

Introduction

From Here to There

The core argument of this book is that cosmopolitanism, the most prominent set of theories of global justice, holds a contradictory relationship with capitalism, specifically with regard to the psychosocial dimensions of capitalism. More specifically, this book shows that there are important and underappreciated intellectual and political resources in the first generation of Frankfurt School thinkers, particularly the negative dialectics of Theodor Adorno and the psychoanalytic critical political theories of Erich Fromm, which can be combined to address a substantial aporia within the theoretical tradition of cosmopolitanism. These untapped resources point to a fundamental and largely ignored problem in contemporary Frankfurt School Critical Theory, particularly the work of Jürgen Habermas and the variety of thinkers working in his legacy, specifically Seyla Benhabib and Andrew Linklater. These thinkers broadly comprise what I consider to be a kind of “critical” cosmopolitanism.¹ In putting Adorno and Fromm in conversation with these contemporary critical cosmopolitans, and cosmopolitan theory in general including some more “radical” variants, we see how the fundamentals of capitalism represent a self-defeating blind spot throughout this important literature—as well as the policies and programs that are pursued with this intellectual tradition as motivation (e.g., large parts of the international human rights regime). This blind spot speaks crucially to critical and more radical cosmopolitanisms’ failures to produce significant practical political results.

This project approaches cosmopolitanism from a perspective distinct from much, if not all, of the recent cosmopolitan scholarship.² The typical

debates have centered around a few different specific dichotomies: ethical versus political cosmopolitanism, communitarianism/particularism/statism versus cosmopolitanism/cosmopolitics, cosmopolitanism's (positive) relationship with liberal capitalism/globalization, and then there are internal debates within each camp that focus on questions of institutional arrangements (practicality, feasibility, likelihood, etc.) as well as the proper path toward the suggested arrangements (usually in relation to extant structures and institutions). Treatments of cosmopolitanism often engage with more than one of the different dimensions or add in additional dimensions depending on the specifics of the particular argument.

I undertake a critical analysis of the lack of a deep engagement with global capitalism in relation to the ethical, political, and institutional facets of cosmopolitan theories. Many might respond by referring to the huge diversity of cosmopolitans who write about the inequity of the global economic order and the appropriate responses regarding distributive justice. Though I will summarize the core aspects of the major positions on global distributive justice in the context of contemporary capitalism, these will be somewhat tangential to my treatment of capitalism in relation to cosmopolitanism here. The problem I will be focusing on is not poverty or inequality per se, though I wholeheartedly assert the absolute injustice of both and support the efforts to alleviate both. Rather, this book focuses on the relationship between capitalism and cosmopolitanism with regard to how capitalism undermines our collective ability to make progress on issues of injustice within a cosmopolitan framework. Furthermore, it is the failure of the political practices ostensibly inspired by and rooted in cosmopolitanism, and attempts toward global justice more generally, in the face of global capitalism and U.S.-led imperialism that motivates my deeper critique of the various strains of cosmopolitanism (and indeed some of its critics).

The chapters of this book develop the intersections and affinities between Frommian and Adornoian Critical Theory (specifically their critiques of capitalist society), arguments regarding globalization, and cosmopolitan-global justice. Integrating these divergent approaches will allow a theoretical hybrid to emerge that can speak directly to theories of postcapitalism associated with the broad neo- and post-Marxist socialist tradition. If one of the central claims of most, if not all, cosmopolitan theories is that there should be new forms of political organization beyond the nation-state, this book will explore how global capitalism inhibits this possibility or conditions it so that the cosmopolitan political system that emerges is only marginally more just, if more just at all—if it emerges at all.

Thinking the World Anew in Political Theory

This project began more formally through my graduate political theory studies. I became increasingly cognizant of a particular trend in ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary political theories—each with its own philosophical premises and quirks—to imagine a better world, a more just or more democratic or freer or more godly world, whatever the specific argument happened to be. Beyond being philosophical exercises, for the most part, each of these contributions was also a kind of political intervention. These were not primarily academic or professional recreation.

Cosmopolitanism as political theory fits neatly into this tradition of specifying an idea of a better future and the struggle to specify the conditions for its possible achievement. For cosmopolitanism, broadly conceived, this means articulating ethical, political, economic, and institutional arguments that move normative International Relations (IR) theory and the global public policy agenda more broadly toward a more globally just world. And here we see the contours of cosmopolitanism's paradoxical failure. In its attempts to be at once theoretical, political, and ethical, cosmopolitanism has failed because it has yet to accurately understand the most problematic roadblocks to its own achievement, which this book argues are rooted in global capitalism.

More broadly, cosmopolitanism has failed to grasp the insights of theorists such as Plato, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Stuart Mill and countless other political theorists; once people are socially conditioned, that is, once they internalize the social expectations and become habituated to them in various ways, they are very difficult to change (Fromm 1994; Verhaeghe 2014). People are socially and psychologically stubborn in complex and varied ways but almost always stubborn nonetheless—even if they are not outwardly or noticeably stubborn in their everyday lives (Fromm 1990). They are stubborn in these ways because our social norms, cultural expectations, and economic relations are themselves stubborn in the first instance. Put more simply, in other words, social conditioning is stubborn. However, this is not to suggest in any way that people are not changeable. They are, and this social conditioning mixed with the utopian potential for social and self-change are supported by the work of Adorno and even more so by Fromm.

