social Identities*, 17(2), 239–253.
- Liebow, E. (2003 [1967]). *Tally's corner: A study of Negro streetcorner men* (New ed.). New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Lillis, M. (2020, April 16). Reopening economy emerges as new political battleground. *The Hill*. Retrieved from <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/493048-reopening-economy-emerges-as-new-political-battleground>.
- Lo, A. (2016). “Suddenly faced with a Chinese village”: The linguistic racialization of Asian Americans. In H. S. Alim, J. R. Rickford, & A. F. Ball (Eds.), *Raciolinguistics: How language shapes our ideas about race* (pp. 97–111). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Logan, J. R. (2012). Making a place for space: Spatial thinking in social science. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 38, 507–524.
- MacGillis, A. (2016, November 10). Revenge of the forgotten class. *ProPublica*. Retrieved from www.propublica.org/article/revenge-of-the-forgotten-class.
- Manasse, G. (Prod.), & Duke, B. (Dir.). (1984). *The killing floor* [motion picture]. United States: Public Forum Productions.
- Marable, M. (1983). *How capitalism underdeveloped Black America: Problems in race, political economy and society*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Martinelli, M. (2018, January 23). Remember the late Ursula K. Le Guin by rewatching her remarkable speech at the 2014 National Book Awards. *Slate*. Retrieved from <https://slate.com/culture/2018/01/remember-ursula-k-le-guin-dead-at-88-with-her-national-book-awards-speech-video.html>.
- Marx, K. (1975 [1844]). *Economic and philosophical manuscripts*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Marx, K. (1859, September 16). From population, crime and pauperism. *New York Daily Tribune*. Retrieved from www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/09/16.htm.
- Marx, K. (1973). *Grundrisse: Foundations of the critique of political economy*. London: Penguin.
- Marx, K. (1976 [1867]). *Capital: A critique of political economy, Volume One*. London: Penguin.

- Marx, K. (2010). Critique of the Gotha Programme. In D. Fernbach (Ed.), *The First International and after: Political writings volume 3* (pp. 339–359). London: Verso.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1970). *The German ideology*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1978). The manifesto of the Communist Party. In R. C. Tucker (Ed.), *The Marx-Engels reader* (2nd edition). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Mary. (2013, October 13). What you learn about humanity from living on the streets. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from www.theguardian.com/commentsfree/2013/oct/13/homeless-nyc-people-you-meet.
- Massey, D. (1993). Politics and space/time. In M. Keith & S. Pile (Eds.), *Place and the politics of identity* (pp. 141–161). London: Routledge.
- Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. A. (1993). *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McCloskey, D. N. (1985). *The applied theory of price* (2nd edition). New York: Macmillan.
- McElhinny, B. (2002). Language, sexuality and political economy. In K. Campbell-Kibler, R. J. Podesva, S. J. Roberts, & A. Wong (Eds.), *Language and sexuality: Contesting meaning in theory and practice* (pp. 111–134). Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.
- McGarvey, D. (2018). *Poverty safari: Understanding the anger of Britain's underclass*. London: Picador.
- McGrath, M. (2019, July 24). Climate change: 12 years to save the planet? Make that 18 months. *BBC News*. Retrieved from www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-48964736.
- McIntosh, J. (2021). Whiteness and language. *The International Encyclopedia of Linguistic Anthropology*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Medhurst, A. (2000). If anywhere: Class identifications and cultural studies academics. In S. Munt (Ed.), *Cultural studies and the working class: Subject to change* (pp. 19–35). London: Cassell.
- Merrifield, A. (2000). Henri Lefebvre: A socialist in space. In M. Crang & N. Thrift (Eds.), *Thinking space* (pp. 167–182). London: Routledge.
- Merrifield, A. (2002a). *Dialectical urbanism: Social struggles in the capitalist city*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Merrifield, A. (2002b). *Metromarxism: A Marxist tale of the city*. New York: Routledge.
- Meyer, K. (2008). Rhythms, streets, cities. In K. Goonewardena, S. Kipfer, R. Milgrom, & C. Schmid (Eds.), *Space, difference, everyday life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (pp. 147–160). New York: Routledge.
- Miller, E. R., Morgan, B., & Medina, A. L. (2017). Exploring language teacher identity work as ethical self-formation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101, 91–105.
- Milroy, L. (1980). *Language and social networks*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Mirzoeff, N. (2011). *The right to look: A counterhistory of visibility*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Mirzoeff, N. (2015). *How to see the world*. London: Pelican.
- Mishel, L., & Kandra, J. (2020, August 18). CEO compensation surged 14% in 2019 to \$21.3 million. Retrieved from www.epi.org/publication/ceo-compensation-surge-d-14-in-2019-to-21-3-million-ceos-now-earn-320-times-as-much-as-a-typical-worker/.
- Mishel, L., & Wolfe, J. (2019, August 14). CEO compensation has grown 940% since 1978. Retrieved from www.epi.org/publication/ceo-compensation-2018/.
- Montag, W. (2017). Althusser's empty signifier: What is the meaning of the word 'interpellation'? *Mediations*, 30(2), 63–68.
- Moore, M. (2003). *Dude, where's my country?* New York: Warner Books.
- Morgan, B. (1998). *The ESL classroom: Teaching, critical practice, and community development*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Morgan, B., & Ramanathan, V. (2009). Outsourcing, globalizing economics, and shifting language policies: Issues in managing Indian call centres. *Language Policy*, 8, 69–80.

