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Outside the Wage: Seeing Politics and Possibilities with Critical Comparisons

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Abstract: Emerging debates on the contemporary reconfigurations of work question previous understandings of the relationships among and between waged, unwaged, and reproductive labour, situated processes of value formation and/or enclosure, and the constitution and limits of contemporary capitalism. Taking Cindi Katz's notion of countertopographies and Gillian Hart's notion of relational comparison as inspirations, this Symposium draws attention to new and existing conceptual frames and modes of analysis to situate contemporary permutations of work within the shifting dynamics of uneven development in specific state, local, and institutional contexts. This Introduction summarises the interrelated and overlapping contributions that papers in this Symposium offer methodologically, analytically, and politically. The open-ended aspiration that emerges from these contributions is that close attention to heterogeneous formations of work outside the wage might help to multiply forms of vigilance and critical praxis necessary to resist the co-optation and enclosure of people's creative energies, and move toward realising the latent liberatory potentials that several of the contributions suggest.

Keywords: countertopography, relational comparison, geographies of work, praxis, epistemological politics

Introduction

Contemporary configurations of work are being remade. What can these shifting spaces and rhythms, relations to power, uneven enrolments within different value regimes, and subjectively experienced textures of work tell us about the (re)configuration of political-economic, social, cultural, and other structural dynamics more broadly? How do these (re)configurations influence, and are indicative of, uneven development in specific state, local, and institutional contexts? How do

they play out across geography and across scales? Emerging debates question previous understandings of these relationships—particularly among generative forms of unwaged and reproductive labour, situated processes of value formation and/or enclosure, and the constitution and limits of contemporary capitalism itself (Chakrabarti et al. 2012; Monteith et al. 2021; Mosoetsa et al. 2016; Sanyal 2013). Are existing conceptual frames adequate for addressing such questions? What new modes of analysis might be approachable and indeed necessary amid these ongoing shifts? Moreover, how do we understand configurations which seem to be new as connected to much longer-standing dynamics of racially and geographically gradated dispossession, expulsion, exploitation, necrotic violence, and theft—and, in those same contexts, persistence, resilience, resistance, survival, and thriving? Indeed, many argue that these dynamics have always been part and parcel of capitalism as a world historical formation (e.g. Byrd et al. 2018; Gilmore 2017; Robinson 1983). Cutting across all these concerns are pressing questions about whether, to echo Gidwani (2015), the heterogeneity of economic activity should be seen as an expression of capital's hegemony, a marker of its vulnerabilities, a sign of its tendency—or even its need—to variously enclose (parasitically) and/or expel (avariciously) relatively autonomous forms of labour and value making, or—most likely—some spatially, temporally, and conjuncturally variable combination thereof. The papers in this Symposium engage these and other questions through a focus on contemporary permutations of work and labour "outside the wage". It expands on conversations over three different Association of American Geographers meetings from 2017 to 2019, each inviting different participants to think about the questions and themes outlined above. Featuring contributions from nine scholars studying geographies of work and labour in disparate contexts globally, the collection presents not only a novel array of new empirical research engaging these matters, but also explores modes of collaboratively analysing and drawing incisive connections across contexts which seem to urgently demand new conceptual frames.

We write in a fraught moment of urgency, crisis, and transformation, in which how we theorise work outside the wage matters. The pandemic has intensified old precarities and generated new dangers, deeply uneven processes which expose racialised and marginalised communities to greater health risks and economic harms. The continuous crises and slow violence of racial capitalism is nothing short of *catastrophe*, a category we borrow from Cornell West (2019) who insists on language that centres the experiences of those on the frontlines of overlapping systems of oppression while also urging action beyond technical, reformist policy solutions woefully inadequate to the task at hand. Certainly, the pandemic shed light on the multiple forms of labour suturing together our social worlds, including our collective dependence on low-paid workers and the unpaid work of social reproduction. The pandemic also forced fast and significant shifts in social relations, as quarantine and social distancing reorganised work, pushed unemployment to new highs, transformed homes into workplaces, and, more recently, inspired the collective soul-searching behind the "great resignation". These material changes yielded new vocabularies, like the term essential work, which highlighted the paradox that the workers deemed the most necessary are

