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To Be Decided\*  
Journal of Interdisciplinary Theory

Volume 5  
Profits & Prophets



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Journal of Interdisciplinary Theory

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Cover art: Urban Style in Rome by Bonifacio Pontonio

Published by the Social and Political Thought Program at  
Acadia University  
15 University Avenue  
Wolfville, NS  
B4P 2R6

[www.tbdjournal.com](http://www.tbdjournal.com)

Articles which appear in this journal have undergone double-blind peer-review and appear at the approval of the editors and their academic advisor. For inquiries about this issue or upcoming ones, please contact us at [tbdgraduatejournal@gmail.com](mailto:tbdgraduatejournal@gmail.com)





# To Be Decided\*

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Volume 5: Profits & Prophets



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# Acknowledgements

Thank you to the faculty and cohort of Acadia's Social and Political Thought program, particularly the graduate co-ordinator, Jon Saklofske, for their assistance, advice, and engagement as this edition took shape. Their support, in addition to the invaluable and almost prophetic advice I received from Acadia's librarians, made this issue possible.

I am eternally grateful to my predecessors – especially Jason Penney who continually offered his expertise, even from out of province. I am fortunate that TBD\* has obviously had so much care and labour put into it before I assumed the role of editor, and that effort has created a journal that offers a valuable experience for so many graduate students to participate in the publication process. On that note, this issue simply would not exist were it not for the dedication of the authors who submitted and resubmitted their pieces as they graciously worked through the reviews and edits. And thank you to all the anonymous reviewers who offered such thorough and insightful commentary without any profit.

## **Editor's Introduction**

At the time of publishing this mini-issue, the world is immobilized by the COVID-19 pandemic. As we wait in limbo to see the effects that this extended period of isolation will have on our social and political structures and economies, the topic of *Profits & Prophets* seems especially pertinent. Profits, the primary incentive of the hegemonic, capitalist system, are being weighed against the lives of citizens. Meanwhile, prophets – figures with privileged access to divine knowledge – are being sought after in the fields of medicine, epidemiology, politics, and economics, while uncertainty, skepticism, and blame dominate all sides of the political spectrum. The prophets of capital, who have benefitted immensely from the inequalities of the world, are viewed by many as both the solution to and the sole perpetrators of this world-changing event.

More than ever we need critical thought to make sense of the world we live in, to recognize false prophets, and those seeking to profit from misfortune. Theory offers an excellent opportunity to do just that. The following submissions challenge conceptions of political and economic progression and development by complicating narratives of right and wrong, truth and falsity.

William Gregson's article "The Double Dead-End of 'Post-Truth': An Althusserian Analysis of the Relationship Between Truth and Ideology" theorizes an insightful method of balancing truth, ideology, and reality in an ever-changing environment. Gregson argues that the term "post-truth" falls short of the capacity to effectively assess both the current political climate and the conditions that have led to its popularity. He draws upon Althusser's theory of ideology to unpack the term and to analyse how the supposed prophets who

dominate the present-day political sphere and garner support represent a new manifestation of ideology. Gregson's detailed inquiry into the foundations of political and social life helps situate the current political moment in the history and future of democratic crises.

In her article "Politicizing Cultural Tourism as a means of Development," Kelsey Gordon interrogates the narrative of profit-based success and how it has shaped tourism as a development strategy. As dominant Western ideologies form the social, economic, and environmental standards that feed the developmental discourses which direct global practice, Gordon points to the injustice and uncertainty that has resulted from these ideologies in the tourism sector. However, she does note that responsible tourism can provide economic opportunities, protect cultural heritage, and have environmental advantages. Thus, Gordon's call for a politicization of cultural tourism means that this complicated issue can be given the attention it rightly deserves. There is no doubt that in the current situation, with international travel at a complete standstill and both national and international borders being closed to non-essential travel, the reintroduction of tourism will be a distinctly political process.

Finally, this issue concludes with a book review of David Nugent's *The Encrypted State: Delusion and Displacement in the Peruvian Andes* by Robert Pantalone. Looking at the political history of the Amazonas region of Northern Peru, this book offers insight into how archival material can be applied and revived in a modern context. Pantalone adds invaluable commentary on the importance of including the histories of Indigenous and marginalized people that were not included in archival materials due to historic social and political erasure. There are valuable lessons to be learned through the strength and

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resistance of these erased histories, lessons that can help confront the prophets of profit.

*To Be Decided\** Journal of Interdisciplinary Theory

Managing Editor

Nina Poletti

# The Double Dead-End of “Post Truth”: An Althusserian Analysis of the Relationship Between Truth and Ideology

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With Donald Trump’s election in the United States and the Brexit campaign’s success in the United Kingdom, journalists, academics, and mainstream political pundits popularized the notion that a new political era known as “post-truth” was being ushered in. According to the proponents of the concept, post-truth is characterized by an “ideological supremacy” over truth, in which truth has been “eclipsed” in politics. The label “post-truth” hence positions truth and ideology as antagonistic and incompatible. In other words, the emergence of a post-truth era is understood as a *retreat* from truth in politics which then can be remedied by a *return* to truth.

The concept of a post-truth era captures a sense of *newness*; it designates a *new* social and political era into which we have supposedly entered, which thereby demands a *new* label. Yet, by understanding this newness in terms of the simple falling away from the truth into the falsity of ideology, the concept of post-truth runs into a theoretical double dead-end. The first dead-end is that this way of conceptualizing post-truth does not provide the tools to adequately inquire into *what* exactly is new about our political present. Historically speaking, so-called post-truth politics have perpetually burdened the West. The second dead-end is that, by upholding the truth/ideology dichotomy and thereby dismissing this new political trend simply as delusional,

the post-truth analysis fails to account for the *self-understanding* of the participants of so-called post-truth politics—that is, it neglects the social and political reasons for why people have *en masse* gravitated towards a new form of politics.

This article is an attempt to overcome this double dead-end by providing an alternative theoretical framework for understanding the new political phenomenon associated with post-truth. To do so, I first explore the popular notion of post-truth, its implied theory of ideology, and its consequent dead-ends. Then, I develop an alternative account of ideology through an engagement with the French Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser, which shows why the truth/ideology dichotomy is false. In doing so, this article argues that rather than post-truth designating a “political subordination of reality,”<sup>1</sup> the concept of post-truth and the populist politics it attempts to grasp are merely new manifestations of ideology which attempt to answer *real* social questions in an *illusory* manner. In the conclusion, I highlight the implications of applying the Althusserian theory of ideology to the concept of post-truth in a way that brings out the continuities between so-called post-truth politics and other oncoming crises in liberal democracy.

## “Post-Truth”?

Following the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit referendum in 2016, the concept of “post-truth” had “rocketed to public attention [...] when the *Oxford Dictionary* named it 2016’s word of the year.”<sup>2</sup> In March 2017, *Time* magazine’s cover asked, “Is Truth Dead?[,]” citing Donald Trump and

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<sup>1</sup> Lee McIntyre, *Post-Truth*, The MIT Essential Knowledge Series (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018), xiv.

<sup>2</sup> McIntyre, *Post-Truth*, 1.

his disregard for truth as the reason for prompting the question.<sup>3</sup> Since then, the notion of post-truth politics has been seen by pundits and scholars as a defining characteristic of the current Western political climate, ushered in by a general wave of right-wing populism.<sup>4</sup>

Commonly defined as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief,”<sup>5</sup> the concept of post-truth is “meant to indicate not so much the idea that we are ‘past’ truth in a temporal sense (as in ‘postwar’) but in the sense that truth has been eclipsed—that it is irrelevant.”<sup>6</sup> The proponents of the post-truth analysis have often characterized this political era as being one dominated by lies and misinformation, citing the dubious nature of many of President Trump’s claims as well as the false advertising done on behalf of the Leave campaign in the UK.<sup>7</sup>

Lies and politically driven misinformation have, arguably, long played a significant role in modern politics in the West,<sup>8</sup> and a decline in public trust in the government has been widely noted to have begun decades ago.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> D.W. Pine, “Is Truth Dead? Behind the TIME Cover,” *Time*, March 23, 2017, <https://time.com/4709920/donald-trump-truth-time-cover/>.

<sup>4</sup> William Davies, “Why We Stopped Trusting Elites,” *The Guardian*, November 29, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/nov/29/why-we-stopped-trusting-elites-the-new-populism>.

<sup>5</sup> This is the definition given by the *Oxford Dictionary* and is cited most often in cases where a precise definition of “post-truth” is provided at all.

<sup>6</sup> McIntyre, 5.

<sup>7</sup> McIntyre, 1.

<sup>8</sup> In the United States for instance, one need only think of the Watergate scandal in the 1970s. As a more modern example, one need only recall the subsequently debunked espoused motivations behind invading Iraq in the early 2000s.

<sup>9</sup> Dimitrios Karmas and François Rocher, “Introduction: The Language of Trust, Distrust, and Mistrust in Multinational Democracies,” in *Trust, Distrust, and Mistrust in Multinational*

However, the proponents of the post-truth analysis nevertheless assert that post-truth designates a *new* phenomenon in which challenges to the truth are being “openly embraced as a strategy for the political subordination of reality.”<sup>10</sup> The primary concern of the proponents of this concept can hence be summed up using Lee McIntyre’s formulation: “post-truth amounts to a form of ideological supremacy, whereby its practitioners are trying to compel someone to believe in something whether there is good evidence for it or not. And this is a recipe for political domination.”<sup>11</sup>

The concept of post-truth hence contains an interesting and implicit presupposition: there exists and/or has previously existed politics based on truth, in which political beliefs are or were primarily informed by facts as opposed to emotions. In other words, using McIntyre’s language, there has existed a politics that was *non-ideological*, in which there was not a “supremacy of ideology” over politics but rather a supremacy of *truth*. The novelty of the so-called post-truth era is therefore dependent upon this “supremacy of ideology” being unprecedented. We must therefore turn towards an analysis of ideology itself in order to properly understand this concept of post-truth and its potential limits for understanding our political era.

## **Ideology and Post-Truth**

What does it mean for post-truth to consist in an “ideological supremacy” over politics? In other words, what does ideology look like in a liberal democracy and how does it become “supreme”? When French liberal Antoine Destutt de Tracy first coined the term “ideology” in 1796, it was meant

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*Democracies*, eds. Dimitrios Karmas and François Rocher, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2018, 3.

<sup>10</sup> McIntyre, xiv.

<sup>11</sup> McIntyre, 13.



as a synonym for the “science of ideas,”<sup>12</sup> providing knowledge of the immutable laws of human nature and the good.<sup>13</sup> Similar to Destutt de Tracy, modern liberalism has for the most part<sup>14</sup> maintained a similar dedication to science and rationality, only now this commitment is counterposed to ideology. Modern liberalism—in largely maintaining its adherence to rationality and reason—consequently tends to understand itself as non-ideological, less ideological, or more natural than other ideologies.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Emmet Kennedy, “‘Ideology’ from Destutt De Tracy to Marx,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40, no. 3 (1979): 353. doi:10.2307/2709242

<sup>13</sup> George Lichtheim, “The Concept of Ideology,” *History and Theory* 4, no. 2 (1965): 167. doi:10.2307/2504150. It wasn’t until when Napoleon Bonaparte, perceiving Destutt de Tracy’s liberal school of thought as politically dangerous, condemned the “ideologues” as metaphysicians, utopians, and ruinous atheists that the term began to be used in a relative and pejorative sense. It was from here that Marx (and other thinkers after Napoleon) derived his derogatory usage of the term. See: Kennedy, “‘Ideology’ from Destutt De Tracy to Marx,” 362-364.