- Morgan, L. H. (2003). *Houses and house – Life of the American aborigines*. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press.
- Motha, S. (2014). *Race, empire, and English language teaching: Creating responsible and ethical anti-racist practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Motha, S. (2020). Is an antiracist and decolonizing applied linguistics possible? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 40, 128–133.
- Mouffe, C. (1979). Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci. In C. Mouffe (Ed.), *Gramsci and Marxist theory* (pp. 168–204). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Mouffe, C. (2019). *For a left populism*. London: Verso.
- Moyers, B. D. (1988, November 13). What a real president was like. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1988/11/13/what-a-real-president-was-like.
- Musto, M. (2012). Revisiting Marx's concept of alienation. In M. Musto (Ed.), *Marx for today* (pp. 92–116). London: Routledge.
- Neilson, D. (2018). In-itself for-itself: Towards second-generation neo-Marxist class theory. *Capital & Class*, 42(2), 273–295.
- Nichols, J. (2015). *The "S" word: A short history of an American tradition ... socialism* (2nd. ed.). London: Verso.
- Norton, B. (2013). Economic crises. *Rethinking Marxism*, 25(1), 10–22.
- Ochs, E. (1992). Indexing gender. In A. Duranti & C. Goodwin (Eds.), *Rethinking context: Language as an interactive phenomenon* (pp. 335–358). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Olorunnipa, T., Boburg, S., & Hernández, A. R. (2020, April 18). Rallies against stay-at-home orders grow as Trump sides with protesters. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from www.washingtonpost.com/national/rallies-against-stay-at-home-orders-grow-as-trump-sides-with-protesters/2020/04/17/1405ba54-7f4e-11ea-8013-1b6da0e4a2b7_story.html.
- Orwell, G. (1937/1958). *The road to Wigan Pier*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Park, J. S-Y. (2013). Metadiscursive regimes of diversity in a multinational corporation. *Language in Society*, 42, 557–577.
- Parker, S. (2015). *Urban theory and the urban experience: Encountering the city* (2nd edition). London: Routledge.
- Patten, E. (2016, July 1). Racial, gender wage gaps persist in U.S. despite some progress. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/01/racial-gender-wage-gaps-persist-in-u-s-despite-some-progress.
- Pennycook, A. (2007). *Global Englishes and transcultural flows*. London: Routledge.
- Pennycook, A. (2018). Posthumanist applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(4), 445–461.
- Pink, S. (2013). *Doing visual ethnography* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.
- Plato. (1994). *Gorgias* (R. Waterfield, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Pütz, M., & Mundt, N. (2019). *Expanding the linguistic landscape: Linguistic diversity, multimodality and the use of space as a semiotic resource*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Rampton, B. (2006). *Language in late modernity: Interaction in an urban school*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rampton, B. (2010). Social class and sociolinguistics. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 1, 1–21.
- Rampton, B. (2016). Drilling down to the grain in superdiversity. In K. Arnaut, J. Blommaert, B. Rampton, & M. Spotti (Eds.), *Language and superdiversity* (pp. 91–109). New York: Routledge.
- Rancière, J. (2011). *Staging the people: The proletarian and his double*. London: Verso.
- Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (1987). *Knowledge and class: A Marxian critique of political economy*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

- Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (2002). *Class theory and history: Capitalism and communism in the USSR*. New York: Routledge.
- Resnick, S., & Wolff, R. (2003). The diversity of class analyses: A critique of Erik Olin Wright and beyond. *Critical Sociology*, 29(1), 7–27.
- Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (2006a). Classes in Marxian theory. In S.A. Resnick & R. D. Wolff (Eds.), *New departures in Marxian theory* (pp. 91–117). New York: Routledge.
- Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (2006b). Power, property, and class. In S.A. Resnick & R. D. Wolff (Eds.), *New departures in Marxian theory* (pp. 118–136). New York: Routledge.
- Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (2013). Marxism. *Rethinking Marxism*, 25(2), 152–162.
- Richardson, J. E. (2007). *Analysing newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rickford, J. R. (1986). The need for new approaches to social class analysis in sociolinguistics. *Language & Communication*, 6(3), 215–221.
- Riley, D. (2017). Bourdieu's class theory. *Catalyst*, 1(2). <https://catalyst-journal.com/vol1/no2/bourdieu-class-theory-riley>.
- Riley, D. J. (2011). Hegemony, democracy, and passive revolution in Gramsci's Prison Notebooks. *California Italian Studies*, 2(2). <https://scholarship.org/uc/item/5x48f0mz>.
- Riley, T. (2017, July 10). Just 100 companies responsible for 71% of global emissions, study says. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2017/jul/10/100-fossil-fuel-companies-investors-responsible-71-global-emissions-cdp-study-climate-change.
- Roberts, B. (2018). Class and overdetermination: Value theory and the core of Resnick and Wolff's Marxism. In T. Burczak, R. Garnett, & R. McIntyre (Eds.), *Knowledge, class, and economics: Marxism without guarantees* (pp. 121–142). London: Routledge.
- Roberts, J. (2006). *Philosophizing the everyday: Revolutionary praxis and the fate of cultural theory*. London: Pluto Press.
- Rodseth, L. (1998). Distributive models of culture: A Sapirian alternative to essentialism. *American Anthropologist*, 100(1), 55–69.
- Roediger, D. R. (2007). *The wages of Whiteness: Race and the making of the American working class* (Rev. ed.). London: Verso.
- Roediger, D. R. (2017). *Class, race, and Marxism*. London: Verso.
- Roelvink, G., St Martin, K., & Gibson-Graham, J. K. (Eds.). (2015). *Making other worlds possible: Performing diverse economies*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ronneberger, K. (2008). Henri Lefebvre and urban everyday life: In search of the possible. In K. Goonewardena, S. Kipfer, R. Milgrom, & C. Schmid (Eds.), *Space, difference, everyday life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (pp. 134–146). New York: Routledge.
- Rosa, J., & Flores, N. (2017). Unsettling race and language: Toward a raciolinguistic perspective. *Language in Society*, 46, 621–647.
- Rosenberg, J. (2019, July 20). "Love it or leave it" has a racist history. A lot of America's language does. *Mother Jones*. Retrieved from www.motherjones.com/politics/2019/07/love-it-or-leave-it-has-a-racist-history-a-lot-of-americas-language-does/.
- Roy, A. (2003). *War talk*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Ruccio, D. F. (2008a). Economic representations: What's at stake? *Cultural Studies*, 22(6), 892–912.
- Ruccio, D. F. (2008b). Introduction: What are economic representations and what's at stake? In D. F. Ruccio (Ed.), *Economic representations: Academic and everyday* (pp. 1–31). New York: Routledge.
- Saad-Filho, A. (2017). Neoliberalism. In D. M. Brennan, D. Kristjanson-Gural, C. P. Mulder, & E. K. Olsen (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Marxian economics* (pp. 245–254). London: Routledge.

- Santos, F. (2021, March 2). Life, death and grief in Los Angeles. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/02/magazine/covid-la-county-hospitals-black-latino-residents.html.
- Sapir, E. (1949). *Culture, language and personality* (Selected essays edited by D. G. Mandelbaum). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Sassoon, A. S. (1990). Gramsci's subversion of the language of politics. *Rethinking Marxism*, 3(1), 14–25.
- Savage, M. (2000). *Class analysis and social transformation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Savage, M., et al. (2013). A new model of social class? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey experiment. *Sociology*, 47(2), 219–250.
- Scollon, R. (1996). Discourse identity, social identity, and confusion in intercultural communication. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, VI(1), 1–16.
- Scollon, R. (2001). Action and text: Towards an integrated understanding of the place of text in social (inter)action, mediated discourse analysis and the problem of social action. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 139–183). London: Sage.
- Scollon, R. (2008). Discourse itineraries: Nine processes of resemiotization. In V. K. Bhatia, J. Flowerdew, & R. H. Jones (Eds.), *Advances in discourse studies* (pp. 233–244). London: Routledge.
- Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2003). *Discourses in place: Language in the material world*. New York: Routledge.
- Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2004). *Nexus analysis: Discourse and the emerging Internet*. New York: Routledge.
- Scott, D. (2020, April 17). Covid-19's devastating toll on black and Latino Americans, in one chart. *Vox*. Retrieved from www.vox.com/2020/4/17/21225610/us-coronavirus-death-rates-blacks-latinos-whites.
- Shalbak, I. (2018). Hegemony thinking: A detour through Gramsci. *Thesis Eleven*, 147(1), 45–61.
- Shohamy, E. (2017). Linguistic landscape: Interpreting and expanding language diversities. In A. De Fina, D. Ikioglu, & J. Wegner (Eds.), *Diversity and super-diversity: Sociocultural linguistic perspectives* (p. 37–63). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Shohamy, E., & Gorter, D. (Eds.). (2009). *Linguistic landscape: Expanding the scenery*. London: Routledge.
- Silverstein, M. (2003). Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life. *Language & Communication*, 23, 193–229.
- Simmel, G. (1903). The metropolis and mental life. Retrieved from www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/BPL/Images/Content_store/Sample_chapter/0631225137/Bridge.pdf.
- Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of class and gender*. London: Routledge.
- Skeggs, B. (2004). *Class, self, culture*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, N. (1998). Gentrification. In W. van Vliet (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of housing* (pp. 198–199). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Smith, N. (2006). Gentrification generalized: From local anomaly to urban “regeneration” as global urban strategy. In M. A. Fisher & G. Downey (Eds.), *Frontiers of capital: Ethnographic reflections on the new economy* (pp. 191–208). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Smucker, J. M. (2017). *Hegemony how-to: A roadmap for radicals*. Chico, CA: AK Press.
- Soja, E. W. (1989). *Postmodern geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London: Verso.
- Soja, E. W. (2010). *Seeking spatial justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Snell, J. (2010). From sociolinguistic variation to socially strategic stylisation. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 14(5), 630–656.
- Snell, J. (2018). Solidarity, stance, and class identities. *Language in Society*, 47(5), 665–691.