The idea of achieving a new, more just political society while grappling with the destructive or unjust remnants of the old society is hardly a new problem in the traditions of political theory. Plato's *Republic* is debatably

an argument for idealized communism embodying perfect justice. However, one of the main problems that Plato has to deal with in the development of the ideal society is how to convince the already living people to change from their previous ways of living and being in the world in relation to one another and society. That is to say, he has to deal with the question of how to move successfully from the nonideal society to the ideal society (assuming the ideal society is actually possible). Plato's answer is the combination of the noble lie/myth of the metals, and the removal from society of everyone above a certain age of adolescence. Although we may find his solution problematic (as he in fact does as well), the insight it offers will be central to this project. We're dealing with building a new kind of society with people conditioned to live in the current, unjust society.

Rousseau's *Social Contract* attempts to address the very same problem: how do we get to a free and legitimate political system based on his ideal of the sovereignty of the general will? Rousseau understood, as Plato did, that people will not change merely because you make a rational argument about the specificity of your ideal conception of legitimacy and a just society. Rousseau opts to argue in favor of the Law-Giver or Legislator. This is a messianic figure (such as Moses or Muhammad—Rousseau's examples) who motivates the population to support and internalize specific notions of freedom, justice, and the ideal social life. For Rousseau, this figure is a necessary precursor to a legitimately governed society. Modern society is a kind of illness that takes a historically renowned figure to "cure."

John Stuart Mill's approach to this question is more specifically related to how to institute a politically and socially liberal system (this is also where Mill garners a lot of accusations of imperialistic and colonialist sympathy). Mill argues that his principles of and arguments for liberalism are appropriate for already civilized peoples but do not apply to the barbarous or uncivilized. Until people are civilized, they cannot properly embody or achieve a liberal value system (which he perceived to be a universal desire).

There are more salient arguments for progress and radical transition that are more relevant to the cosmopolitan and critical theoretical traditions and will be mentioned later in this project, such as Kant's and Marx's. What these central figures in the philosophical foundations of cosmopolitanism and Critical Theory fail to do too is adequately address the question of psychology (or we might say character or virtue) with regard to the next progressive stage of society and specifically how the dominant social psychology of the current stage threatens, undermines, or prevents the emergence of that

next progressive stage, or they do so in superficial or historically untenable way. Much of contemporary cosmopolitan theory and even the common communitarian critiques have failed to address this aporia as well.³ This book argues that the kind of thinking, dispositions toward the world and others, and individual character traits that are encouraged under capitalism are antithetical to the kind of psychology, virtue, or character needed to cultivate global solidarity, ubiquitous support for substantial international human rights, and that they even hinder the emergence of globalizable democratic socialism (which will be argued is the only reasonable response to the ethical demands of cosmopolitanism and their contradictory relationship to cosmopolitanism). That is, what will be argued for is the need for a postcapitalist cosmopolitanism.

The psychological failure of cosmopolitanism is not nearly as straightforward as communitarian statist⁴ often suggest, or even the more philosophical argument of Richard Rorty claims.⁵ For thinkers such as Sandel (1998) and Taylor (1989), among others, liberal universalism (which normative cosmopolitanism is typically, and for good reasons, treated as) misunderstand the nature of human identity and how it is that people become who they are, and thus how they form moral ties to others. While I do not plan to delve into this question, the communitarians have a point on the formation of identity but commit a naturalistic fallacy in extending the empirical formation of the self and identity to the realm of moral obligation (which is the standard cosmopolitan response from the thinkers addressed in this project).

The problem, I argue, is a horrible combination of ideology, instrumental rationality, identitarian thinking, and the marketing social character, and specifically how these interrelated aspects of (late/consumer) capitalism combine to create a globally expansive and deepening social-psychological phenomenon that I refer to as the “capitalistic mentality.” It is precisely this capitalistic mentality that has stalled, and will continue to stall, the development of the psychopolitical ethos necessary for the further development of an emancipatory cosmopolitan world order that must be postcapitalist.

However, within the contemporary cosmopolitan tradition there are few references made to the actual fundamentals of the system of capitalism understood as an exploitative, alienating economic system or more accurately and broadly as a totalizing economic system that is continually expanding as a social, political, and cultural system as well. However, the core problem is not necessarily that they don't utilize as strong a definition as this one; the problem is that they accept supporters of capitalism's definition and/or leave it nearly wholly untheorized (though there are conceptual problems at

the heart of their uses that will be interrogated herein, since they produce some of the important contradictions that are the focus of this book).