<sup>14</sup> It ought to be noted, however, that liberalism has become increasingly difficult to define. See: Duncan Bell, “What Is Liberalism?,” *Political Theory* 42, no. 6 (2014): 682–715. doi:10.1177/0090591714535103. Nevertheless, there are prominent characteristics that can be outlined with confidence.

<sup>15</sup> It has been widely noted that the dominant liberal-conservative ideologies have often presented their “own rules of selectivity, bias, discrimination, and even systematic distortion as ‘normality’, ‘objectivity’, and ‘scientific detachment.’” See: István Mészáros, *The Power of Ideology* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2005), 3. While this tendency is certainly indicative of the internal and originary structures of the liberal ideology (as can be observed genealogically as well as in the modern examples given below), it is also likely the result of liberalism’s more contingent status as the dominant ideology. This was acutely observed by Mark Fisher in his exploration of the concept of *capitalist realism*. For Fisher, capitalist realism consists in the “widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible to even *imagine* a coherent alternative to it.” See: Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009), 2. As Alain Badiou also notes, whereas liberal capitalism was once positioned as the “absolute Good” opposed to the “Evil” of communism, it is now positioned as the “only possible way forward.” See: Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, trans. David Macey and Steve Corcoran (London: Verso, 2010), 2-5. This cynical “realism”

This phenomenon can be succinctly observed in liberal works such as Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, in which he argues that liberal democracy's victory in the Cold War marked the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution"—i.e. the attainment of History's telos.<sup>16</sup> According to Fukuyama, while other political systems were ridden with "grave defects and irrationalities," liberal democracy is "arguably free from such fundamental internal contradictions."<sup>17</sup> Other liberal works such as Steven Pinker's *Enlightenment Now* suggest that it is through the employment of reason, logic, and science that the world has become a better place, and that oncoming crises (ecological crisis, income inequality, poverty, etc.) will be resolved.<sup>18</sup> It is in these appeals to objectivity, rationality, and being "ideology-free"<sup>19</sup> that liberalism's conception of ideology understands itself to uphold a straightforward pathway to the truth by bypassing ideology altogether. This same understanding of ideology's dichotomous relationship to truth underpins the popular concept of post-truth: whereas previously truth held primacy in politics, now ideology dominates.

Thus, we can make sense of the solutions advocated by the proponents of the post-truth analysis as simply involving a *return* to the truth, rationality, and objectivity that has, in their view, been "eclipsed" by ideology in this new political epoch. McIntyre, for instance, states that in the "era of post-truth, we must challenge each and every attempt to obfuscate a factual matter and

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further cements liberalism's self-appointed position as the only rational system in existence and as being inextricable from the natural order of things.

<sup>16</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 2006), xi-xii.

<sup>17</sup> Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, xi.

<sup>18</sup> Steven Pinker, *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress* (New York, NY: Viking, 2018), 322-327.

<sup>19</sup> Mészáros, *The Power of Ideology*, 3.

challenge falsehoods before they are allowed to fester.”<sup>20</sup> James Ball, author of *Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World*, similarly makes a series of suggestions for combatting post-truth such as teaching media literacy in schools,<sup>21</sup> challenging one’s own assumptions and biases,<sup>22</sup> or having media outlets be more trustworthy and error-free.<sup>23</sup> In other words, for many of the defenders of the post-truth analysis, it is enough to have the facts on one’s side, because although “the voices on the other side may be loud, it is a powerful thing to have the facts.”<sup>24</sup>

This is where the concept of post-truth comes to its first dead-end. A *return* to truth in politics implies a *departure* from truth—or, more boldly, that there ever was truthful politics to depart from in the first place. The notion that we have entered a “post-truth era” is premised on the fallacy that truth’s irrelevance to politics is *new*. Steve Fuller suggests that post-truth is “endemic to the history of Western Thought,” tracing the origins of the concept back to the Ancient Greeks.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, a deep skepticism of the relationship between truth and politics was present in much of Plato’s works. In the *Republic*, for instance, Plato famously outlines the concept of the “noble lie” that serves to conceal the truth to preserve a political order.<sup>26</sup> Other Platonic dialogues such

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<sup>20</sup> McIntyre, 157.

<sup>21</sup> James Ball, *Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World* (London: Biteback Publishing Ltd., 2017), 260.

<sup>22</sup> Ball, *Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World*, 272.

<sup>23</sup> Ball, 268.

<sup>24</sup> McIntyre, 157. I am far from suggesting that these proposed solutions or initiatives are bad or should not be pursued. Nor am I arguing against facts. For instance, media literacy training in public schools will, indeed, become increasingly necessary. My point, as will be further expounded, is that these solutions do not come close to addressing the real problem.

<sup>25</sup> Steve Fuller, *Post-Truth: Knowledge as a Power Game* (New York, NY: Anthem Press, 2018), 181.

<sup>26</sup> Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1968), 414b.

as *Gorgias* also demonstrate the problematic relationship between truth and politics in Ancient Greek society through an engagement with “rhetoric,” in which interlocutors such as Callicles assert that the truth and justice that Socrates seeks are merely “pretty words,” “man-made conventions” and “pointless trumpery” that hinder the desirable pursuit of political power for personal gain.<sup>27</sup>

The so-called post-truth era, however, does not indicate a unique return to the political problems that scourged the Ancient Greeks either. Indeed, the post-truth predicament remained typical of Western politics long after Plato. Many Enlightenment figures viewed the Enlightenment as the departure from what could be defined as post-truth politics, in which religion, emotion, ideology, or dogmas ruled our political and social lives instead of reason, rationality, and science.<sup>28</sup> Similarly (yet simultaneously in opposition to many Enlightenment thinkers), Karl Marx also believed that ideological phantasies could be transcended in favour of a scientific alternative.<sup>29</sup> In an analysis of 20<sup>th</sup> Century “totalitarianism”, Hannah Arendt also describes a phenomenon strikingly similar to what the concept of post-truth describes. She states: “In an ever-changing, incomprehensible world the masses had reached the point where they would, at the same time, believe everything and nothing, think that everything was possible and that nothing was true.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 492b-c.

<sup>28</sup> Ronald S. Love, *The Enlightenment* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 75-77.

<sup>29</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The German Ideology,” in *The German Ideology: Including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, Great Books in Philosophy (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998), 43. As will become evident, although Althusser’s theories are fundamentally Marxist, this is one of the ways Althusser differs most from Marx. Marx conceived of ideology proper as having emerged from the bourgeois mode of production, whereas Althusser conceives of ideology in a much more all-encompassing manner.

<sup>30</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, A Harvest Book (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1968), 382.

In this way, the concept of post-truth hits its first dead-end insofar as its intuition, that there is something new about the social and political events of our times, cannot be satisfied by *what* the concept of post-truth identifies as *new*. That is, the so-called post-truth era lacks any meaningful *newness*. Under this framework, Donald Trump, the Leave campaign, and the political tactics that underpinned their success would therefore be conceived of merely as a continuation of the Western tradition. At most, the novelty of the so-called post-truth era would be a matter of degree—nothing but an intensification of an existing phenomenon. Does this then render the concept of post-truth’s intuition of *newness* irrelevant? Is there *really* nothing *new* going on?

While post-truth politics, as it is popularly conceived, has always existed, it is not correct to assume that *nothing* unprecedented is occurring in the West’s social and political world. There is a relatively new form of politics (currently being labelled as post-truth) being practiced by its associated populist movements that is a recent anomaly in liberal democracy. Donald Trump and the Brexit referendum indeed represent a popular rejection of many liberal democratic ideals (tolerance, cosmopolitanism, free trade, etc.) that very few saw coming.<sup>31</sup> Some have gone to the extent of arguing that Trump’s election poses a profound authoritarian threat to the very institutions of liberal democracy.<sup>32</sup> Regardless of how exaggerated this analysis may be, the concept of post-truth politics at the very least indicates a significant *challenge* to the established political order since, as many have noted, post-truth politics has been seen as a tool to rhetorically and politically assault the so-called “liberal

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<sup>31</sup> Chris Perez, “Pundits Were Spectacularly Wrong About the 2016 Election,” *New York Post*, November 20, 2016, <https://nypost.com/2016/11/10/pundits-were-spectacularly-wrong-about-the-2016-election/>.

<sup>32</sup> Masha Gessen, “Autocracy: Rules for Survival,” *The New York Review of Books*, November 10, 2016, <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2016/11/10/trump-election-autocracy-rules-for-survival/>.

elite.”<sup>33</sup> Whereas in 1989 liberal democracy’s legitimacy to many appeared unquestionable,<sup>34</sup> many see post-truth politics as a profound threat to many of the fundamental tenets of liberal democracy.

In conceiving of this new challenge to liberal democracy as being distinctly a challenge to truth, however, the concept of post-truth encounters its second dead-end. The concept of post-truth not only fails to adequately grasp *what* new politics are present (as it cannot merely be the subversion of truth) but *why* this new form of politics challenging liberal democracy has emerged. By upholding the truth/ideology dichotomy and placing the subjects<sup>35</sup> of so-called post-truth politics exclusively on the side of delusion and falsity, the concept of post-truth neglects the self-understanding of those propelling this new politics. While this self-understanding (or, as we will see, ideology) may be steeped in falsehoods and lies, to dismiss it as *essentially* being a disconnection from truth annihilates the capacity to find truth underneath, i.e. the real reasons *why* massive amounts of people have adopted this particular relation to the truth. In other words, the question becomes not how this self-understanding has provoked an ideological suspension of reality but rather *what* in our reality has provoked this self-understanding?

We, therefore, need a new way of understanding the socio-political phenomenon that the concept of post-truth attempts to grasp. That is, we need a way of characterizing our political present that provides an understanding of how it is connected to and shaped by some underlying truth of our world. I

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<sup>33</sup> William Davies, “Why We Stopped Trusting Elites,” *The Guardian*, November 29, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/nov/29/why-we-stopped-trusting-elites-the-new-populism>.

<sup>34</sup> See Francis Fukuyama’s aforementioned *The End of History and the Last Man*.

<sup>35</sup> By which I mean the participants, practitioners, and supporters of these right-wing populist movements which function via these untruths or so-called “post-truth” politics.

argue that we can find these theoretical resources in the French Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser, and his attempt to reconceptualize the nature and significance of ideology.

## Althusserian Ideology and Post-Truth

Unlike the simple binary opposition of ideology and truth underpinning the idea of post-truth, Althusser begins his analysis by grasping ideology as “a matter of the *lived* relation between men and their world.”<sup>36</sup> This relation, however, does not merely constitute the act of distorting or subverting this world’s reality. What this living of the relation means, rather, is that ideology is “not a simple relation but a relation between relations, a second degree relation.”<sup>37</sup> This “second degree relation” constitutes the “way [that people] live the relation between them and their conditions of existence” which “presupposes both a real relation and an ‘*imaginary*’, ‘*lived*’ relation.”<sup>38</sup> Similarly to the theorists of post-truth, Althusser upholds a certain objectivity (a “real

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<sup>36</sup> Louis Althusser, “Marxism and Humanism,” in *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2005), 233.