- Southern, J. (2000). Blue collar, white collar: Deconstructing classification. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick, & R. D. Wolff, (Eds.), *Class and its others* (pp. 191–224). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Springer, S. (2012). Neoliberalism as discourse: between Foucauldian political economy and Marxian poststructuralism. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 9(2), 133–147.
- Stein, S. (2019). *Capital city: Gentrification and the real estate state*. London: Verso.
- Strauss, C. (2006). The imaginary. *Anthropological Theory*, 6(3), 322–344.
- Streeck, W. (2017). *How will capitalism end? Essays on a failing system*. London: Verso.
- Strummer, J., & Jones, M. (1979). Clamptown (recorded by The Clash). On London Calling. Epic Records.
- Taylor, C. (2004). *Modern social imaginaries*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Terkel, S. (1974). *Working: People talk about what they do all day and how they feel about what they do*. New York: The New Press.
- Terkel, S. (1992). *Race: How Blacks and Whites think and feel about the American obsession*. New York: The New Press.
- Thompson, E. P. (1963). *The making of the English working class*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Tissot, S. (2015). *Good neighbors: Gentrifying diversity in Boston's South End*. London: Verso.
- Tom, A. T. (2020). The Chinese Progressive Association and the “Red Door”. In D. C. Fujino & M. Harmachis (Eds.), *Black power afterlives: The enduring significance of the Black Panther Party* (pp. 289–300). Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Tomlinson, M. (2017). Introduction: Imagining the monologic. In M. Tomlinson & J. Millie (Eds.), *The monologic imagination* (pp. 1–18). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tomlinson, M., & Millie, J. (Eds.). (2017). *The monologic imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Trinch, S., & Snajdr, E. (2017). What the signs say: Gentrification and the disappearance of capitalism without distinction in Brooklyn. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 21(1), 64–89.
- Trudgill, P. (1974). *The social differentiations of English in Norwich*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2003). The discourse-knowledge interface. In G. Weiss & R. Wodak (Eds.), *Critical discourse analysis: Theory and interdisciplinarity* (pp. 85–109). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vanneman, R., & Cannon, L. W. (1987). *The American perception of class*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Vološinov, V. N. (1973). *Marxism and the philosophy of language*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wachs, M. (1996). The evolution of transportation policy in Los Angeles: Images of past policies and future prospects. In A. J. Scott & E. W. Soja (Eds.), *The city: Los Angeles and urban theory at the end of the twentieth century* (pp. 106–159). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Wallerstein, I. (2011). *Historical capitalism with Capitalist civilization*. London: Verso.
- Watkins, E. (2005). Class novelties: Distributive processes and lived experiences. *Rethinking Marxism*, 17(1), 9–13.
- Watkins, S. (2010). Shifting sands. *New Left Review*, 61, 5–27.
- Watts, J. (2018, October 8). We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe, warns UN. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report (5 July 2019).
- Weber, B. (2018). *Class war, USA: Dispatches from the workers' struggles in American history*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- When, F. (2006). *Marx's Das Kapital: A biography*. London: Atlantic Books.
- Williams, R. (1977). *Marxism and literature*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Williams, R. (1985). *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society* (Rev. ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wilson, M. (2019, October 11). 'I know the struggle': Why a pizza mogul left pies at memorials to 4 homeless men. *New York Times*. Retrieved from: www.nytimes.com/2019/10/11/nyregion/homeless-murders-nyc-hakki-akdeniz.html.
- Wirtz, K. (2017). "With unity we will be victorious!": A monologic poetics of political "conscientization" within the Cuban Revolution. In M. Tomlinson & J. Millie (Eds.), *The monologic imagination* (pp. 89–120). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wolff, R. (2012). *Democracy at work: A cure for capitalism*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Wolff, R. D. (2017). Marxian class analysis. In D. M. Brennan, D. Kristjanson-Gural, C. P. Mulder, & E. K. Olsen (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Marxian economics* (pp. 29–41). London: Routledge.
- Wolff, R. D., & Resnick, S. A. (2012). *Contending economic theories: Neoclassical, Keynesian, and Marxian*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Wood, E. M. (1995). *Democracy against capitalism: Renewing historical materialism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, E. M. (1998). *The retreat from class: A new 'true' socialism* (revised ed.). London: Verso.
- Wright, E. O. (1986). What is middle about the middle class? In J. Roemer (Ed.), *Analytical Marxism* (pp. 114–140). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Wright, E. O. (1998). Rethinking, once again, the concept of class structure. In E. O. Wright et al., *The debate on classes* (pp. 269–348). London: Verso.
- Wright, E. O. et al. (1998). *The debate on classes*. London: Verso.