Cosmopolitanisms and Responses to Globalization

The various cosmopolitan thinkers address the topic of global justice and political community in unique ways. Despite these differences, there are some shared characteristics that make cosmopolitanism a loosely cohesive political-theoretical tradition which reaches back to the ancient Cynics and Stoics. All of the versions of cosmopolitanism addressed here, though, in part or in whole, derive more closely from Kant's essays "Perpetual Peace" and "Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" (Kant 1991). The most central shared characteristic of all cosmopolitanism is that membership in the community of humanity is more morally relevant than membership in any smaller form of community, including but not limited to the nation-state, ethnic group, or religious association. This principle can be stated more strongly, as many cosmopolitan theorists do, that nation-state boundaries are morally irrelevant. The second shared principle of cosmopolitanism, which derives from the first, is that because political or cultural boundaries are morally irrelevant to determining the moral or political worth of a person or group of people, all people must be regarded as morally equal to one another. Thus, the third principle is that our obligations and responsibilities to one another cannot ignore or privilege a preferred group or community due to those morally irrelevant boundaries. In other words, the third shared principle is that we have an equal obligation to others regardless of where they live or where they were born or regardless of any other morally insignificant distinction (including those established by historically contingent lines on a map, and more often than not produced through dispossession and violence). Among the more political conceptions of cosmopolitanism, there is a fourth shared principle that advocates for a transnational political structure that embodies or at least furthers the normative goals held by the more philosophical-moral cosmopolitans.⁶

In order to understand and appreciate the novelty of this project, a more solid grounding in the distinction between contemporary cosmopolitanism and Marxism is important. It is well known that much cosmopolitan theory is regarded as being more or less liberal, in either its ethical or political varieties.⁷ That being said, Chris Brown's (1992) work in the subfield of international political theory articulated a version of cosmopolitanism that

was broad enough to include Marxism, understood as supranational socialism. Though Brown's articulation of Marxism as a kind of cosmopolitanism is restricted to the predictions and normative goals of Marxism (the dictatorship of the proletariat and then a classless, stateless society), he does allow for the characterization of Marxism as a class-based theory, as opposed to possessing the individualistic quality of cosmopolitanism. Brown was one of the original thinkers to contextualize Marxism within the broader theoretical tradition of cosmopolitanism, but the neo-Kantian liberal cosmopolitanism (including the more "social-democratic" cosmopolitanisms of Held and the various Habermasians) is still dominant. The recent scholarship of Richard Beardsworth (2011) has further normalized this vision of cosmopolitanism and Marxism as distinct theoretical and normative traditions that are best understood separately. Though in his separate characterizations of these groups of thinkers makes sense for both disciplinary and pragmatic reasons, the political and ethical costs are too high to hypostatize this separation.

In his *Cosmopolitanism and International Relations Theory* (2011), Beardsworth provides separate chapters summarizing the "Marxist critique of cosmopolitanism" and the "Cosmopolitan response to Marxism," respectively. It is in these two chapters that the problematic normative-theoretical separation between these two traditions is reified and mystified. The cosmopolitan response to re-embed liberalism (borrowing from David Held and Karl Polanyi among others) within a regulated marketized global social democracy does not make up for the failure to appreciate the interconnectedness of the normative goals of international socialism and cosmopolitanism, nor does it redress the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of capitalist globalization. It is not merely that Marxists argue for the impossibility of separating politics and economics as Beardsworth claims, but that Critical Theorists in the Marxist tradition expand that position to suggest that capitalism increasingly comes to dominate more and more aspects of human life, including psychological disposition, social norms, and cultural practices.

The point I'm making here and in the subsequent chapter is not that we merely need to substitute Marx for Kant and cosmopolitanism will be cured of its liberal capitalist ills. The idea is not that Marxist political-economic theories need to be substituted for social democratic ones (though Marxist economic insights are continually invaluable to the leftward progression of reformist social democrats). Rather, it is my contention that by gleaning insights from Marx, Fromm, Adorno, and many others working out of the Marxist tradition that the immanent theoretical and empirical contradictions between cosmopolitan approaches and goals and capitalism as

a totalizing system become apparent. First-generation Critical Theory offers the dialectical diagnostics that open a path toward a practicable, theoretical solution to the psychological contradictions of global capitalism in relation to the normative vision cosmopolitanism seeks.⁸

This project is certainly not the first to have attempted to explore the psychosocial dimensions of capitalist globalization in a normative context. While this is not an exhaustive summation of those prior works, it is valuable to look at a few of the more prominent ones. The first texts worth mentioning here are Ben Barber's *Jihad vs. McWorld* (1996) and *Consumed* (2008). These texts, taken together, support the thesis that will continue to be developed here more specifically in the context of cosmopolitanism: the contradictory predominant coexistence of mass inequality and deprivation alongside sociocultural and political-economic demands for consumption and consumerism spread like diseases and are similarly destructive to the selfsame attempts at the betterment of the quality of life for people everywhere. The outgrowth of this is that where capitalist globalization spreads, there will be both reactionary and radical resistances to it. The quality of those resistances has been empirically varied, but they have been equally limited in their success; capitalist globalization continues its destructive pattern. Again, though their central arguments are not typically characterized as I have done, taken together, we can imagine that *Jihad vs. McWorld* can be used to tell the story of the globalization of the phenomena described in *Consumed*; the story is the globalization of rampant conspicuous, competitive consumerism alongside the degradation and injustice experienced by of billions of human beings.