<sup>37</sup> Althusser, “Marxism and Humanism,” 233.

<sup>38</sup> Althusser, 233.

relation”<sup>39</sup>) that can be distinguished from ideology.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, for Althusser, ideology is not entirely distinct or estranged from the concrete real—as in the popular post-truth model—nor is ideology in direct contact with it. Rather, Althusser formulates ideology as being “*illusion/allusion*.”<sup>41</sup> Ideology alludes to reality in an *illusory* way in that it is the *imaginary* lens by which we interpret and experience our *real* lives and its conditions.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> To clarify what Althusser means by a “real relation”, it would be useful to briefly explicate what Althusser means by *science* and its relationship to *ideology*—Althusser makes a sharp distinction between the two. For Althusser, science has as its object the *concrete-reality* that is revealed through the *concrete-in-thought*—i.e. knowledge. See: Althusser, “On the Materialist Dialectic,” in *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2005), 186. In other words, whereas ideology is the way we relate to our concrete-reality and social relations and thereby plays a practico-social function (as is outlined below), science’s function is that of knowledge production whereby one may uncover the *essence* of social relations and ideologies. See: Althusser, “Marxism and Humanism,” 231. Althusser gives the example of the bourgeois who “lives in the ideology of freedom” but whose real relations are governed by the “law of a liberal capitalist economy”. See: Althusser, “Marxism and Humanism, 234. It ought to be noted, however, that for Althusser science is not merely an empirical task; Althusser’s epistemology (for more on this, see: *Reading Capital*) asserts that the development of scientific knowledge goes from the *abstract* to the *concrete* (as opposed to the other way around), and often begins with an interrogation of an ideology. See: Althusser, “*On the Materialist Dialectic*,” 184–185. Further investigation into this topic is certainly warranted (albeit outside the scope of this article), particularly alongside other approaches such as the Lacanian *Real* (for a brief extrapolation of some of Lacan and Althusser’s similarities, see Althusser’s essay: *Freud and Lacan*) or Foucault’s work on the production of knowledges (which would likely serve to problematize some of Althusser’s presuppositions).

<sup>40</sup> Althusser’s theory of ideology is therefore not ultra-relativist or subjectivist. Reality is not completely subsumed into ideology (or vice versa).

<sup>41</sup> Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation),” in *On Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), 36.

<sup>42</sup> Due to the limited scope of this article, I focus on the basic structure of ideology rather than Althusser’s more famous exploration of the “materiality of ideology” and the role of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) (Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation), 36). Nevertheless, the role that ISAs (in particular, the media ISA)



Ideology, for Althusser, consequently plays the necessary and unavoidable social function of equipping people “to respond to the demands of their conditions of existence.”<sup>43</sup> Whereas the popular post-truth analysis presupposes a conception of ideology wherein ideology is surmountable through unbiased access to the truth, Althusser presents a conception of ideology that has a certain inescapability. Ideology as such is largely *unconscious*—or, it is *consciousness* in so far as it is the manner in which we *unconsciously* become *conscious* of our world.<sup>44</sup> There can, therefore, be no such thing as a post-ideological society in the way that the popular conception of post-truth and the solutions to it imply. Althusser states that only “an ideological world outlook could have imagined societies *without ideology* and accepted the utopian idea of a world in which ideology (not just one of its historical forms) would disappear without trace, to be replaced by *science*.”<sup>45</sup>

Although what the defender of the post-truth label would designate as ideological is indeed considered ideological under the Althusserian model as well (e.g. Trump’s followers are in fact ideological), the key difference is that Althusser replaces the truth/ideology dichotomy with an ever-present relation between truth and ideology, thereby rendering the very idea of a post-truth era untenable. For Althusser, ideology in general (as opposed to an assortment of *ideologies*) has no history, it is “omnipresent, trans-historical and therefore immutable in form throughout the extent of history.”<sup>46</sup> There can therefore be

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have played in the propagation of the ideology of “post-truth” would be helpful in understanding the emergence of such a phenomenon.

<sup>43</sup> Althusser, “Marxism and Humanism,” 235.

<sup>44</sup> Althusser, 233.

<sup>45</sup> Althusser, 232.

<sup>46</sup> Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation),” 35. Althusser borrows this component of his theory from Freud. The omnipresent and trans-

no such era in which ideology *in-itself* uniquely dominates politics as suggested by the concept of post-truth. Arguably, under the Althusserian model, every single political era would thereby be understood as being always-already dominated by ideology insofar as we are always-already relating to our world.

Particular ideologies (i.e. specific manifestations of ideology in general), however, do have histories. In other words, while ideology in general constitutes the trans-historical character of ideology *in-itself*, particular ideologies consist in the different ways we have historically related to our world. Understood as a particular ideology, the political phenomenon that the concept of post-truth designates would consequently not be *post*-truth at all. Rather, it would be none other than a particular and historically relative way of relating to the truth. In other words, the political predicament associated with post-truth embodies not a *supremacy* of ideology but its own form of ideology—an *illusory allusion*.

This is the way in which the Althusserian model overcomes the first dead-end of the post-truth analysis. Whereas the popular concept of post-truth only accounts for the *illusory* component of this ideological relation while failing to account for its unique historical placement—i.e. its *newness*—the Althusserian framework accounts for such newness through ideology's *alluding* function. The *allusion* of ideology is its relation to what Althusser calls an "existing *ideological field*" and "the social problems and social structure which sustain the ideology and are reflected in it."<sup>47</sup> As such, for Althusser, "the developmental motor principle of a particular ideology cannot be found within ideology itself but outside it, in what *underlies* (*l'en-deçà de*)"<sup>48</sup> the particular

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historical nature of the *unconsciousness* that Althusser is describing here is very similar to Freud's unconscious.

<sup>47</sup> Louis Althusser, "On the Young Marx," in *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2005), 62.

<sup>48</sup> French translation added by editor.

ideology.”<sup>49</sup> Given this method of analysis, the politics associated with the post-truth label ought not only to be understood by its falsehoods (e.g. ‘immigrants are taking the jobs’) but must be understood in relation to “*the objective internal reference system of its particular themes, the system of questions commanding the answers given by the ideology.*”<sup>50</sup>

The newness contained in an ideology is then a particular reality—often a new problem, difficulty, or contradiction present in a social order that poses itself as a question to be answered by the ideology. The Althusserian framework thereby overcomes the second dead-end confronting the concept of post-truth as well. It does so by characterizing the *self-understanding* of the subjects of this new form of politics (currently labelled as post-truth) as consisting in the act of ideology giving the *illusory answers* to the *real questions* that spawned the ideology in the first place. For Althusser, ideologies therefore “need only be ‘interpreted’ to discover the reality of the world behind their imaginary representation of that world.”<sup>51</sup> Whereas at first glance ideology appears to be that which conceals reality, the interrogation of the self-understanding of an ideology (i.e. its answers) can indeed reveal something concrete about our reality (i.e. the social problems posed as questions) that explains *why* the ideology emerged. The politics associated with so-called post-truth politics is then understood not as the *source* of a modern political crisis but rather a response, effect, or symptom of it.

We now have a way to overcome the double dead-end of post-truth and get at both the *what* and *why* of the intuition of *newness* that provokes the popular conception of a post-truth era. As we have seen, the *newness* of the phenomenon that the concept of post-truth designates does not concern the

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<sup>49</sup> Althusser, “On the Young Marx,” 63.

<sup>50</sup> Althusser, 67.

<sup>51</sup> Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation),” 36.

degree to which truth is being undermined in political discourse but rather the way a social reality is being lived and understood. As such, the concept of post-truth loses its theoretical grounding; there is no "ideological supremacy" unique to our present. What, then, becomes of post-truth as a phenomenon and concept? In other words, what are the discursive implications of the Althusserian interjection on the socio-political inquiry pursued by the proponents of the post-truth analysis? Furthermore, if our political present is defined not by a subversion of the truth but rather a *new* ideological way of relating to *new* social problems, then what precisely are these problems spawning new ideologies?

Although a comprehensive answer to these questions lies outside the scope of this article, I will nevertheless conclude with the proposal that "post-truth" ought to be understood as an ideology in two distinct ways: first, the concept of post-truth points towards (yet nevertheless conceals) a new populist and nationalist ideology that presents a unique challenge to liberal democracy. Second, the post-truth analysis (i.e. the concept of post-truth as a way of understanding our political predicament) becomes an ideology itself: an *illusory* way of relating to *real* problems and challenges in the political order.

## **"Post-Truth" as Ideology**

As we have seen, ideology for Althusser is the way in which we live the "inadequacy/adequacy of the relation between [us] and the world."<sup>52</sup> Therefore, characterizing the politics of the populist governments and movements associated with post-truth as a particular ideology (and hence as being not altogether removed from concrete social reality) is not to suggest that its lies and misinformation contain hidden truths. It is not to suggest that when

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<sup>52</sup> Althusser, "Marxism and Humanism," 235

Donald Trump claimed that Mexico will pay for the southern border wall<sup>53</sup> or when the Leave campaign claimed that the “UK pays £350 million a week to the EU,”<sup>54</sup> that these statements are true or even partly true. What concerns this method of inquiry is not to what extent these statements are valid or true but rather to identify the ideology underlying these statements.

As was previously noted, the recent right-wing populist movements associated with so-called post-truth politics indicate uncertainty and discontent in liberal democracy. These movements—characterized by anti-establishment rhetoric, xenophobia, and distrust in globalization—can therefore be understood as indicative of a new ideology insofar as they are new ways of relating to liberal democracy. In other words, the members or sympathizers of these populist movements which often function via falsehoods are relating to the objective social and political world (“relating to their relations” in Althusser’s language) in a particular way (the unique shape of the ideology) because of particular objective conditions that have developed in the world. While the core model of liberal democracy remains intact and fundamentally indistinct from its previous forms—and is therefore far from new—this ideology represents a popular backlash against *new* problems and developments in liberal democracy.

Two of the dominant theories explaining the current rise of right-wing nationalist populism—the “economic insecurity” thesis and the “cultural backlash” thesis<sup>55</sup>—point towards these new developments in liberal democracy. The former approach “emphasizes the consequences for electoral

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<sup>53</sup> James Ball, *Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World* (London: Biteback Publishing Ltd., 2017), 3.

<sup>54</sup> Ball, *Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World*, 2.

<sup>55</sup> Ronald F. Inglehart and Pippa Norris, “Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash,” *Harvard Kennedy School Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, no. 16-026, (2016), 2.

behavior arising from profound changes transforming the workforce and society in post-industrial economies.”<sup>56</sup> For instance, deindustrialization—widespread in the West since the neoliberal turn—has led to the “elimination of jobs that were exploitative but meaningful (the steel worker in a bustling factory) and the rise of jobs that are exploitative but feel meaningless (like security guard in a shopping mall),” lending to higher support for Trump and Brexit from affected small and rural areas.<sup>57</sup> The “cultural backlash” thesis, on the other hand, emphasizes the reactionary response to massive socio-cultural changes that the West has experienced since the postwar consensus.<sup>58</sup> This phenomenon can be most charitably understood as alienation from an increasingly unrecognizable world and at worst as a backlash from those who seek to preserve their privilege. Either way, both theses are based on the premise that there are new developments in liberal democracy that have spawned the right-wing populist reaction.