INDEX

Page numbers in *italic* refer to figures.

- academia 7, 26
- academics: and archival spaces 131;
ethnographer 137; neoliberalism 5;
reputation 17; self-reflexivity 46
- acceptance 7–8, 69, 77, 110
- accountability 5
- adjunctification 46
- agency from commodities 37–40
- Agha, A. 15
- Ahmed, S. 34
- Akdeniz, H. 111
- algorithmic surveillance 18, 37
- alienation 25–27, 37, 38
- Althusser, L. 16, 54
- Amariglio, J. 54
- American apartheid 123
- American capitalism 106; being White
71–72; class and its others 66–68; organic
intellectuals on race, class, and identity
72–88; in US 68–70
- American dream 3, 13, 106
- Americanness 93
- American Perception of Class, The* 90
- anger 94; and frustration 42; and resentment
30, 33; toward minorities and immigrants
76; White workers 86
- anti-capitalists 96; ideological platform 27–
28; imaginaries 14, 22, 131; practices 131
- anti-communists 157
- anti-LGBTQ sentiment 9–80
- anti-patriotic media 34
- antiracism 15
- anxieties 27, 126
- applied linguistics research 4
- Arbery, A. 153
- asylum seekers 34
- automobile advertising 35

- Bakhtin, M. 30, 41
- Bakhtinian discursive dynamics 89
- Baldwin, J. 10
- Balibar, E. 92–93
- banalization of mass culture 167
- banking model approach 125
- behavioral attitude 24
- Benjamin, W. 138
- Berger, J. 138
- Big Pharma 2
- Black Americans 110, 156
- Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement
11, 124
- Blackness 69
- Black Panther Party 39, 86
- Black workers 28
- Blommaert, J. 136–137
- blue-collar workers 52, 99
- Boggs, G. L. 168
- Boston 151–154
- Boston Chinese Evangelical Church 135
- Bourdieu, P. 62
- Bourke-White, M. 156
- British National Front 34

- brutal indifference 24
 Bucholtz, M. 62
- Callari, A. 54
 Cannon, L. W. 90
 capability 160
 capital 67; existence 27; socio-spatialities of 131–160
 capitalism/capitalist 7, 15, 40, 97, 110, 122, 132, 161–162; advanced 148; civilization 162; class 51; continuation of 18; crisis 163; culture 115; discourse 120, 122; dominance 120; economies 15, 30; effects 25–27; with freedom and liberty 80–81; grotesque realism 30–32; hegemony 14, 30, 127; infiltrates 126; multiplicity of meanings 6; organism 44; representations 14; social ubiquities 7–9; space 147
 capitalist-induced social relations 25
 capitalists 9, 13–14, 27, 44
 capitalist society 6, 15, 69, 87, 92, 115, 157; counter-hegemonic imaginary to 13–14; Dickens's portrayal of 44; integral component of 24; linguistic landscapes 136–137; racial-class dynamic of 143
 Carter, J. 114
 climate change 1
 Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 67
 cinema *see* literary and cinematic representations of capitalism
 cisgender female 60
 civility 78
 Civil Rights movement 11
 class: analyzing 51; belonging 49–53; connotations 52; definition 47–48, 51–52; discursive domains 56–58; identity politics 58–63; incompatibility 57; indexicalities 47; interanimating 53–56; labourers 48; overdetermining 53–56; positioning paradigm 46; power theorists of 52; relations, polarized 51; representations 46–47; social semiotics 155–156; solidarity 105; subsumed 52; *see also* working class
Class, Race, and Marxism 67
 classed identities 64
Class Theory and History: Capitalism and Communism in the USSR 100–101
 clean money 64
 Clinton, B. 13
 Clinton, H. 59
 Clinton campaign 60
 Coal Office 139, 140
 co-constructs: of capitalist 22; common-sense beliefs 71–72; non-capitalist sites 4
 coding schemes 53
 collective-based community 14
 collective labour 46
 colloquialisms 41
 Columbus, C. 153–154
 commerce: signage 140; spatiality 110
 commodities/commodity: culture 37; as discursive identifications 35–37; fetishism 36; form 36; labor 26; in marketing and selling 26; physicality 36
 common sense 89; beliefs 14, 81; capitalist parlance 48; discourse 109, 122; framing 80; majority 163
 communal labor 4
 communal spaces 162
 communism 14, 119, 121–122
Communist Manifesto, The 107, 157
 Communist Party bureaucrats 122
 communists 100–101
 community reservoirs 16–17
Condition of the Working Class in England, The 43
 condominiums 133–134, 138, 146, 147
 Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) 75, 105
 Connors 44
 conscience 124
 conservatism/conservatives 34, 163, 165
 Constitutional amendments 39
 consumers, confident 81
 contextual discursive framing 62
 copwatching 39
 corporate profits, re-allocation of 6
 counter-hegemony: discourses 89, 167; imaginary 13–14; signs 131
 Coutinho, C. N. 162–163
 COVID-19 viral pandemic 15
 critical theory of recognition 60–61
 culture/cultural 10; beliefs 10; of commodities 37; contexts 51; elitism 167; identities 132; politics of emotion 58; representations 100; and social identity 40; socially constructed 59
- Davis, M. 34–35
Death and Life of Great American Cities, The 160
 democracy 95–96, 166
 democratic values 166
 demographics 33
 deregulatory state policies 6
 desegregation, enforced 83
 Devine, F. 56
 Devlin, B. 29
 Dickens, C. 43, 114