often low-paid, unpaid, and unprotected. This resignification of whole worlds of work long denigrated and devalued represented a reckoning. Outlets such as the *New York Times* began running stories on the plight of informal workers like street vendors as they navigated impossible binds, in which their work—their only buffer against destitution—could expose themselves and their loved ones to disease and possible death. If solidarity with essential workers built cross-class filaments of concern, it also co-existed with policies that prioritised the functioning of something called the economy over people's lives. Contributor to this Symposium Rachel Goffe named this as a "transparent callousness to premature death", riffing on Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (2007) incisive definition of racism and thereby marking the deeply racialised dimensions of the pandemic response. Indeed, *essential* paired lethally with *disposable*, as, for instance, Amazon forced employees to work alongside their symptomatic colleagues and waste workers cleaned Bangalore without personal protective equipment (Arakal 2020). Countering these callous realities, workers organised. From hunger striking taxi drivers in New York to Guatemalan street vendors winning official state recognition as workers, the pandemic intensified contestation over the meaning, terms, and valuation of work (Marchiori and Prandini Assis 2021; Widdicombe 2021). Alongside this uptick in collective action, more modest modes of acting politically also took shape, like revived practices of mutual aid (Cayuela 2021; Rutherford 2021; Spade 2020). It remains to be seen if the pandemic will be a portal, as Arundhati Roy (2020) wrote, a doorway into ways of being, seeing, and labouring otherwise in the world. Yet these transformations certainly highlight the central importance of robust ways of theorising and intervening in worlds of work outside the wage.

Situating Contemporary Formations of Work Outside the Wage

As is now widely documented, the global urban majority—poor city dwellers in the global South and North—depends on unwaged work. Familiar forms of informalised urban work—like street vending or wastepicking—resiliently persist and have been described by scholars as "wageless life" (Denning 2010), invisibilised "infrastructural labour" (Gidwani and Maringanti 2016), "wasted lives" (Bauman 2013), or life "beyond the proper job" (Ferguson and Li 2018). At the same time, new modes of insecure work proliferate, like the celebrated gig economy hosting Uber drivers, "Task Rabbits", and creative-class consultants labouring under precarious relations of profit-making and risk-taking. Indeed, a comprehensive body of scholarship has documented how financialisation, economic restructuring, and austerity politics generalise conditions of insecurity (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Chakrabarti and Dhar 2010; de Solano and Colectivo Situaciones 2002; Massey 1994; Sassen 1998), thereby creating the need for so many to turn to work outside the wage. These dynamics entail the expansion of surplus populations (Davis 2006; Li 2010; Sanyal 2013;), sometimes framed as those cast out and redundant to the needs of capital. Yet, capital has always depended on the conditional enrolment, enclosure, and capture of unremunerated labour (Federici 2004; Robinson 1983) in all manner of settings both immediate and adjacent

to spaces of exchange-value making. And people who find themselves in these situations are forging lives, livelihoods, political movements, tactical compromises, and quiet rebellions (Agarwala 2016; Bayat 2000; Sarmiento et al. 2016). Like a mobius strip, these diverse labourers outside the wage are at once marginalised from and necessary to the contemporary accumulation of capital, defending their spaces of work, the materials of their trade, and their right to extract livelihoods and pursue generative lives in and from the—particularly urban and peri-urban—spaces they inhabit (Gago 2017; Millar 2014; Swanson 2010) while at the same time producing and buoying the production of value in surprising ways. Following this insight, state, civic, and capitalist institutions have developed and deployed various, sometimes deliberate, other times haphazard discourses, techniques, and policies to try and contain, discipline, manage, and capture these energies (Gidwani 2013; Goffe 2017). Indeed, as capitalism produces the conditions impelling so many to make do on the margins and in worlds of informalised work, the value produced in these spaces is open to being targeted for enclosure or appropriation, often on the heels of discursive devaluations which denigrate the behaviours, capacities, and spaces of the unwaged (Fraser 2014; Tucker and Anantharaman 2020). Herein are both the grounds and the stakes for new conceptual frames and comparative analytics.