The second way “post-truth” can be understood as an ideology is as a way of accounting for this populist challenge. As liberal democracy continues to be challenged, so too will liberalism within its own problematic seek to ideologically comprehend the social problems of the day. While liberalism continues to face crises it may not (at least presently) be equipped to deal with, it has fallen back into itself by placing itself on the side of truth in the truth/ideology dichotomy. Rather than facing the realities of our political predicament, it resorts to questioning the sanity of its challengers. For instance, some have characterized the state of the modern Western political predicament

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<sup>56</sup> Inglehart and Norris, “Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash,” 2.

<sup>57</sup> David Harvey, “Universal Alienation,” *TripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique, Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society* 16, no. 2 (May 4, 2018): 428-430.

<sup>58</sup> Inglehart and Norris, 2-3.

as being the result of a “collective insanity” or “psychosis,”<sup>59</sup> while others have accused right-wing populist leaders of deliberately deluding “millions of lower income voters” by “playing on [their] prejudices”.<sup>60</sup> Another popular maneuver has been to clinically speculate on Trump and Brexit supporters’ psychological well-being.<sup>61</sup>

In other words, by placing the supporters of Trump, Brexit, and other right-wing nationalist populisms on the side of pure falsity, the concept of post-truth not only conceals what’s really going on (as outlined above) but reveals its own ideology. In Althusser’s words, liberalism is functioning within its own “ideological field,” in which ideology and truth are understood dichotomously. In response to social questions (populist challenges to liberal democracy and its root causes), the ideology of post-truth becomes the answer (*we* are sane and truthful; *they* are delusional). Contained within this concept of post-truth is therefore a “relation between relations”—a way of living and understanding our political present that fits a well-established narrative.

## Conclusion

This article has argued that under the Althusserian lens, the phenomenon that the concept of post-truth politics is attempting to address cannot be adequately understood or resolved through the truth/ideology binary

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<sup>59</sup> W. J. T. Mitchell, “American Psychosis: Trumpism and the Nightmare of History,” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/american-psychosis-trumpism-and-the-nightmare-of-history/>.

<sup>60</sup> Joseph Ingram, “The Dangerous Delusions of Brexit and Trump,” *iPolitics*, February 23, 2018, <https://ipolitics.ca/article/dangerous-delusions-brexit-trump/>.

<sup>61</sup> John Richer, “Psychological Processes at Work in Trump and Brexiters,” *Guardian*, January 14, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jan/14/psychological-processes-at-work-in-trump-and-the-brexiters>.

which underlies the post-truth analysis. Rather than being an “ideological supremacy” over truth itself, this article proposed that post-truth (as a concept as well as phenomenon) may be understood as a twofold manifestation of ideology in so far as it is an *illusory* way of relating to *reality*. This approach, I argued, retrieves the desirable *newness* attributed to our present political crisis by understanding the politics attributed to post-truth as not being the source of a crisis but a reaction to it.

Traditional approaches to understanding the concept of post-truth leave us with a double dead-end. First, by treating the idea of post-truth as *new*, the traditional account fails to historicize the relationship between truth and politics and, by extension, is unable to recognize the *newness* of our political era. The basic presupposition of the post-truth analysis—that the newness of contemporary politics is defined by an unprecedented separation of truth and politics—fails to account for the tumultuous history of the relationship between truth and politics in the West. As was outlined, the concept of post-truth—as it is defined by the proponents of the concept—can be observed throughout the history of Western political thought. The problematic relationship between truth and politics that can be observed in Plato—which the Enlightenment attempted (and ultimately failed) to resolve—has not dissipated nor presently taken on a unique form. At best, there has been a recent exacerbation of an already existing phenomenon. By historicizing the phenomenon, we can appreciate the dead-end of grasping post-truth as a historically new form of or trend in politics.

Second, by treating the politics associated with post-truth as being essentially disconnected from truth, the traditional analysis fails to uncover some truth about our own world. This condition is the second dead-end we encountered. For, the post-truth analysis supposes once this political trend has



vanquished, so too will the social problems that spawned it.<sup>62</sup> In other words, the real *newness* of our political era—or at least the source of this *newness*—will not vanish with Trump’s defeat, a second referendum, or otherwise. So long as the questions remain—likely in the form of contradictions, alienation, quiet crises, etc.—there will be the ideological answers attempting to diagnose the illness, never mind the accuracy of the diagnosis. At this moment, the scapegoats are the immigrants, the refugees, the Jews, the Muslims, the feminists, the transgender community, the “neo-Marxist postmodernists,” the “globalists,” or otherwise. Many of these narratives are far from new. However their current prospects for longevity are really beside the point. As more crises in liberal capitalism approach or accelerate (climate crisis, refugees, income inequality, etc.), this need to appeal to ideology as a means of understanding these realities will not cease.

As such, the problems defining our political present go far beyond the misinformation labelled as post-truth or the right-wing populist ideologies currently manifesting. Indeed, the governments and movements most frequently associated with the post-truth label very well may not survive the oncoming election cycle (as I write this, mainstream polling predicts that many of the major Democrats in the primaries would handedly defeat Trump<sup>63</sup> and

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<sup>62</sup> It is of course a very difficult task pinpointing with precision these social problems. Such a task—if to be done precisely and comprehensively—is resolutely outside the scope of this article. The main purpose of this inquiry is rather to merely point analysis in a different direction. This said, some preliminary remarks can be made; a fundamental change in the nature of work (i.e. neoliberal deindustrialization), income inequality, rapid cultural change, political alienation and social atomization are all examples of problems or occurrences that have either appeared or intensified in recent decades.

<sup>63</sup> Harry Enten, “CNN’S Latest Poll on 2020 Democrats,” *CNN*, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/politics/live-news/cnn-poll-10-23-2019/index.html>.

Brexit negotiations are in absolute disarray.<sup>64</sup>) Though of course one ought not to count on President Trump being defeated in 2020 nor count on the current wave of right-wing nationalist populism subsiding soon, the principle consequences of the Althusserian inquiry maintains its relevancy irrespective of the results of upcoming elections or the health of populist and nationalist movements. The role that the Althusserian framework can play is therefore to dissect these oncoming ideologies, to unmask them as the illusory allusions that they are so as to more concretely understand the social phenomena that underpin them.

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<sup>64</sup> Lisa O'Carroll, "Brexit Weekly Briefing: Frantic Negotiation End in Anticlimax for PM," *The Guardian*, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/oct/22/brexit-weekly-briefing-frantic-negotiations-end-anticlimax-boris-johnson>.

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# Politicizing Cultural Tourism as a Means of Development

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The origin of tourism as a development strategy began in Spain during the 1960s,<sup>1</sup> and became the model that other nations, particularly those in the Global South, adopted as a development strategy. During its heyday in the 1960s, 93 percent of all Spanish export revenues came from the tourism sector.<sup>2</sup> Until recently, tourism was proposed as an effective long-term strategy for development of the Spanish economy;<sup>3</sup> however, following the 2008 global financial crisis, the tourism industry in Spain collapsed. Current research suggests that Spain has lost its competitive edge in tourism as more competitively priced tourist destinations entered the market.<sup>4</sup> The rise and fall of the tourism industry in the Spanish case indicates that tourism may not be the sustainable development strategy that it is thought to be. Nevertheless, the economic benefits of tourism, namely that entry into the tourist market has low overhead costs, and thus significant revenue potential, maintains tourism as a popular development strategy in the Global South.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, tourism is associated with a variety of serious social and political issues, including the

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Brown and Derek Hall. "Tourism and Development in the Global South: The Issues." *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 5 (2008): 840.

<sup>2</sup> Brown and Hall.

<sup>3</sup> Jacint Balageur and Cantavella-Jordá. "Tourism and a long-run economic growth factor: the Spanish Case." *Applied Economics* 34, no. 7 (2002): 877-899.

<sup>4</sup> Jose Francisco Perles-Ribes, Ana Belén Ramón-Rodríguez, Antonio Rubian Serrano, and Luis Moreno-Izquierdo. "Economic crisis and tourism competitiveness in Spain: permanent effects or transitory shocks?" *Current Issues in Tourism* 19, no. 12 (2016):1210-1234.

<sup>5</sup> Brown and Hall, "Tourism and Development in the Global South: The Issues," 840.

tendency to exploit labourers, foreign control over tourism infrastructure (international hotels and resorts for example), disruption of culture, sexual exploitation of women and girls, and increased environmental degradation.<sup>6</sup> As a development strategy, then, tourism involves much more than simple economic benefits.

That said, not all tourism is the same and as I will demonstrate later in the paper, precisising definitions and types of tourism is a difficult task. Cultural tourism, in brief, is tourism that engages with local culture. Within development policy, cultural tourism in particular has been praised as a means to create jobs in hospitality and tourism to garner economic growth that the state can then funnel back into the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, increased tourist populations and the associated commodification of culture create their own sorts of development problems that cannot be measured in terms of economics.<sup>8</sup> The demand for *cultural* tourism, specifically, increased significantly in the 1990s with the expansion of globalization and an increased interest in more adventurous types of tourist activities.<sup>9</sup> Today, cultural tourism is recognized as a “high-profile, mass-market activity,”<sup>10</sup> accounting for an estimated 39 percent of all tourism.<sup>11</sup> Given the popularity of cultural tourism, a better understanding of the economic and social impacts of cultural tourism as a development strategy is needed.

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<sup>6</sup> Brown and Hall, “Tourism and Development in the Global South: The Issues,” 841.

<sup>7</sup> Christian M. Rogerson and Clinton D van der Merwe. “Heritage Tourism in the Global South: Development implications of the Cradle of Humanity World Heritage Site, South Africa.” *Local Economy* 31, no. 1-2 (2016): 234-248.

<sup>8</sup> Bob McKercher and Hillary du Cros. *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*. (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2002), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Brown and Hall, “Tourism and the Global South: The Issues,” 840.

<sup>10</sup> McKercher and du Cros, *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Greg Richards. “Cultural Tourism: A review of recent research and trends.” *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 36 (2018): 12-21.



Although there are an ever-increasing number of variables that may be analyzed in a discussion of development, this paper focuses on three such variables: first, economic development as a source of security and autonomy for a state; second sustainable environmental development as a source of potential insecurity at both the state and international level; and, finally, culture itself as the unique character that is being sold for development and which must be preserved for the people to whom the culture belongs. Thus, I ask: what are the implications of cultural tourism as a development strategy on economic development, environmental sustainability, and on culture itself?

My analysis employs Luigi Pellizzoni's theory of the biopolitics of neoliberalism alongside Arturo Escobar's post-colonial development theory—both of which share a Foucauldian analysis that emphasises the role of observation and self-sanction in regulating behaviour. Pellizzoni's interpretation of the biopolitical effects of neoliberalism establishes a unique connection between neoliberalism and the biological world. He argues that the market logic of neoliberalism inserts itself into social life by normalizing individualism, competition, and entrepreneurialship as *moral duties*, such that individuals voluntarily submit to the demands of neoliberal rule.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the inherently diffuse and dynamic structure of neoliberalism realized by these agents, alongside “the neoliberal view of limitless expansion of an unconstrained will” intersects with the “fully agential yet at the same time fully disposable biological world”.<sup>13</sup> The result is that the biological world is shaped by, and understood through, neoliberal rationalities. Neoliberalism has two key features that make international tourism possible. First, neoliberalism encourages globalization through market expansion, thus making the world more accessible for travel. Second, the consumptive market logic of

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<sup>12</sup> Luigi Pellizzoni. *Ontological Politics in a Disposable World: The New Mastery of Nature*. London: Routledge, (2015): 61.