- dictatorship 14
dimensional hegemonic consent 91–92
dirty money 64
disarticulation–rearticulation 166
discourses 40–42; of consumption 38;
production 8; of roots 46; in social
circulation 4
discursiveness: disparagement 92; enactments
119; framing 80; hegemonic framings
40–41; identifications 54; narrative of
capitalism 116
disinformation 10
distinction-making signs 149–150
diversity 4, 110
dual positionality 90
Du Bois, W. E. B. 69–70
Dude, Where's My Country? 163
- Eagleton, T. 32
Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts 25
Economic Policy Institute (EPI) 3
economics/economic: discourses 131;
inequalities 7, 164; relationships 53;
representations 4; social relations 26,
46–47; and social status 114; status and
attribute 34; systemic inequalities and
injustices 31; theory 59; utopia 59
emotional support 27
Endecott, J. 154, 154
Engels, F. 6, 14, 25, 30, 43–44, 48, 107
enregisterment 137
ersatz economics 101–102
estrangement 23–25, 29, 113
ethnic and racial communities 105
ethnic and religious divides 28
ethnic solidarities 34–35
ethnography 43, 136–137
European capitalist colonists 38
European-era events 31
Evers, M. 10
- fair market value 12
fake news 10
false consciousness 99, 167
Faulkner, W. 85
fear and anxiety 60
federal minimum wage 164
feeling as thought 32, 58
fetishism 36
finance/financial: anxiety 33; capital
6, 143
flexibility 5
Floyd, G. 153, 161
Fontana, B. 33
“forever foreigners” 113
- fossil fuel-burning automobiles 2
Foucault, M. 25
freedom 6, 61, 124
free markets 2, 5, 103, 119, 129
free trade 5
French Revolution 156
- gender: and ethnicity identities/
identifications 60; inequalities 93; neutral
restrooms 155; performativity 61;
positionality 79; role framing 29; social
semiotics 155–156
*General Theory of Employment, Interest and
Money, The* 164
genocide 71, 153
gentrification 110, 133, 149; monological
uniformity 143–147; neighborhoods 136;
signs 140
geo-spatial boundaries 132
Gibson, K. 16
Gibson-Graham, J. K. 33, 56–57
globalised class identities 63
globalization 30, 93
Goffman, E. 47, 53, 95
Graham, J. 16
Gramsci, A. 7–8, 168; common-sense
interrelated discourses 126–127; strategies
164; traditional intellectual 8
Great Depression 106
Groundhog Day 44–45
- Hale, C. R. 5
Hall, K. 62
harassment 114
Hartmann, T. 39
Harvey, D. 5, 12, 16, 102, 133, 137
health care and social security 6
hegemony 100; consent 41, 108; discourses
122, 131; frame of capitalism 120;
intellectual 8; political and social order
34; principles 166
heteronormativity 29, 70
Hobsbawm, E. 107
homelessness 143
Hoover, H. 117
- identities within nation-states 93
identity politics 58–63, 78
ideology: social-relational 86; state
apparatuses 124; struggle 166–167;
visibilities 131; wages 69
illegal immigrants 34
imaginaries 9–13
immigrants: blaming and shaming 114;
business owners 110; communities and