Taken as a whole, the contributions to this Symposium outline the contours of complex and fluid practices and relations best understood as a historical norm, rather than the remnants of some transitional phase yet to be overcome. Indeed, it is now clear that the regular paycheque and union representation are historically and geographically restricted dynamics, rather than the universal horizon of emancipatory possibility. Toward situated analyses of these broader dynamics, the assembled papers take as their starting points multiple, distinct but often intersecting varieties of work and labour outside the wage. Authors use the terms work and labour to signify different formations within this mix, pointing to both their emergent nature and fluidity and the ways these formations defy stable categorisation in academic and popular thought. Some unwaged activities described—like street vending and wastepicking—align with common notions of "work" as embedded in economic exchange, while other forms of non-commoditised cooperation, care, and more-than-capitalist life-making and "people-making" labour (Fraser et al. 2019:21) occur both in and beyond spaces of employment and livelihood making. As such, many of the undertakings described in the papers blur clean distinctions between forms most often legible as work and forms of reproductive, emotional, and what others have described as psychic labour (Bystrom and Nuttall 2013; Kinnamon 2016; Mahadeo 2019), which we define as the affective and subjective aspects of persisting amid conditions hostile to one's thriving. Following the interventions of generations of feminists, it is equally clear that the labour of reproducing home, family, and broader forms of social infrastructure are fundamental to complex dynamics of production and reproduction of social life (Federici 2012; Katz 2001, 2004; Luthra 2021; Mies 2014; Mullings 2021). Often uncompensated and increasingly commoditised, intensely gendered and racialised, such reproductive work sustains selves, families, communities, and socialities, and therefore generates value, subsidises profit-

making, and plays a role in the cultivation of a diverse array of labourers, and subjectivities and forms of value. Again, this entails psychic, affective, and emotional as well as material aspects, and one of the contributions of this collection is to articulate the several among many different ways this is so. Such reproductive labour may occur as necessity in bleak conditions where the means to sustain life are under outright assault, or more tacitly as a creeping compulsion within everyday life in enduring relations of dominance. Always historically specific, heterogeneous, and internally differentiated, these dynamics are deeply interdigitated with race, gender, and other formations of difference (Quijano 2000; Samson 2010). But they are also shot through with forms of poesis and poetics which must not be reduced to narratives of dominance alone. As the contributions in this collection show, these formations of work and labour are both deeply heterogenous and reveal broader structural and conjunctural conditions.

Interventions

With these contours in mind, papers in this collection are grounded in recognition and examination of forms of labour outside the wage along the continuum outlined above. And from this starting point, each arrives at a deeper analysis not only of the content and products of heterogeneous forms of work, but of histories, institutional and policy formations, cultural dynamics, experiences, and other nuances that condition, emerge from, surround, and saturate forms of work and labour in their particularity. From there, broader patterns become legible and broader comparisons can be drawn—enabled in and through attention to the structures, scales, temporalities, and textures that come into view from the vantage point of different instances of labour and work outside the wage. Leveraging this spatially and temporally sensitive and indeed comparative approach, political dynamics and possibilities palpable in and across different contexts also come into sharper focus.

Given these dimensions, we understand this Symposium as making a series of interrelated and overlapping contributions to the literatures and debates cited above. These contributions can be understood along methodological, analytical, and political axes, and we describe each in more detail below. Rather than outlining each of the five papers in this collection one by one, we interweave core findings and arguments from each throughout as a means of underscoring and drawing connections across these contributions.

Methodological: A Relational Comparative Approach, or Tracing (Counter)Topographies

Over the course of several years of conversation exploring these questions and formations we saw the need for a comparative approach that might produce new analytics and ways of conceptualising the complex dynamics and connections at play across different settings and contexts. But the heterogeneity in the issues at hand made this a somewhat difficult proposition. Predominant modes of comparative work tend to assume that bounded spatial and/or temporal units have

discrete attributes that can be held constant or varied to allow for comparison. Yet all the variegations amid the interconnections of work outside the wage that we might seek to trace—from flows of migrant labour to capital to governance and policy practices to the fluctuation of market cycles—limit the utility of this mode of comparison (Gough 2012; Hart 2006, 2016; Jacobs 2012; Robinson and Roy 2015; Ward 2010). So rather than holding constant a set of background variables, the contributors to this collection have taken up a different framework to interrogate how the spaces, politics, and values of unwaged work articulate with modalities of contemporary global capitalism and other structural and institutional points of connection. Namely, papers in this collection, explicitly or implicitly, contribute to what Cindi Katz (2004:xii) has called a topographical analysis which attempts to excavate and chart "unexpected connections among disparate places" via their relationships to specific processes within the spatial-social formation of contemporary global capitalism, and, beyond that, to identify possibilities for political praxis, resilience, resistance, and reworking—Katz calls these "countertopographies"—that might be approachable precisely in and through these same connections and relations. In this framing of connection across geographies, difference does not signal incommensurability or the foreclosing possibilities for useful comparison, but is, rather, fodder for understanding spaces, temporalities, regimes of value, and therefore openings for politics and possibilities outside the wage.