<sup>13</sup> Pellizzoni., 64.

neoliberalism demands ever more things to be bought and sold. Eventually, the market logic of neoliberalism expands beyond the consumption of material goods to include nonmaterial goods, here specifically experiences of culture. As an economic development strategy made possible by the expansive demands of neoliberalism, cultural tourism, then, participates in shaping neoliberal rationalities.

Post-colonial development theory is inherently concerned with the effect of development on culture and is often exacerbated in relationships between the Global North and the Global South. For Escobar, the Global South is constructed via the normalizing gaze of the North, which posits itself as the standard of “developed” and the Global South as the Other, which means as backwards, primitive, savage; in short not like “us”. In the name of development, the Global South begins to accept this view of itself by aspiring to the cultural and development standards of the Global North.<sup>14</sup> In short, intercultural relationships, particularly those of power and dominance, shape culture itself. Post-colonial development theory, then, has something unique to contribute to the discourse of cultural tourism because culture is explicitly the object of the tourist’s gaze. On the one hand, tourists from the Global North seem to value the culture of the Other; however, on the other hand, they entrench a power dynamic wherein the host is maintained as the Other.

As I will demonstrate, cultural tourism as a development strategy presents a series of double binds for developing states, wherein economic benefits, environmental protection, and culture itself may be supported and maintained, while simultaneously being undermined. To support this argument, I highlight a series of cases from the Global South. In the economic argument, I turn to Morocco and Egypt to highlight the opportunities and risks

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<sup>14</sup> Arturo Escobar, “Discourse and Power in Development: Michel Foucault and the Relevance of his Work to the Third World,” *Alternatives X* 10, no. 3 (1985): 377-400.

of economic dependence on tourism. In the environmental argument, I turn to the global case of climate change and the effect of economic disparity between the Global North and Global South on climate change and climate responsibility. And finally, in the cultural argument, I turn to South Africa, Mexico, and Cambodia to demonstrate how selling culture may be educational or appropriative.

## A brief and problematic definition

As a subset of tourism, cultural tourism has proven difficult to define.<sup>15</sup> Tourism in general can be broken down into various subcategories, for example eco-tourism, adventure tourism, volun-tourism, religious tourism, medical tourism, package tourism, and sex tourism, to name but a few. This variety is further complicated by the fact that any given trip may involve multiple types of tourism. If for example, a person was to go on a safari in the sub-Saharan desert, the trip could be classified as package tour that encompasses both eco-tourism and adventure tourism. Cultural tourism, though more specific, is a polymorphous category of tourism that refers to any tourist activity that engages with the local culture, including tangible experiences such as visits to museums, world heritage sites, ancient ruins, religious spaces, and consumption of art, architecture, cuisine etc., and intangible experiences related to feeling immersed in local culture.<sup>16</sup> Culture tourism, then, is a catch-all for things like heritage tourism, religious tourism,

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<sup>15</sup> Douglas Noonan, and Ilde Rizzo, "Economics of cultural tourism: issue and perspectives." *Journal of Cultural Economics* 41, no. 2 (2017): 95-107; Linda K Richter, "Power, Politics, and Political Science: The Politicization of Tourism," 189:203; Greg Richards, "What is Cultural Tourism?" *Van Maaren*. Edited by Ergoed voor Toerisme. Weesp: National Contact Monumenten, 2003; Greg Richards, "Creativity and Tourism: The State of the Art," *Annals of Tourism Research* 38, no. 4 (2011): 1225-1253; McKercher and du Cros *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*.

<sup>16</sup> Greg Richards, "What is Cultural Tourism?" 2003; Greg Richards, "Creativity and Tourism: The State of the Art," (2011).

and ethnic tourism, but does not include business trips or travel to visit friends and family.<sup>17</sup> With this definition in mind it is easy to see why tracking and analyzing cultural tourism is a herculean task.

## **Tourism and Economic Development**

The tourism industry is one of the largest economies in the world, accounting for a little over 10.4 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP) or gross world product (GWP).<sup>18</sup> The largest tourist economies are primarily Western states; however, of these states the tourism industry is a small portion of GDP. Tourism accounted for 1.4 trillion dollars in the US economy in 2018, which represented a mere 7.7 percent of total GDP.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, states that are highly dependent on tourism tend to be in the Global South. For example, tourism accounted for 109 billion US dollars<sup>20</sup> of the Thai economy in 2018, which was 21.2 percent of total GDP.<sup>21</sup> In 2017,<sup>22</sup> tourism accounted for 52.9 billion US dollars of Morocco's GDP, which accounted for 18.5 percent of total GDP.<sup>23</sup> In fact, tourism has been a major component of Morocco's development strategy since 1999 when King Muhammad VI spearheaded a campaign to make tourism Morocco's leading

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<sup>17</sup> Christian M Rogerson. and Clinton D van der Merwe, "Heritage Tourism in the Global South: Development implications of the Cradle of Humanity World Heritage Site, South Africa," *Local Economy* 31, no. 1-2 (2016): 234.

<sup>18</sup> WTTC World, 2018. \*World Travel and Tourism Council calculates global and national tourism statistics, which will be cited again in this paper by the region and the year of analysis.

<sup>19</sup> WTTC US, 2018

<sup>20</sup> My calculation to US dollars using exchange rates from 2018 found at [www.exchange-rates.org](http://www.exchange-rates.org). In Thailand this represent roughly 3.5 trillion Bhat.

<sup>21</sup> WTTC Thailand, 2018

<sup>22</sup> The WTTC stopped calculating tourism statistic for individual North African Countries in 2018, they now provide a single report for all of West Africa.

<sup>23</sup> WTTC Morocco, 2017. \*My calculation to US dollars, in Morocco this represents roughly 194.4 billion Dirham.

industry.<sup>24</sup> The result has been a rapid increase in the number of tourists as well as a shift in economic development.<sup>25</sup>

The economic development of the tourism sector can be classified by the pre-Fordist, Fordist, and post-Fordist models, which correspond to modes of production and consumption rather than historical global moments.<sup>26</sup> In the tourism sector, the pre-Fordist stage is characterized by the prevalence of family businesses and limited marketing, followed by the Fordist phase, which “is characterized by the mass production of standardized goods and services, to reduce their unit production costs.”<sup>27</sup> Finally, the post-Fordist, or neoliberal, phase is characterized by a flexible model of accumulation that impacts both production and labour and the expansion of tourism to the global market by way of modern technology.<sup>28</sup> Morocco entered the post-Fordist phase of tourism development in 2000 through tax incentives to court international investment in the tourism sector, while maintaining state investment in the industry by supplying both financial and natural resources to investors.<sup>29</sup> The post-Fordist phase of tourism encourages the continued acquisition of land by investors not only to supply, or more accurately to *create*, the demand for tourist destinations, but also to serve the investment interests of tourism developers.<sup>30</sup> By reinvesting tourism profits back into land acquisition, investors are able to generate higher profits than simply providing hospitality accommodations and services.<sup>31</sup> However, there is little evidence to show that these policies have benefited the Moroccan people; in fact, the development of the tourism

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<sup>24</sup> Fernando Almeida Garcia, “Analysis of tourism policy in a developing country: the case of Morocco,” *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism Leisure and Events* 9, no. 2 (2017): 1.

<sup>25</sup> Garcia, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Garcia, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Garcia, “Analysis of tourism policy in a developing country: the case of Morocco,” 3.

<sup>28</sup> Garcia, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Garcia, 19.

<sup>30</sup> Garcia, 20.

<sup>31</sup> Garcia, 20.

economy appears to have been designed to support the political structure of the monarchy and the political elites within Morocco.<sup>32</sup>

Still, tourism is regarded as an essential and effective development strategy in Morocco because of the rapid expansion of the tourism industry and the employment and infrastructure that supports it.<sup>33</sup> The Vision 2010 plan for tourism development in Morocco revolved around boosting the economy through tourism infrastructure and job growth and training in the hospitality sector.<sup>34</sup> This plan was generally successful in achieving its stated objectives; however, development of tourist infrastructure, namely beach resorts, lagged behind the stated goals, which was attributed to the 2008 global financial crisis.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, the 2008 financial crisis highlights an important point. The fact the states in the global South are dependent on tourism means that they are susceptible to exogenous shocks in the global tourism market, which is exacerbated by increased reliance on foreign travellers for economic growth, specifically a reliance on individual tourists. Because of this, the state must market itself in such a way that the individual tourist finds the destination an appealing and safe experience. The state can facilitate this interest with effective marketing; however, some factors are beyond the state's control. States remains susceptible to unforeseen shocks, for example tsunamis, war, hurricanes, recession, and diseases, and some suggest that states can take steps to mitigate these types of unforeseen events.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, at the time of writing this paper, the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has effectively shut down tourism around the globe.

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<sup>32</sup> Garcia, 3.

<sup>33</sup> See: Hatim el Gharbi, "Tourism is part of Morocco's path towards sustainable development." *Ideas for Development*. Accessed January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019: <https://ideas4development.org/en/tourism-is-part-of-moroccos-path-towards-sustainable-development/> ; Siona Jenkins, "Mohamad Sajid: tourism is essential for Morocco's development," *Financial Times*. Accessed January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019: <https://www.ft.com/content/783fc966-5c23-11e7-b553-e2df1b0c3220>

<sup>34</sup> Garcia, "Analysis of tourism policy in a developing country: the case of Morocco," 13.

<sup>35</sup> Garcia, 13.

<sup>36</sup> Richter, "Power, Politics, and Political Science: The Politicization of Tourism," 192.

Even under normal circumstances, mitigation of risks requires capital, and if the developing state relies on tourism as the means to attain capital, states must walk a delicate balance when it comes to supporting a tourism economy that appeals to travellers while developing the state. State security is a factor in the desirability of a tourist destination—as it is for development—and as such it is in the state’s interest to promote political stability, without which there is a distinct risk that the tourism industry can rapidly collapse, which is precisely what happened in Egypt in 2011 during the revolution.

Tourism in Egypt was considered the “rising star of the new millennium” because of the rapid increase in the tourism economy, which increased from 304 million dollars in 1982/1983 to 6.429 billion dollars by 2004/2005.<sup>37</sup> In response to a growing debt with the International Monetary Fund, Egypt adopted tourism as a development strategy, which included officially classifying the Sinaï and the Red Sea as tourist zones, establishing laws that guaranteed rights to operating licence for private companies, and granting ten-year tax exemptions for investors.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, the state funded infrastructure and development while selling land to foreign investors.<sup>39</sup> The result of which is that the lion’s share of the economic activity garnered through the tourism industry comes from rents in private foreign investment and Egyptian elites.<sup>40</sup> Because of this, Richter and Sterner argue that tourism as a development policy in Egypt was not so much because of a desire to develop the state for the people, but to maintain the neo-patrimonial structure of Egyptian politics.<sup>41</sup> In this case there was a clear failure to establish state

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<sup>37</sup> Thomas Richter and Christian Sterner, “Politics, Economics and Tourism Development in Egypt: insights into the sectoral transformation of a neopatrimonialism rentier state,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 5 (2008): 939-959.