In a similar vein, through from a quite different political angle and motivation, Amy Chua's *World on Fire* (2003) looks at how economic and political globalization (the intentional spread of democracy and "free" markets worldwide) breeds destruction and resistance primarily because it ends up privileging either previously culturally dominant minorities, new internal minorities, or, most troublesome, new culturally external minorities. However loathsome many aspects of her argument are, there are two points that should be drawn from Chua's book that are relevant to this study. First, globalization includes the spread of an oppressive, dominating market mentality that overtakes previous cultural practices or gets internalized within already-existing cultural practices. The second insight is that this undermines the emergence of cosmopolitan solidarity necessary for the continued development of dialogic communities, feelings of hospitality, shared notions of rights, cross-cultural recognition, and communicative action more broadly

(but again, this is probably not the main point that Chua would prefer her readers take from her work).

Lastly, we have Ethan Watters's *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche* (2010). Watters, a preeminent journalist and essayist, tells of his experiences of traveling the world, specifically focusing on how the Americanization of conceptions of and treatments for mental illness has led to the exacerbation of certain behaviors, almost all of which are depicted as being destructive to the specific culture's or nation's previous ways of understanding and dealing with the undesirable aspects of the human condition. Many of the stories that Watters tells support the thesis developed in this book that global capitalism spreads and behaves similarly to diseases, especially when it comes to psychological and behavioral norms.

Psychological Capitalism and the Capitalistic Mentality

This project utilizes the theoretical contributions of Adorno and Fromm to develop a more psychosocial understanding of capitalism that can be deployed effectively to critically reinterpret the cosmopolitan tradition within normative IR theory. Unfortunately, this will be the first book-length attempt to apply both of these thinkers together in this field. But even on their own, these prominent Critical Theorists have been almost entirely absent in contemporary IR.

There have only been a couple serious uses of Adorno in IR in the past decade. Daniel Levine's *Recovering International Relations* (2012) utilizes Adorno's negative dialectics to construct the idea of the vocation of the Critical International Relations scholar and a nonidentitarian constellation-based methodology appropriate to that vocation. Though the normative aspects of Adorno's work are present, the primary function of Adorno in this work is the construction of a sustainable critical methodology for critical IR that Levine labels, appropriately, "sustainable critique." In a different manner, Steven Roach's *Critical Theory of International Politics* (2010) utilizes Adorno's negative dialectics in support of a version of international federalism that is nonreified. Both of these works are underappreciated in the field, due in no small part to the lack of familiarity many in IR have with Adorno's oeuvre, to say nothing of the effects of an increasingly neoliberal capitalist publishing model that saturates the discipline with far more scholarship than can be fully appreciated and engaged with.

There have been even fewer serious engagements with the political or social psychological thought of Erich Fromm in IR. In fact, from a strict disciplinary perspective, there is basically no engagement with Fromm at all (which is a good reason to eschew these boundaries more generally). Lawrence Wilde, who is not technically speaking an IR scholar, has been the intellectual most steadfastly attempting to revitalize interest in the forgotten contributions of Erich Fromm to international politics and political theory/philosophy, and is the sole theorist, as far as I'm aware, to have used Fromm primarily in conversation with cosmopolitanism.⁹ Wilde first presented his cosmopolitan interpretation of Fromm in his 2003 book *Erich Fromm and the Quest for Solidarity*. He has further expanded on this interpretation within the context of a cosmopolitan interpretation of the radical humanist tradition, of which Fromm is one of the key figures, in *Global Solidarity* (2013). Wilde argues that Fromm's work is best interpreted as a kind of virtue ethics that shares important similarities with the capabilities approach developed by Martha Nussbaum (2013) and Amartya Sen (1999). Wilde claims that for Fromm people possess core potentials (rationality, compassion, productiveness, and cooperativeness) that are undermined and prevented from being achieved more fully. I generally agree with Wilde's characterization of Fromm's ideas up to this point. Though as with the cosmopolitan theories discussed throughout this book, when it comes to locating the core of the problem in society, Wilde asserts that Fromm would say that poverty and inequality are the primary forces that undermine the achievement of core potentials and thus global solidarity. This less expansive interpretation of Fromm is important but unnecessarily limited, as I will show. Fromm has so much more to offer political theory and normative IR theory, to say nothing of what he has to offer to contemporary political movements.

In order for Fromm to be at his most useful, we must utilize the full depth of his intellectual legacy. We must understand more fully how the psychological aspects of capitalism, regardless of poverty and income inequality, undermine the core potentials of humanity and thus undermine global solidarity, which in turn inhibits our ability to deal with poverty and other forms of inequality.

Beyond the technical uses of Adorno and Fromm, much of the perceived credibility of this project will be based on the acceptability of the notion of capitalism that is utilized. Throughout, I will use a working definition of capitalism (merging both Marxian and Weberian components) to show how cosmopolitan theorists misjudge the inherent social and psychological

impact of capitalism in all spheres of human life, principally its conditioning of those who are socialized into it, in various ways, toward competitiveness, acquisitiveness, and avarice, as well as its more broadly alienating character. In order to offer a praxeological critique of cosmopolitanism based on a psychological understanding of capitalism, broadly acceptable definition of capitalism is needed lest the phenomena I am describing be attributed to an unjustifiable or arbitrary definition.