- individuals 34; heteroglossic discourse 112
 impostor syndrome 133
 Indigenous peoples 153
 individualistic corruption 44
 individuality 24
 interactional dynamics 139
 interactional encounters 10, 28–29
 interactional engagement 111
 interanimating class 53–56
 interanimating dynamics 60
 interpersonal engagements 23–24
 intersectionality 60
 Iroquois Nation 14
 Italian American community 153
 Italian immigrants 153
 Ives, P. 111
- Jacobs, J. 160
 Japan, Imperial 33
 Johnson, B. 141
 justice 78
- K-12 schools 55
 Keynes, J. M. 164
 Keynesian policies 164
Killing Floor, The 105
 Korean immigrants, racism among 110
- labor: activities and products 27; disunity 105; iconography 50; market, evolving geography of 144; marketplace 50; production/distribution 54; value 46
 Landmark, T. 153
 language 47; and discourse 28, 50, 143; learning and teaching 15; policies 4; in public spaces 136; rights 15
 Lefebvre, H. 9, 16, 36, 115, 131, 137, 143
 Levine-Rasky, C. 60
 liberal media outlets 38
 linguistics 16, 28; anthropology 28; and discursive reframing 84; landscapes 131, 136–137, 144; repertoires 31
 literary and cinematic representations of capitalism 43–45
 local allegiances 93
 Los Angeles *see* neighborhoods in Los Angeles 148–151
- macro-economic paradigm 5
 Make America Great Again (MAGA) 11, 13
 Maly, I. 136–137
 Manchester, ethnography of 43
 manufacturing, displacement of human labor 18
- market-based competition and commodification processes 6
 Marx, K. 14, 48, 97–98, 107
 Marxist scholars 16
 Mash Report 24–25
 mass transportation, tax-funded 2
 material and cultural inequalities 62
 Meatland 145–146, 146
 mechanical mobility 36
 mental health illness 38
 middle class 48, 55–56; identities 62; status 50; White woman 79
 militia 39
 model minority 68
 monads 25
 Mondragon Corporation 100
 money, imaginary 12
 Mong Kok neighborhood 124
 monology/monological: identity politics 78; uniformity 146
 Moore, M. 163–164, 168
 moral discourses 50
 morality 124
 motivated social achievement 105
 Mouffe, C. 166
 Mulford Act 39
 muscle cars 70
- national economic prosperity 59
 Nazi Germany 33
 need and desire 116
 neighborhoods in Los Angeles 148–151
 neoclassical economics 5, 59, 102–103
 neoliberalism/neoliberal 4–7, 59; discourses 59, 96, 165; framing 2, 83; multiculturalism 59; policy 7; state-managed capitalism 7; thought 5
 Newton, H. 39
New York Times 38, 111
 non-capitalism 162
 non-immigrant Black households 28
 nonpolarized class positions 51
 non-violent civil disobedience movement 124
- Occupy Central 124
 Occupy Wall Street Movement 32, 48, 124
 “one country, two systems” 124
 organic intellectuals 8, 168
 Orwell, G. 37, 167
 overdetermination 54
 overtime pay 8–9
- peace movement 33
 Pennycook, A. 16–17

- People's Republic of China 81
 performativity 104
 person-centered approach 11, 89
 phantasmagoria 37
Pharma: Greed, Lies, and the Poisoning of America 2
 physical and psychic space 135
 planned obsolescence 27
 political graffiti 143
 polysemy 96
 Posner, Gerald 2
 post-capitalism 14–18
 posthumanism/posthumanist 16, 18;
 applied linguistics 14–18; materialism 15;
 thought 17
 post-manufacturing 'service' economy 99
 post-war Labour party government 6
 private property rights 5
 privatized gains 6
 productive workers 49, 52
 provisional and insecure jobs 90
 pro-war politicians 34
 psychoanalysts 13
 public speaking 125
 public transportation system, disintegrating
 157–158

 quasi-market principles 5

Rabelais and his world 30
 race/racial: and classed solidarity 87;
 desegregation of schools 83; differences,
 social class groups 60; discriminations 82;
 gender and sexuality estrangement 27–30;
 and genders of workers 104; role in
 American capitalism 66–88 (*see* American
 capitalism); segregation 123; social
 relations 79; social semiotics 155–156;
 solidarity 74; tensions and reactions 83;
 see also American capitalism
 racism/racist 11, 15, 93; covert 77;
 discourses 29–30; injustices in society
 79–80; violence 161
 Rampton, B. 50, 62
 rape 76, 153
 rational thinking 33
 Reagan, R. 13, 114
 Reagonomics 116–118
 reflexivity 46
 regional-cultural differences 25
 religion/religious: beliefs and identities 93;
 and hegemonic cultural beliefs 29;
 identities 29
 Renaissance era 30
 reorganization, of capitalism 5–6

 repertoires 16
 representational spaces 143
 residential differentiation 133
 Resnick, S. A. 16, 52–54, 59, 164
 retirement funds 8–9
 revolution/revolutionary: movement 108;
 socialist organization 39
 Rickford, J. R. 64
 Riley, T. 62
Road to Wigan Pier, The 167
 Roberts, B. 54–55
 Rogers, W. 117
 Romney, M. 41
 Ruccio, D. F. 4, 56–57