<sup>38</sup> Richter and Sterner, 948.

<sup>39</sup> Richter and Sterner, 948.

<sup>40</sup> Richter and Sterner, 954-965.

<sup>41</sup> Richter and Sterner, 940.

security as both a means of encouraging tourism and means of institutional development.

Further research on the role of tourism, land acquisition, and social unrest is required, especially in the case of Egypt. During the 2011 Egyptian revolution, the foreign tourist economy effectively collapsed overnight and today it is still struggling to recover.<sup>42</sup> As a development strategy, tourism not only failed to establish economic and state security but may have contributed to the growing inequality that arises from neoliberal development policies and the sense of injustice that inspires revolutions. Access to land is a defining feature political struggles to overcome poverty, hunger, and oppression.<sup>43</sup> The global demand for economically productive land often pushes the most vulnerable out of their homes and into more densely populated centers, which in turn creates an environment of social injustice, unrest, and instability.<sup>44</sup> Development without the informed consent and participation of the populations that it ought to serve lacks legitimacy. Furthermore, foreign acquisition of land without informed consent of local populations adds to a feeling of alienation from the land and the sense of injustice that comes without political representation. Because of these factors, Anseeuw and Taylor indicate an ominous political tipping point in those nations whose land is being snapped up by international investors.<sup>45</sup>

In both Morocco and Egypt, neoliberal economic policies targeting the tourism sector supported the desire to maintain the existing political norms of neopatrimonialism within each state. In each case, elites maintain neopatrimonialism by making domestic resources available for foreign

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<sup>42</sup> WTCC Egypt 2015

<sup>43</sup> Ward Anseeuw and Mike Taylor, "Factors Shaping the Global Land Rush," *Grabbing Back: Essays Against the Global Land Grab*. Edited by Alexander Reid Ross. Edinburgh, London, Oakland: AK Press, 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Anseeuw and Taylor.

<sup>45</sup> Anseeuw and Taylor.



corporate investment in the tourism sector for their own private gain rather than for state development. From a post-colonial development perspective, neopatrimonialism represents a new face on the same old colonialism whereby local elites are coopted to sell public resources for private foreign investment. This cooptation and new face on colonialism is made possible, in part, by the all-encompassing nature of neoliberal economics. Building on Foucault's conception of biopower—although ultimately arguing against Foucault's own theory about neo-liberalism—Pellizzoni argues that “the basic goal of neoliberal policies... is to develop, disseminate and institutionalize economic rationality in any social field”.<sup>46</sup> This mechanism decentralizes power, by means of private wealth, and as such,

the type of society envisaged by neoliberals is eminently disorganized, decentered, incoherent and impossible to plan or steer in any precise direction, the only possible task being to provide the conditions for an unconstrained expression of all the forces at stake, which means ensuring that the market logic prevails everywhere.<sup>47</sup>

In this light it should not be at all surprising that the development of tourism has utilized neoliberal economic strategies. The market logic of tourism in the neoliberal moment is one which places a degree of power in the hands of the individual traveller as a consumer, but which ultimately encourages states to export tourism development to transnational corporations. The nature of the neoliberal moment, with its focus on the individual's financial freedom, free markets, and free trade, and the subsequent growth of transnational mega corporations, alongside the retreat of the state's governance capacity, means that transnational hotels, airlines, and travel agencies are the big winners of

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<sup>46</sup> Pellizzoni, *Ontological Politics in a Disposable World: The New Mastery of Nature*, 61.

<sup>47</sup> Pellizzoni, 62.

tourism development. As such, tourism as a development strategy is mediated through the market rather than the state. The state then, has few levers to pull in order to control the development of a tourism market. The financial impetus to keep costs low means that there is incentive to keep the local economy comparably weak so as to attract both investment in hospitality and tourism as well as budget travellers. Indeed, tourism does not reduce the income gap between developed and undeveloped countries.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, we should not expect that it should decrease class inequality within the state.

## **Environmental Issues and Cultural Tourism**

The negative environmental impacts of tourism are well established.<sup>49</sup> At one point it was thought that tourists' appreciation and desire for visual consumption of natural landscapes, free from industrial imagery, would create a demand for environmental preservation within the tourism industry and that increasing tourism could become a democratizing force that would enable tourists to vote with both their dollars and feet.<sup>50</sup> Tourism appears to be uniquely capable of increasing awareness about environmental protections for two central reasons. First, "tourism enables a much wider range of environments to be gazed upon," thus exposing the traveller to a variety of landscapes, be they urban, rural, or remote.<sup>51</sup> Second, travellers then compare the various environments and landscapes and, over time, develop an aesthetic judgement about desirable tourist destinations and travel experiences.<sup>52</sup> It is through the development of aesthetic judgment that the tourist develops a romantic ideal of the environment and their travel experiences, which feeds the demand for

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<sup>48</sup> Garcia, "Analysis of tourism policy in a developing country: the case of Morocco," 3.

<sup>49</sup> Lezen et al., "The carbon footprint of global tourism," 522-528.

<sup>50</sup> John Urry, "The Tourist Gaze and the 'Environment'," *Theory Culture & Society* 9 (1992):4

<sup>51</sup> Urry, "The Tourist Gaze and the 'Environment'," 8.

<sup>52</sup> Urry, 9.

environmental protection.<sup>53</sup> From the perspective of post-colonial development, the idea that those who can afford to travel ought to be aesthetic arbiters of landscapes—rather than the people who call those landscapes home—because the experienced traveller’s judgment is better, represents a point at which the gaze of the idealized traveller establishes and creates norms of desirability in the Global South. But, insofar as travellers and local populations share the desire to protect landscapes this need not be a relationship of dominance.

Still, visual impressions may hide darker realities of tourism’s environmental impacts. Increasing tourist populations, and the development of infrastructure to support them, places pressure on resources, including land, water, and energy.<sup>54</sup> In ecological zones increased foot traffic can damage plant life, erode the soil, and drive wildlife out of their habitat, leading to an overall loss of biodiversity.<sup>55</sup> Mitigating the negative impacts of environmental degradation requires both the institutional mechanism to research and support environmental policies, which for the developing state is often in short supply. Beyond the ramifications for individual developing states’ environments, increasing international tourism has had a significant impact on global climate change. For example, tourism in states that market beach vacations are highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and researchers have already noted a decline in tourist travel along the Mediterranean coast because of rising temperatures, a trend which is projected to continue.<sup>56</sup>

The issue of accountability and action for climate change is politically contested and is exacerbated by carbon accounting as a method of pollution

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<sup>53</sup> Urry, 9..

<sup>54</sup> U. Sunlu, “Environmental Impact of Tourism,” *Local resources and global trades: Environments and agriculture in the Mediterranean region*. Edited by D. Camarda and L. Grassini. CIHEAM, 2003.

<sup>55</sup> Sunlu.

<sup>56</sup> Jorge Olcina Cantos and Fernando Vera Rebollo, “Climate Change and Tourism policy in Spain: Diagnosis in the Spanish Mediterranean Coast,” *Cuadernos de Turismo* no. 38 (2016): 565-571.

measurement. As is stands, countries are responsible for the pollution that is created within their borders.<sup>57</sup> For states heavily dependent on tourism, this means responsibility for the carbon impact of tourists, which is arguably a disproportionate and unjust burden to bear for developing states. Additionally, international freight and travel is not accounted for in any state's carbon ledger; consequently, the actual impact of international transportation is not accounted for in climate change calculations and forecasts.<sup>58</sup> Previous estimates on the impact of global tourism suggests that tourism accounted for 2.5-3% of total emissions; however, these estimates did not account for the supply chain of the environmental costs of tourism, namely food, accommodation, transportation, and shopping.<sup>59</sup> A recent study included these costs and found that the tourism industry accounts for eight percent of global emissions.<sup>60</sup> Of this eight percent, the largest share arises from travel habits of Canadians and Mexicans travelling to the US, which accounts for 2.7 percent of the global carbon impact of tourism.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, island destinations have the highest carbon footprint per capita, and in the case of Greece, Croatia, and Thailand more carbon is generated by tourists than by the local populations.<sup>62</sup>

Unsurprisingly, travellers from high income states consumed more in terms of travel, consumption of goods, and hospitality than those from low income states.<sup>63</sup> Yet the effects of climate change are disproportionately borne by the poor, especially those in developing countries.<sup>64</sup> McLaren demonstrates that there is a relationship between ecological consumption, sustainability, and

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<sup>57</sup> Naomi Klein. *This Changes Everything*. (New York: Random House, 2014), 79.

<sup>58</sup> Klein, 79.

<sup>59</sup> Manfred Lezen, Ya-Yen Sun, Futu Fatuuray, Yuan-Peng Ting, Arne Geschke, and Arunima Malik, "The carbon footprint of global tourism," *Nature Climate Change* 8 (2018): 522-528.

<sup>60</sup> Lezen, et al., 523.

<sup>61</sup> Lezen, et al., 523.

<sup>62</sup> Lezen, et. al., 522-528.

<sup>63</sup> Lezen, et al., 524.

<sup>64</sup> D. McLaren, "Environmental Space, Equity and the Ecological Debt," *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World* (2003): 21.

global equity.<sup>65</sup> Poor countries often turn to environmentally deleterious means to produce energy and products because they are the only means available to them, “thus inequality is a driving force behind unsustainability.”<sup>66</sup> To suggest that developing states ought to be responsible for the environmental impact of their economic activity, when it is one of only a few means of development available to them, is an act of environmental injustice that creates a false equivalency of consumption across economically unequal states by ignoring the fact the Western world is the primary driver behind environmental degradation and climate change.<sup>67</sup> Such is the case with tourism, however, in this case developing states are dependent on Western tourists continuing to consume a larger share of the global carbon debt through travel and tourism.

In the Western world in particular, tourism is increasingly viewed as a social right because of the benefits it brings to overall health and happiness.<sup>68</sup> As McCabe and Deikmann demonstrate, the change from tourism being viewed as an activity for the rich, to being viewed as a fundamental human right, coincides with global economic development.<sup>69</sup> As the function of global economic development, I suggest neoliberalism is the driving force behind this change in attitude, not only because travel has become a financially available activity, but because the demands of neoliberalism on the individual create the desire to escape through travel. Here, Pellizzoni helps to think through the relationship between neoliberalism and the environment.

On the one side we have humans, as individuals and populations moved by the ‘natural’ dynamics of need, desire, and interest; on the other there is the environment, the

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<sup>65</sup> McLaren, 21.

<sup>66</sup> McLaren, 21.

<sup>67</sup> McLaren, 21.

<sup>68</sup> Scott McCabe & Anya Deikmann, “The Rights of Tourism: Reflections on Social Tourism and Human Rights” *Tourism Recreation Research* vol. 40 2, (2015).

<sup>69</sup> McCabe & Deikmann, “The Rights of Tourism: Reflections on Social Tourism and Human Rights.”

surrounding biophysical world, provided with its own ‘vital’ dynamics without being ontologically fixed, hence agential and a source of surprises, but also, and for this very reason, open to unlimited possibilities of intervention.<sup>70</sup>

As a demand created by the desire to escape, and supplied by the interests of development, cultural tourism has a unique relationship to neoliberalism. Moreover, this relationship has a unique interaction with environmental intervention, which on the one hand seeks to protect the environment so that there is a commodity there, while on the other alters that environment through the activity of tourism itself. Whereas ecotourists may be more conscientious about their engagement with the environment because love of the environment is a direct motivation, cultural tourists do not necessarily share that concern. In cultural tourism there is the desire for pristine landscapes but not necessarily an awareness of how to walk gently in them. Think for example, of the difference between someone whose travel philosophy is “leave no trace”, and the person who removes rocks from national parks as a souvenir. The environmental concerns of cultural tourism as a development strategy thus present another double bind which simultaneously supports and undermines development goals.