Capitalism is certainly an economic system, but it is far from *just* an economic system. Capitalism conditions the minds of the people who are born into it as well as those that are degraded and/or conquered by it. The definitions used by Marx and Weber support this characterization. The more cultural understandings of capitalism offered by David Riesman (see the *Lonely Crowd* [1950], which is heavily indebted to Fromm's notion of social character, which will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters), Daniel Bell (see *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* [1976]), and Slavoj Žižek (see *The Sublime Object of Ideology* [1989], etc.) each also support the use of this form of conceptualization of capitalism. Feminist political theorists and economists, broadly categorizable as social reproduction theorists, also draw their focus to the nonformal economic aspects of capitalism (see, among others, Silvia Federici's *Revolution at Point Zero* [2012], Tithi Bhattacharya's edited collection *Social Reproduction Theory* [2017], Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser's *Feminism for the 99%* [2019], and Susan Ferguson's *Women and Work* [2020].)

What is capitalism then, beyond the standard interpretation of merely an economic system with certain economic characteristics? Marx's view of capitalism focuses on the expropriation of surplus value from a class of laborers (the proletariat) by the class who owns the means of production (the bourgeoisie) through the payment of a wage that undercompensates and thus misrepresents the actual labor time put in compared to the value received by the employer. The value of the goods being produced is based on an unstable combination of both use-value and exchange-value, with exchange-value the primary determinant. This relates to what Marx calls commodity fetishism, which is a mystified social value added to goods that is unconnected to the amount of labor put into producing it, the raw materials it is made out of, or its use-value (Marx, *Capital Vol. 1*).¹⁰ The idea here is that as a commodity, the value of a thing becomes embedded in perverted social relations that exceed any economic determination beyond the technology needed to produce it, which the value ascribed to a

commodity so often does exceed. The reasons this occurs are based on the psychosocial mystification and alienation of the production process itself (*Capital Vol. 1*, 320–321).

Weber's definition of capitalism, on the other hand, is connected to his sociological theory of the Protestant ethic and focused on the drive for accumulation of profit. The accumulation of profit becomes an end in itself, according to this view. This is not to say that under capitalism accumulation of profit for profit's sake is the only acceptable goal for accumulating wealth, but the supposition is that when the accumulation of profit comes into conflict with other ends, in most cases, in the last instance, we might say, the accumulation of profit emerges as the superior goal (again, generally speaking) (Giddens 2010 [1971]; Wallerstein 2011 [1983]; Robinson 2004).

For both conceptions of capitalism, the economic interactions that seem to exhibit noncapitalist characteristics (such as charitable donations, or unremunerated household labor) are either the exceptions that justify the core characterization, or in some way support the core aspects of capitalism. For example, an unpaid stay-at-home mother or father buys many things produced under capitalist relations in order to complete their household tasks. Even though they are not subjected to an expropriation of surplus value in the form of an hourly wage (although their labor surely supports the possibility of an overall capitalist economy), their labor includes numerous supportive interactions with the greater capitalist system. With that said, the working definition of capitalism I use in this book, which will be explained and justified in more detail in chapter 2, is: a system that aims at the endless accumulation of capital as its own end, through the expropriation of surplus value in the form of wage labor, enabled and buttressed by a range of unwaged, unremunerated labor.

Now even this synthetic view still might seem to describe capitalism as purely an economic system. In reality, the definitional aspects of capitalism, although wholly economic in nature, inherently affect all aspects of society and social relations (including politics, the family, culture, religion, art, social relations, etc.). This point is absolutely central to my critical reinterpretation of cosmopolitanism. Capitalism, although it is definitionally an economic system, by the specific nature of its economic character is exposed as a totalizing social system.¹¹ Until contemporary cosmopolitans, perhaps especially those "critical" and "radical" cosmopolitan theorists, understand the incompatibility of capitalism with each of their conceptions of justice, justice will remain elusive. However, as we will see, that would be a diffi-

cult proposition, because capitalism is barely theorized within most works of contemporary cosmopolitanism; it is hardly even acknowledged at all.

The primary aspect of capitalism that undermines cosmopolitanism is rooted in the concept of alienation. As a philosophical/social concept it emerged in the thought of G. W. F. Hegel and was drastically elaborated upon by Marx in his early writings, most notably in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. In Marx's later work, alienation is still an important theoretical concern, but it is subsumed into the concepts of exploitation and commodity fetishism. Alienation is typically viewed as a concern of humanist Marxists, and although this is fundamentally accurate, alienation as described by those humanists is a structural aspect of capitalism. It is the product of an economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production and does not depend on the choices made by individual capitalists to exist.

For Marx, we are alienated from the process of our labor (we rarely work on more than a piece of the product or service); from the product of our labor (in that we do not own it); from our species-being (our "human nature"); from ourselves (we begin to see ourselves as inhuman or machine-like; we feel and think less and end up acting robotically); from each other (we regard each other as competitors in the marketplace of consumer goods or labor opportunities or as a means to improve our own lot in life, not in solidarity as fellow humans); and finally from nature (we are separate from nature; it is "out there," and it exists to provide us with material resources to consume) (Ollman 1971; Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*).