 Saad-Filho, A. 5
 salaried wages 46
 Savage, M. 63
 scientific community 1
 Seale, B. 39
 Second Amendment 39
 second language acquisition (SLA) 15
 security guards 52
 self-alienation 37
 self-censorship 125
 self-conscious 24
 self-defining oneself as Black 73
 self-disciplining 125
 self-identification 61
 self-identification 29; groups 11; White
 person 84
 self-imposed racial divisions 75–76
 self-imposed teaching practices 125
 self-isolating 24
 self-perceived agentive acts 37–38
 self-performed classed identity 51
 self-presentation 133
 self-proclaimed communist 100–101
 self-reflective narratives 64
 self-reflexivity 46
 self-selected demographic of people 42
 self-valorization of capital 49
 sensed social difference 51
 sense of control 35
 sense of freedom 35
 sense of insignificance 45
 sense of privacy 35
 sense of social relations 84
 separation 24
 sexism 79–80
 sexualities, enactments of 29
 sharecropping, post-Civil War 68
 Shohamy, E. 136
 Silver Lake 148, 150
 Skeggs, B. 38, 50, 52

- Smith, L. 72
 Snajdr, E. 149
 snowflakes 156
 social accomplishments 109–110
 social class 53
 social communes 4
 social connection 27
 social distribution of property 52
 social division and estrangement 59
 social formation 24
 social grouping 47
 social hegemony and political government 8
 social hierarchy 30
 social historical co-constructions of
 race 10
 social identity 35, 137
 social imaginaries 10, 12
 socialism 13–14, 81, 95–96, 100–101, 119,
 127, 164, 167
 Socialist party 167
 mobility 69, 137
 social multiaccentuality 8
 social politics of equality 61
 social qualifications 53
 social relations 27–28, 36, 94, 138
 social reproduction theory 55
 social semiotic discourse 136
 social spaces 17, 53
 social totality 54
 Social Type 148–149, 149
 social value judgments 8
 social-welfare society 6
 sociocultural structures 33
 socio-ideological consciousness 97
 sociolinguistics 15, 28
 sociolinguists 46–47, 58–59, 63
 sociopolitical juncture 60
 socio-spatial dialectic 131–132,
 134, 156
 Soja, E. W. 132
 spatial division of labor 144
 spatial practices 132
 spectral realities: alienation and
 estrangement 25–27; estrangement
 23–25; race, gender and sexuality
 estrangement 27–30
 Stalinism 14
 Strauss, C. 11
 stress 126
 structural enactments 2
 structural racism 161
 structure of feeling 32–35, 58
 subsistence, physical means 9
 subversive linguistic landscapes 156–158,
 157–159
 Sunset Boulevard 148
 supervisors 52
 surplus labour 52, 97
 surplus-value 4, 8, 12

Tale of Two Cities, A 114
 tax 118, 163, 165–166
 Taylor, B. 153, 161
 Thatcher, M. 35, 163
 Thatcherism 35, 163–164
 Thompson, E. P. 50
 thought as feeling 58
 tolerance 110
 traditional intellectuals 8
 transglobal contexts 55
 transnational capitalism 5
 trickle-down economics 116–117
 Trinch, S. 149
 true democracy 101
 Trump, D., immigrant policies of 124

 Umbrella Movement 124
 unemployment, and under-employment 99
 union organizations, radical 105
 unproductive workers 52
 urban capital accumulation 110
 urban capitalist society 140
 urban discourse 137
 urbanization of capital 136, 144
 urbanized spaces 35
 urban linguistic landscape ethnographies
 137–138
 urban neighborhoods 110
 urban regeneration 143
 urban social-spatialities of 132–135
 US working-class unity 34–35

 Vanneman, R. 90
 verbal and physical abuse 58
 verbal infliction 30
 violence/violent 114, 162; estrangements
 29–30; imaginary 10
 visibility 134–135
 visual studies analysis 136

 wages 9; gaps in 3; labourers 51; slave 85;
 and wealth 28; of Whiteness 82
 Watkins, E. 53–54
 Watkins, S. 5
 wealth inequalities 3
 white collar workers 52
 White English-speaking Americans 34
 White flight 35
 White heteronormative masculinity 40
 Whiteness 11, 69, 71, 79

- White workers, salaries of 28
- White working-class 59–60, 83
- Williams, R. 32–33
- Wolff, R. D. 16, 51–54, 59, 164
- workers: average 13; Black 28; blue-collar 52, 99; productive 49, 52; genders of 104; unproductive 52; white collar 52; White, salaries of 28
- working class: backgrounds 46; based community 62; Black community 17; Latinx 150; modern 48; neighborhood 144; solidarity 75; voters 59
- World War II 33
- Wright, E. O. 51
- xenophobia 15, 34



Taylor & Francis Group
an **informa** business



Taylor & Francis eBooks

www.taylorfrancis.com

A single destination for eBooks from Taylor & Francis with increased functionality and an improved user experience to meet the needs of our customers.

90,000+ eBooks of award-winning academic content in Humanities, Social Science, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Medical written by a global network of editors and authors.

TAYLOR & FRANCIS EBOOKS OFFERS:

A streamlined experience for our library customers

A single point of discovery for all of our eBook content

Improved search and discovery of content at both book and chapter level

REQUEST A FREE TRIAL
support@taylorfrancis.com

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

 **CRC Press**
Taylor & Francis Group