## **Cultural Considerations and Concerns**

Maintaining elements of culture that serve the happiness of local populations ought to be a central concern of development strategies because it is through cultural communities that individuals feel that they belong in the world. Admittedly, measuring cultural belonging and happiness is an unenviable task replete with normative pitfalls, so it is not surprising that much

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<sup>70</sup> Pellizzoni, *Ontological Politics in a Disposable World: The New Mastery of Nature*, 67.

of development theory relies on other factors to measure development goals. However, a discussion of cultural tourism without a discussion of the ways in which it relies on and alters culture would be remiss.

Pieterse characterizes culture as the “arena of struggle” wherein individual agents, and local and national cultures either support or challenge one another.<sup>71</sup> Because of this competition, culture is a living, changing element of human existence that ought not to be categorized or instrumentalized for political purposes.<sup>72</sup> The beauty of this characterization is that it indicates a way to think about culture, while avoiding claims about what it is. However, for this reason appealing to culture as a development strategy is problematic. On a national level, essentialist claims about culture erase cultural differences within the state and have been used by the state to support nationalist policies that marginalize or oppress minorities in general, and indigenous peoples and foreigners more specifically.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, the politicization of cultural essentialism on local levels can lead to ethnic fundamentalism.<sup>74</sup> Cultural tourism complicates this narrative by targeting an element of culture that is perceived as marketable by instrumentalizing it as a product on the international stage. Here the issue of cultural leadership comes into question. Who gets to decide whether or not to market culture?

The benefits of a bottom up approach to cultural leadership and marketing culture can be observed in the case of post-apartheid South Africa, which sought to distribute the economic benefits of the tourism industry to poor rural areas and at the same time promote awareness of South Africa’s history in The Cradle of Civilization, which is located in one of South Africa’s

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<sup>71</sup> Jan Neverdeen Pieterse, *Development Theory* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage, 2010), 64.

<sup>72</sup> Pieterse, 64.

<sup>73</sup> Pieterse., 67.

<sup>74</sup> Pieterse, 69.

poorest rural areas.<sup>75</sup> The development of tourism policies in the region began with local consultation, which demonstrated a need for job opportunities in the construction and hospitality and tourism industries for local peoples.<sup>76</sup> The Cradle continued to develop as a tourism destination with the help of small local businesses, including an artist's collective designed to promote local art to tourists, and the establishment of several family businesses that were "founded for lifestyle considerations rather than profit maximizations."<sup>77</sup> These local businesses are regarded as integral to successful tourism development because they combine local skills and knowledge with the international tourism market, and as such they serve an important educational and economic role in development.<sup>78</sup>

The educational aspect of cultural tourism is a significant benefit of cultural tourism as a development strategy. Rogerson and van der Merwe found that the proportion of school trips to The Cradle increased compared to overall trips in the period between 2006 and 2012, largely because of a decline in overall visitors attributed to the global financial crisis.<sup>79</sup> While this presents something of a threat to the site as a global tourist attraction, the fact that it is accessible to local schools serves an important social function and decreases dependence on international tourism as an economic generator. Despite investment in cultural tourism, tourists visiting The Cradle are largely there to visit friends and family or for business. The resources that may be used for cultural tourism are being used for other forms of domestic tourism, and

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<sup>75</sup> Rogerson and Van der Merwe, "Heritage Tourism in the Global South: Development implications of the Cradle of Humanity World Heritage Site, South Africa," 238.

<sup>76</sup> Rogerson and Van der Merwe, 239.

<sup>77</sup> Rogerson and Van der Merwe, 241.

<sup>78</sup> Rogerson and Van der Merwe, 241.

<sup>79</sup> Rogerson and Van der Merwe, 242.



because of this Rogerson and van der Merwe conclude that the economic potential for cultural tourism is largely untapped.<sup>80</sup>

In the case of The Cradle of Civilization, the fact that cultural tourism has not reached its full economic potential may be a part of the reason that it has been a successful foray into the tourism industry for the local population. The characterization of the benefits of local family business indicates that The Cradle remains in a pre-Fordist tourist economy and has not experienced the impacts of neoliberal business development. In bustling tourist economies, the introduction of a constant stream of tourists into the local culture adds an additional element into the cultural arena of struggle. While cross cultural relationships between locals and tourists can be a positive experience on an individual level, a large body of research demonstrates that tourist destinations experience a general *ennui* with tourist populations.<sup>81</sup> Research on local populations' attitudes towards tourists suggests that in the early stages of development locals experience euphoria, but overtime feelings progress towards apathy, discomfort, and eventually antagonism.<sup>82</sup> Murders of tourists in Mexico and Thailand, and terrorist attacks on tourists in Egypt, suggest that the long-term social impacts of tourism can have more nefarious repercussions.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Rogerson and Van der Merwe, "Heritage Tourism in the Global South: Development implications of the Cradle of Humanity World Heritage Site, South Africa," 242.

<sup>81</sup> Paul Bac Dorin, "The Impacts of Tourism on Society," *Annals of Faculty of Economics* 1, no. 1 (2012):500-506; Brian King, Abraham Pizam, and Ady Milman, "Social Impacts of Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 20, no. 4 (1993): 650-665; Victor Teye, Ercan Sirakaya, and Sevil F. Sönmez, "Residents' attitudes towards tourism Development," *Annals of Tourism Research* 29, no. 3 (2002):668-688.

<sup>82</sup> David Fennel, *Ecotourism*. London: Routledge, 2007, 47-48.

<sup>83</sup> See: Elizabeth Chang, "Were the American cyclists killed in Tajikistan naive for travelling there?" *The Washington Post*. 2018. Accessed January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/were-the-american-cyclists-killed-in-tajikistan-naive-for-traveling-there/> and; Josh Holiday, "British tourists murder in Thailand." *The Guardian*. 2014. Accessed January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/15/british-tourists-murdered-thailand-koh-tao> and; Woody, Christopher. "Violence is high in Mexico's most popular tourist destinations-but some groups are more at risk." *Business Insider*. Accessed January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019: <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-mexico-violence-affects-tourists-tourism-2018-4>

In his assessment of culture, Pieterse explicitly criticizes the post-development approach to cultural analysis for being, “long on history and short of future, strong on critique and weak on construction. It has room only for a reactive position of resistance rather than a proactive perspective of imagining and developing alternatives.”<sup>84</sup> This is a fair critique; however, a post-development analysis provides a comprehensive and compelling explanation for the culture clash that can arise from tourism because it examines power differentials in relationships. In his seminal work on post-development theory, Escobar takes up a Foucauldian analysis of development in order to highlight the ways in which development itself can lead to the continued oppression of the cultural “Other” through development policies that treat the West as the standard *par excellence*.<sup>85</sup> It is through this oppressive relationship that the global South began to see itself through the eyes of the West— as “inferior”, “underdeveloped” and “ignorant”, and it was in light of these views that the global South “began to doubt the value of [their] own culture” and accept the Western development objectives and cultural norms.<sup>86</sup> On the surface, the introduction of cultural tourism as a development policy, then, appears to flip the script on Western evaluation of foreign culture. However, the post-development analysis fundamentally requires an analysis of the historical conditions of the discourse of development.<sup>87</sup>

The history of many states in the global South and the history of tourism is intimately linked with colonization. It is because of colonial history, post-development scholars argue, that the Western world produced the idea of the developing world as the exoticized, however ultimately inferior, “Other.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Pieterse. *Development Theory* 2<sup>nd</sup>, 73.

<sup>85</sup> Escobar, “Discourse and Power in Development: Michel Foucault and the Relevance of his Work to the Third World,” 377-400.

<sup>86</sup> Escobar, 394.

<sup>87</sup> Escobar, 385.

<sup>88</sup> Richard Peet and Elaine Hartwick, *Theories of Development* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (New York: The Guilford Press, 2015), 237.

Tourism, some argue, is an extension of a colonial past that markets the cultural heritage of the “Other” as an exotic and exciting experience designed for the consumption of the Western world.<sup>89</sup> McRea notes that a key motivation for cultural tourists is to a yearning to re-discover “familiar yet strange practices and beliefs” of a “fictionalized past.”<sup>90</sup> This is not to say that the cultural tourist is inherently naive or racist in their quest for cultural experiences. In fact, McRae argues that tourists are seeking authentic cultural experiences but that these experiences are tinged with a history of colonization that makes mutual and respectful cultural exchange difficult to attain.<sup>91</sup> The central issue here is that of *inauthentic* cultural exchange because it represents a false view of culture that is created in the eyes of the tourist in the same way that the cultural identity of the Other was created by the colonist.

As a development strategy, then, cultural tourism must ensure that cultural authenticity is maintained; however, this often fails to happen. Decisions about cultural representation and authenticity in tourist destinations are often made by those outside of the culture that is being represented; meanwhile, cultural and artistic projects that reflect the local culture tend to arise from grassroots.<sup>92</sup> The tendency for cultural exploitation and appropriation is especially evident in marketing cultural tourism. Marketing in the Mayan Riviera features Mayan peoples, especially scantily clad Mayan women, alongside picturesque scenic backdrops and archeological sites.<sup>93</sup> Although the Mayan people are appropriated and exoticized as a selling feature

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<sup>89</sup> Dean MacCannel, “Tourist Agency,” *Tourist Studies* 1, no. 1 (2001):23-37.

<sup>90</sup>Leanne McRea, “Rethinking tourism: Edward Said and the politics of meeting and movement,” *Tourist Studies* 3, no. 3 (2003): 239.

<sup>91</sup> McRea, 239.

<sup>92</sup> Christine Ballengee-Morris, “Cultures for Sale: Perspective on Colonialism and Self-Determination and the Relationship to Authenticity and Tourism,” *Studies in Art Education A Journal of Research* 4, no. 3 (2002):232-245.

<sup>93</sup> Traci Arden, “Where are the Maya in Ancient Maya Archaeological Tourism? Advertising and the Appropriation of Culture,” *Marketing Heritage* (Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Altamira Press, 2004), 104.

of the Mayan Riviera they are largely excluded from the economic benefits that come with being a key stakeholder; rather, their engagement in the tourism industry tends to be as service workers in the hospitality sector.<sup>94</sup> In Mexico, local artisans are pushed out of major tourist locations because they cannot afford the rents, the result is the sale of cheap tourist trinkets and the appropriation of cultural imagery in central tourist areas.<sup>95</sup> The “lower” forms of everyday artistry and craftsmanship are disregarded, meanwhile the archeological past of the Mayan people is marketed as high art and culture.<sup>96</sup>

That said, the preservation of archeological sites is one of the potential benefits of cultural tourism. However, the degree to which this is achieved is contested as archeologists express concern for the impact of tourism on archeological sites in general.<sup>97</sup> In Mexico, archeology sites and ancient ruins are controlled at the national level and profits from ticket sales are redistributed for site maintenance and for archeological and historical institutes.<sup>98</sup> Yet, not all states retain control over their heritage sites. In 1999, Cambodia negotiated a deal with the Sokha Hotel, a subsidiary of the Sokimex oil and gas corporation, to handle the ticket sales into the Angkor Archeological Park; in the first year they earned 3.9 million dollars, none of which was used for park preservation.<sup>99</sup> Degradation of historical sites has also come about because of unintended consequence of tourism, for example cultural tourism in the Mekong Delta of Cambodia during the 1950’s created a demand for Southeast

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<sup>94</sup> Arden, 104.