Why this facet of capitalism became so important to the humanist vein of Marxist interpretation is because it organically alters the subjects of capitalism's ability to achieve solidarity with one another, thus preemptively aborting progress toward socialist revolutionary change (Fromm 1994 [1941]; 1976). Alienation as understood by Marx prevents individuals, especially those who are members of the proletariat (those who do not own or control the means of production but merely toil on it to survive, with the ensuing surplus value and profit flowing to the owners of said means of production, the bourgeoisie), from living a fully human and humane existence according to our species-being, defined as "essential life activity," which for humanity means to labor as one freely chooses. Additionally, because the defining characteristics of capitalism require the exploitation of wage labor and profit seeking, ideological discourses that legitimize and/or mystify this

feature of capitalism, exploitation becomes normatively acceptable, even if not in its most egregious forms (e.g., chattel slavery or fourteen-hour work days) (Ollman 1971).

Psychological research has provided little evidence for the existence of “switches” within the human mind that allow us to consistently turn certain behavioral dispositions and psychological traits off and on as we choose (referring to the aspects of psychology and behavior that go deeper than mood). Social conditioning undermines free will and agency at every turn, even if incompletely. The capitalistic mentality, as it is reproduced through capitalist ideology, functions as a psychological phenomenon; it is not merely ideology, and it implicitly and consistently—if imperfectly—undermines solidarity and noninstrumental cooperation wherever capitalism spreads.

Success under capitalism requires people to be more competitive than they otherwise would be. I am not making the argument that people would not be competitive under alternative modes of production. History has shown us that people were competitive under feudalism and the so-called tribal modes of production. It is, however, my supposition, and one first explained by Fromm, that the marketing personality that succeeds in capitalism is far more pervasively competitive than under previous modes of production, as well as it might be under potential future ones (Fromm [1941] 1994).

Thus far, Adorno’s negative dialectics has only been felt implicitly, though a more comprehensive explanation of the intersection between Fromm’s notion of paradoxical logic and negative dialectics will be given in chapter 2.¹² Before detailing what negative dialectics is more specifically, it is useful to point out how it is already being utilized. Negative dialectics calls attention to contradictions. According to Fredric Jameson (2007), this is the defining characteristic of all dialectical thought, and negative dialectical thought is hardly an exception. By taking a negative dialectical approach, the contradictory presence of both capitalism and an argument for progress within cosmopolitanisms appears to consist of the mutually destructive components they are in reality. Unlike Hegelian or Marxian dialectics, there is no presumed teleology: the positive negation of the negation is not guaranteed from the beginning and without de-reifying agency and demystification it is likely that the negation of the negation will be a negative as well (Adorno 1973; 1993; 2003). This means that we cannot assume the liberal democratic aspects of capitalism will win out over the exploitative, unequal, plutocratic leanings of capitalism. We cannot assume that progress under capitalism really means progress for most people. We

must never forget that a concept such as progress is never identical to the reality of “progress,” which for Adorno is implicated in processes of regression and dehumanization along with the advancements of technology and certain political freedoms (Adorno and Horkheimer 2007).

To elaborate slightly on this very rough explanation of negative dialectics, the core principle is the rejection of the central characteristic of Western or Aristotelean logic, the law of noncontradiction. The law of noncontradiction holds that something cannot be a thing and not that thing at the same time (A cannot be A and not-A at the same time). Contrary to Hegel’s argument regarding the dialectic that “the whole is true,” Adorno counters axiomatically that “the whole is false” (Buck-Morss 1977). Capitalism is the embodiment of a false totality, not the pure positive, rational totality that Hegel implies. It is a totality that represents the destructions of humanity among humanity. It is a totality that is at once material and imaginary (or ideological). Adorno argues that there is no reason for us to assume that this is the case, and he offers the nonidentical relation between language and reality as the primary example. As I just mentioned, progress is both progress and not-progress at the same time. We can see this in the reality of our global situation: not only is progress only progress or more progressive for certain people (usually the already wealthy and privileged) but progress also means the destruction of our biospheres and ecosystems. When we fail to remember that concepts are never identical to themselves (they are never identical to the reality they purport to describe), we are exemplifying “identitarian” thinking and more specifically reifying language and the world. Reification is the practice of making something abstract or ideal concrete when it is not. For Adorno (1973; 2003), reification is part and parcel of identitarian thinking, though it is more harmful because reification involves forgetting the forgetting. Reification means that we believe we understand reality through our concepts; we don’t even realize we are engaging in problematic identitarian thinking.

Identitarian thinking is, additionally, an important aspect of instrumental reason (a concept inaugurated in the sociological theories of Max Weber but expanded by Adorno and Horkheimer). Instrumental reason is the reasoning of capitalism; do not question the end (the end is pre-given and everyone learns it from an early age: make profit/make money) but only ask about the best way to achieve that end. Reason becomes broadly utilitarian toward that particular end. Identitarian thinking is central to instrumental reason because it is, in a sense, economical. It doesn’t waste

time with the complexities of reality. It doesn't concern itself with justice or externalities that it perceives to cost nothing. This is precisely what combines with Fromm's work to develop the amalgamated concept of the capitalistic mentality.

This project, and chapter 2 specifically, will argue that we are socially conditioned to think that competitiveness, greed, possessiveness, hyper self-interest, material inequality, and even rampant violence are the dominant aspects of human nature (embodied in the practices of consumerism). We reify human nature by failing to question *how* competitive or *how* self-centered people "naturally" are, and we are encouraged to, because this is consistent with the dominant ideology and logic of the profit motive. There is strong, suggestive sociological evidence of the pervasiveness of these beliefs that will be provided in the book, though one need only turn to social media to see how seriously such beliefs are taken by millions, if not billions of people.

The capitalistic mentality is this psychosocial behavioral framework we are conditioned into that promotes the marketing social character, having (over being) a pathological relation to normalcy, pervasive reification, and identitarian thinking. Applying a negative dialectical analysis, framed in this way, to cosmopolitanism allows us to demystify precisely why capitalism—understood socially, culturally, and psychologically—undermines cosmopolitan sensibilities and democratic, egalitarian progress.

At this point it is worth emphasizing that this is not a book criticizing neoliberalism. It isn't against criticizing neoliberalism per se (as it also offers a critique of neoliberalism in a certain sense), but it is centrally about capitalism as such, of which neoliberalism is one particular iteration of what I have referred to elsewhere as the political-economic manifestation of what happens when capitalism is winning (Sculos 2019b). There is a kind of cottage industry in academia surrounding neoliberal subjectivity. This is a valuable literature in its own right. Many of the arguments thinkers such as Wendy Brown (2015) make are consistent in most respects with the claims I make in this book. However, there is one key difference. For critics of neoliberalism and the neoliberal subject, there are at least two possible paths to untying the Gordian knot: some form of socialism or democratic postcapitalism, or a future return to some kind of regulated welfare state or social democratic capitalism that is not neoliberal. What the argument of this book suggests is that this latter option is not really an option, because the underlying problem is not neoliberalism or neoliberal capitalism, but capitalism itself. It is not neoliberal subjectivity that is at issue but the further instantiation of the capitalistic mentality.¹³

The Dialectic of Exclusion and Inclusion

In every era of history there have been ideas that were believed to be impossible, and for a lot of those ideas history has thus far been proved right, but for a number of other ideas, history has been proven wrong. The main argument of this project is more about addressing the pragmatic *possibility* of making drastic improvements toward the perhaps unreachable ideal of egalitarian global justice through universal institutional inclusion than proving definitively a singular, particular way to immediately fulfill the promise of universal human rights understood both politically and economically.

I will go on to argue that capitalism is, as an increasingly ubiquitous framework, a kind of active retrovirus that permeates the circulatory system of all levels of sociopolitical interactions and thus supports and expands this latter kind of diseased politics. Dialectically, however, a potential solution of global solidarity and cosmopolitan spirit is made possible through the ubiquity and global contagiousness of capitalist systems. In its pervasiveness, capitalism allows itself to be the target of revolutionary reform it rightfully should be. This overcoming of the capitalistic mentality is far from guaranteed by the structures of capitalism itself; it is only with a change in the spirit—that is, in the psychology of humanity—that emancipatory justice can overtake the annihilatory leanings of the capitalistic social character (Adorno 1968; Fromm [1960] 2010; 1968). It is not only people that need to change; institutions do as well. The institutional change—because it can affect more change than ad hoc reeducation—likely needs to, if only slightly, precede the more pervasive shift in global social character. A change among a minority of people might lead to a change in the institutions of global and national politics as I will lay them out, but a more widespread change in character requires more time and would likely be undermined without some kind of institutional support.¹⁴ The likelihood of success in regard to any of this is still highly unlikely given the current trend of things. However, as both Adorno and Fromm suggest throughout their oeuvres—with differing and variable degrees of optimism—radical yet reasoned belief in the power of the possibility of success and the need for such success is all that can be guaranteed by taking the capitalistic mentality seriously as *the* psychosocial threat to global justice and human emancipation.

If much of cosmopolitan theory concerns itself with peoples' universal inclusion in systems of justice beyond and within nation-states, the central dichotomy is thus one of inclusion versus exclusion. However, this dichotomy can only serve the cause of global justice so well before its thus far reified

applications countermand its own ends. We must understand the nuances and complexities of inclusion versus exclusion, specifically the quality of the inclusion and exclusion.¹⁵ What will be expanded on is the quality of the inclusion or exclusion from global capitalism as well as the socioeconomic variables that play a part in kinds of political exclusion.

As external observers of and participants in systems of inclusion and exclusion, we can see aspects of the capitalistic mentality at work in something as seemingly purely political as who is included as a citizen. Our media is saturated with rhetoric nowadays testifying to the horrific job-stealing character of *illegal immigrants* entering the United States. According to this prevalent narrative, *illegal immigrants* need to be excluded because they are stealing jobs away from Americans who want to work but cannot find employment. The problem is not with the inherent dynamics of postindustrial or late capitalism around the world or in a particular country, but instead the problem is that we have failed to exclude the undeserving. Conversely, much of the argument for allowing undocumented people to stay in the country is based on an idealization of exploitation: “Let them stay; they do work no Americans really want to do, like clean our toilets and mow our lawns.” Inclusion here is the desire to work under a moderately more benevolent system of wage slavery. This is a variant of what Keeanga-Yamahatta-Taylor (2019) has recently referred to as “predatory inclusion.” The psychosocial dimensions of capitalism, of which hypercompetitiveness and dehumanization are the most noxious, pervade discussions and decision making around citizenship and immigration policies as well. These are just two obvious examples. There are plenty of others to choose from too, sadly.