<sup>95</sup> Arden, 105.

<sup>96</sup> Arden, 107.

<sup>97</sup> See: Yorke Rowan and Uzi Baram, *Marketing Heritage: Archeology and the Consumption of the Past*. (Oxford: Altamira Press, 2004).

<sup>98</sup> Arden, “Where are the Maya in Ancient Maya Archaeological Tourism? Advertising and the Appropriation of Culture,” 108.

<sup>99</sup> Miriam T Stark and P. Bion Griffin, “Archeological Research and Cultural Heritage Management in Cambodia’s Mekong Delta: The Search for the ‘Cradle of Khmer Civilization’.” *Marketing Heritage*. (Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Altamira Press, 2004), 125-126.

Asian antiquities, which caused looting of ancient ruins and the sale of antiquities on the black market.<sup>100</sup>

## Conclusion

Having highlighted some of the economic, environmental, and cultural possibilities and concerns with cultural tourism as a development policy, I have established that cultural tourism as a development strategy is a double-edged sword which may promote economic development, environmental protection, and positive cultural interactions, but only to a certain point. As it stands, I am hesitant to suggest that cultural tourism is an overall net gain for developing nations. That said, if the focus is on local culture and development is instituted on a small scale, cultural tourism can have a positive impact. When tourism is a means of development, the individual traveller bears a responsibility to the host nation, whether they know it or not. The solution that McLaren proposes to the overall problem of economic and ecological debt can be applied to tourism and development; although, it represents an idyllic view of political will and the individual's capacity to search beyond their immediate reality. By linking consumption with the individual and setting a maximum rate of consumption, ecological debt and economic wealth can be redistributed at the individual level; thus, both global inequality and environmental degradation can be reduced and even brought to a state of equity.<sup>101</sup> The fact that neoliberal economics informs cultural tourism and development, compounded by the fact the tourism as a development policy relies on an accumulation of individual travelers' habits and preferences, means that, like neoliberalism, the effects of cultural tourism as a development

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<sup>100</sup> Stark and Griffin, "Archeological Research and Cultural Heritage Management in Cambodia's Mekong Delta: The Search for the 'Cradle of Khmer Civilization'," 125-126.

<sup>101</sup> Stark and Griffin, 125-126.

strategy, will be disaggregated, uncontrollable from any one point, and filled with double binds that both support and undermine development goals.

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# *The Encrypted State: Delusion and Displacement in the Peruvian Andes*

David Nugent, Stanford University Press 2019

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David Nugent's *The Encrypted State* theorizes state rule in novel terms. Departing from the conventional assumption that states are rational, regular, and ordering, Nugent questions the contradictory processes of state formation. State power, he contends, is not merely repressive but frequently makes "the chaotic, contradictory, delusional, disorganized, and irrational" appear as though they were mundane, commonplace, normal, and prosaic.<sup>166</sup> The state, therefore, engages in processes of masking which duplicitously convert violent and coercive practices into apparently neutral and anodyne ones so that it may legitimate them. To reveal these processes, Nugent turns his attention to what may seem an unusual case study: a roughly thirty-year period in the Amazonas Region of northern Peru during which time those efforts broke down in a spectacular fashion.

Beginning in the 1920s and ending during the 1950s, the archival record from this era documents a state that operates irregularly until paranoia renders it dysfunctional. Centered on the regional capital, Chachapoyas, these documents trace a transition of rule from an effective but disorganized state to an apparently conventional but inoperable one. In the former, *castas*, a cyclical succession of aristocratic families, succeeded in drafting forced labour for

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<sup>166</sup> David Nugent, *The Encrypted State: Delusion and Displacement in the Peruvian Andes* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019), 6.

collective works but troubled Weberian theories which defined the state as possessing a monopoly on violence. That changed when an influx of capital aimed at modernizing Peru set in motion a modernization programme that swept aside the earlier order. Elites scrambled to preserve their aristocratic status within the new state which lacked the administrative and territorial capacities of the previous arrangement. As a result, there was a “war of all against all that broke out within the terrain of government” as functionaries competed for funds and undercut one another rather than pursuing shared goals.<sup>167</sup> This fracture was so extreme that planners lost their grip on reality and attempted to recruit a labour force which exceeded not only what was available but the entire population of the region itself. State officials displaced that failure onto the *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana* (APRA), a political party which they believed was tormenting their efforts to such a degree that mutual suspicions paralyzed their rule and internal factions began sending the encrypted memos which give Nugent’s book its title. The regional government succumbed to delusions of all-powerful enemies and officials “came to view their administration as a pale imitation of a sophisticated, complex state structure located somewhere deeply underground” even though they could not see it.<sup>168</sup>

Within just a few decades, an outwardly rational state apparatus collapsed into complete disarray. Nugent’s most original and valuable contribution is the political programme he theorizes to explain those delusions: sacropolitics. Differing from both biopolitics and necropolitics, sacropolitics is neither about “managing nor taking life but rather animating it. Sacropolitics is about bringing to life dead, dying or moribund populations and social

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<sup>167</sup> Nugent, 155.

<sup>168</sup> Nugent, 3–4.

formations.”<sup>169</sup> It is a practice which seeks to emancipate the nation from a backward past (in Peru, a feudal social structure) and asks individuals to become new subjects who enhance themselves in the name of realizing an invigorated future. According to Nugent, to do so requires a ‘state of redemption’ which, in contrast to a state of exception, is declared not to kill with impunity in some places but to broaden the category of who can be asked to make sacrifices to encompass all subjects. The whole nation becomes a development camp in which citizens must perform acts of loyalty in order to free themselves and their community from their limits. This fantasy makes it necessary to believe in the omnipotence of the state. To realize its order, any other outlook is regarded “as wholly irrational—as motivated by fanaticism, extremism, and the desire to subvert.”<sup>170</sup> Adversaries become unintelligible from the perspective of authority and delusion therefore becomes pervasive.

*The Encrypted State* is fortuitous in that it arrives at a time when an otherwise limited case study resonates with mainstream political trends. One need only look to the United States to see an example of how. Substituting American for Peruvian content, the same dynamic plays out: a central government becomes delusional after it is stymied in an effort to build a grand nation-redeeming project (a border wall), displaces those failures onto an internal conspiracy (the ‘deep state’) and blames a backwards political structure for its frustrations (coastal elites and their ‘swamp’). Nugent’s book is also a testament to the value of the kind of detailed academic work which is increasingly endangered. It is a local, longitudinal study which yields insightful results about broad formations. The deep and close reading of archival material is undoubtedly the project’s strength and what enables its most important conclusions to emerge. But that narrow lens at times curtails the book’s

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<sup>169</sup> Nugent, 30.

<sup>170</sup> Nugent, 47.

potential. As the volume progresses, Nugent propounds details of the state project which are historically relevant but conceptually redundant. The clearest examples come in Chapters Six and Seven which focus on *corvée* for the military service and civil engineering projects, respectively. Nugent's intent is to more fully show how excessive conscription manifests the delusional character of the Peruvian state. These chapters, however, mostly provide granular details in service of reiterating arguments that have already been described in earlier passages. While the repeated explanations reveal shared hallucinations and displacements, they do less to show how those specific projects relate to the state apparatus which is the subject of the book.

A more compact treatment of the documentary record might have yielded a volume with space to consider the sacropolitical state's intersection with other categories. Largely implicit throughout *The Encrypted State* are accounts of how sacropolitics impacted indigenous populations, the families of the poor, and the lives of women whose suffering appears only in passing mentions of the brutality of both *casta* and state power. It is unsurprising that those groups are excluded from the material on which Nugent draws: forced conscription targeted working-aged males in numbers that grossly exceeded the available labour supply. In that regard, these lacunae underscore Nugent's underlying point about how the state becomes detached from the reality which it governs by highlighting how it misidentifies population. But their absence in Nugent's book are concerning for other reasons. Although backgrounding marginal groups is the condition of the state's utterances—its ability to mask the exceptional in the banal language of bureaucratic machinations—that practice need not be reproduced in academic studies where other sources could be included. Adding those perspectives would no doubt exceed the archival methodology which Nugent has adopted, but references to texts like Diana Taylor's gender-based analysis of the Argentine state, *Disappearing Acts*,

in his construction of a theoretical framework suggests that his project is compatible with those approaches.

Broadening the investigation of the Peruvian state would also open productively onto questions of resistance that are mostly latent or referred to in general terms in *The Encrypted State*. For example, Nugent notes that some peasants opted for “permanent dislocation rather than temporary flight” in the face of conscription.<sup>171</sup> For him, this is an encounter between two political geographies: a local hierarchical stasis enforced by *casta* units and a modern one of mobility imposed by the central government. Yet, while Nugent connects the abandonment of the land with earlier resistance to colonialism, he does not contextualize it in the practices of the indigenous groups whom sacropolitics targeted. This omission is lamentable because, as Marisol de la Cadena has argued, Andean politics faces irruptions of indigenous practices which assert non-human beings who trouble the opposition of nature and humanity that founds state politics.<sup>172</sup> Seeing the state as the singular context of Peruvian politics therefore seems unnecessarily restrictive. Missed opportunities are also evident in the treatment of APRA. Nugent suggests that the opposition party was, at times, little more than a nuisance for the state, and at others a credible threat to its power. But because the reader encounters APRA almost exclusively through its archival characterization, it is impossible to discern to what degree it intentionally succeeded in unsettling the state and whether it constructed the parallel apparatuses. Shedding further light on how indigenous, Pan-American, and post-colonial movements opposed the power

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<sup>171</sup> Nugent, 150.

<sup>172</sup> Marisol De La Cadena, “Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections Beyond ‘Politics,’” *Cultural Anthropology* 25, no. 2 (2010): 334–370, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2010.01061.x>.



of the delusional state would broaden the utility of Nugent's sacropolitical theory by uncovering ways those flows of power might be reversed or undone.

The question of resistance therefore uncovers the reason why Nugent's book is a valuable contribution. As noted above, the delusional state has become an urgent political issue outside of the so-called Global South. Indeed, it now confronts countries whose orders are predicated on a capacity to declare those nations backwards and in needs of salvation to justify their own political projects, much as the Peruvian state impugned its peasant population. Today the need to know and resist delusional and disordered adversaries, especially those descended from elite political structures, is a matter of global importance. Failing to understand those processes risks bringing about the same delusions that carried mid-twentieth-century Peru to crisis. Thus, as these dynamics become unmasked in new contexts, Nugent's theorization of the state and concept of sacropolitics may prove to be platforms for considering politics beyond the thoroughly-investigated specificity of his study.

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Nugent, David. *The Encrypted State: Delusion and Displacement in the Peruvian Andes*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019.





TBD

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To Be Decided\* Journal of Interdisciplinary Theory  
Volume 5: Profits & Prophets  
Spring 2020