There are moments throughout this book that will feel hopeless—especially toward the end of chapter 3. In the many places I have presented parts of this work, the question I have so often been asked is, “Where is the space for agency?” which is itself an interesting question given that one of the crucial theoretical figures deployed in this argument was castigated throughout his career for giving too much pride of place to individual and even collective agency. While my work here certainly more accurately portrays Erich Fromm’s very real pessimism about the likelihood of success for any radical reformation on a massive scale, there are often spaces for agency. It will always be a differentially constrained and conditioned agency—not an agency outside of the forces of ideology that become the incentivized, normalized, and justified capitalistic mentality—but there is definitely space for hope. It is, as China Miéville (2015) in *Salvage* has called for, a “hope with teeth.” It is a “hope without optimism” to use Terry Eagleton’s (2015)

phrasing. We have no reason to think things will turn out well, but the truth that they possibly might, with the right collective actions and changes in the too often frozen heart of humanity, is what we should be focused on. Despair. Be pessimistic. There is ample cause for both, but that can and must be combined with a critical hope aimed at theorizing, developing, and practicing (in no particular order) alternatives to the current way of organizing our world and alternatives to our current ways of thinking (or at least what currently passes for thinking). It must begin first with us—in whatever collectivities we can create together—to realize that democracy can help us recreate one another with psychosocial incentives that countermand and delegitimize the capitalistic mentality. This project aims to offer a contribution to the intellectual and practical conversations that have attempted to offer elements of such a critical hope and vision.

Some Notes on Method, Style, and Audience

It is important for the reader to understand the intellectual spirit in which the project was written, and although that spirit will evince itself throughout the project, understanding the intentionality of that spirit and associating it with a particular mixture of theorists (in this case Adorno and Fromm) is well served by an explicit explanation of some of what is going on “behind the scenes.”

I have attempted to apply a complex mixture of Adornoian negative dialectics combined with the accessibility and normative democratic ethos of Fromm’s theory and writing style in general. Scholarly debates and jargon are unavoidable in a book of this kind, which is principally aimed at an academic audience. But, the hope is that in combining Fromm’s political style as a filter for some of Adorno’s well-known intellectual elitism, an original contribution to contemporary debates in Critical Theory and within and against the cosmopolitan tradition will be allowed to come to fruition that is both scholarly and comprehensible to a reader lacking in-depth knowledge of any of the traditions or thinkers referenced herein. The primary goal for this book, as with any work of critical scholarship, is to expose the complexities the current social situation that fail to be apparent on their own or through existing scholarship. Yes, negative dialectics and radical psychoanalytic humanism are the starting points here. However, these are not just the theoretical tools that I will be using to analyze cosmopolitanism and contemporary Critical Theory and Left thought more generally,

but are also the methodological and stylistic inspiration behind the explicit applications of these theorists as paradoxically instrumentalized analytical, as well as ethico-political, tools.

As any application of negative dialectics should, the arguments made here have, as much as is possible, acknowledged their own nonidentity and potential contradictoriness—though for the sake of readability and to avoid the appearance of excessive hedging, this was not done in every instance. Perhaps too little, or perhaps too much. Whichever it is, I hope that sympathetic readers will *not* ignore these moments, but instead take them as opportunities to think beyond my arguments and concepts.

There are also important elements of play in this monograph. Most notably in the last long section of chapter 2, but in other instances as well (sometimes noted explicitly, sometimes not). From the beginning of this project, way back in 2013–14, there were two main examples in this project that represented what I'd always thought were productive manifestations of “play,” as this concept manifests in Critical Theory. The first is related to the title of the initial dissertation: *Worlds Ahead?* While the dissertation, and this book, is still about achieving a world that is habitable and dignified for all people in the future, this particular phrase (without the question mark) has a double meaning—and its use in the title of the dissertation was meant as a direct, but playful, jab at my alma mater, Florida International University, whose neoliberal mantra is: *Worlds Ahead*. Their “*Worlds Ahead*” strategic plans and institutional practices are nothing more than the epitome of the capitalistic mentality described in this project, but also of a broader critique of cosmopolitan theories that not only accept that global justice is possible through capitalism, but that global justice is more or less equivalent to global capitalism.

The second important example of play comes in the use of the phrase “capitalistic mentality.” This phrase is a play on Ludwig von Mises’s (1956) “anti-capitalistic mentality,” which according to him represents an array of embarrassing self-serving leftist criticisms of capitalism. In other words, he thinks that leftists only oppose capitalism because they aren’t good at capitalism and/or simply want to subject freedom- (i.e., capitalism-) loving peoples to the authoritarianism inherent in genuine democracy and egalitarian political-economic forms—no other reasons. If one were looking for a better “intellectual” representation of the capitalistic mentality it would be tough to find anything more fitting than Mises’s theory of the anticapitalistic mentality.