Katz offers (counter)topographies as a research sensibility that permits, on the one hand, an interrogation of the critical topographies of globalisation, including thick historical geographies of particular places that can then enable, on the other hand, a "critique of the social relations sedimented into space and … the material social practices at all geographic scales through which place is produced" (2001:1228–1229). We emphasise, in particular, labouring practices and different formations of value as key factors producing place. The cartographic metaphor of contour lines here is deployed as a way of charting "precise analytic relationships" and enabling new understandings of connections between perhaps seemingly distant and disparate locations and thus the "inference of connection in uncharted places in between" (Katz 2001:1229). In quite different ways, the contributions to this Symposium each take up this approach as a means of excavating points of interconnection between perhaps seemingly distant and disparate locations, times, and formations of work outside the wage, by extension pointing to different potential points of struggle, contestation, and potential political intervention in the contemporary conjuncture. Most papers are co-authored by two researchers who bring their ethnographic material in conversation across space and time, offering an innovative post-fieldwork style of comparison (see also Tucker and Devlin 2019).

While not all papers in this collection explicitly describe their methods as countertopographical, ambitions to trace lines of connection across locations pulse throughout. In their examination of two different kinds of urban workers in two very different cities—waste collectors in Delhi and market vendors in Kampala—Aman Luthra and William Monteith (2021) offer "aesthetic technologies" as one contour line that connects the transformations in labour processes across the two

sites. Workers in both cases have appropriated such technologies—identity cards, uniforms, and codes of conduct—to assert claims to the legitimacy of their livelihoods. Attending to quite different contexts from North American locations, Christian Anderson and Amanda Huron (2021) draw connections between the kinds of civic labour undertaken in parent–teacher associations (PTAs) in Washington, DC and in block associations in New York City through an analytic contour line of "salvage commoning". In both locations, they identify commoning practices which initially developed as a direct response to the realities of disinvestment in public goods and services, before then becoming a part of the civic-institutional apparatus which inequitably conditions such disinvestments. In a third comparative context, Nicole Molinari and Geraldine Pratt (2021) draw a distinction between brutal and softer forms of privatisation by tracing how neoliberal restructuring is experienced and managed differently by workers within non-profit versus for-profit long-term care facilities in Vancouver. They excavate forms of relational care and solidarity that are necessitated across differences in these contexts, and from which different post-COVID futures might emerge.

If the aforementioned contributions focus on tracing contour lines spatially across separate and distinct sites and sectors of labour and/or organisation types, other authors carefully think space and time together. Goffe (2022) closely considers the lived rhythms and historical geographies of one space where residents navigate fluctuating, mobile boundaries of land and labour in Jamaica. From here, she draws out spatio-temporal entanglements among empire, plantation economies, state policies, seasonal labour, and self-provisioning and social reproduction, elaborating the concept of "ownershiplessness" as a particular relation to land that was and continues to be essential to the production of labour as simultaneously self-sufficient and readily available for capital. Hilal Kara and Beverley Mullings (2022) draw our attention to "wait space", offering an examination of the spatio-temporal dynamics of waiting strategies deployed by young women in contemporary Turkey as they negotiate an uncertain politico-economic landscape characterised by a nationalist neoliberal Islamism that offers them scant employment opportunities. This articulation of wait space extends our understanding of what Mullings (2021) calls "life-work", wherein precarious peoples' struggles to achieve livelihood, social reproduction, and life-making often overlap across geographies such that neat separations between work and home, labour and leisure become unbound in ways that cannot easily be spatially or temporally demarcated. If the concept of life-work allowed Mullings to explore how young people in Jamaica generate value through collaboration and sociability, the wait space allows Kara and Mullings to attend to the alternative spaces of possibility that waiting creates for young women in Turkey.

Other contributions also contextualise specific forms of work to chart spatio-temporalities and complex historical geographies. Anderson and Huron (2021), for instance, connect contemporary policy formations in two cities to voluntary and civic practices which mutated over four decades of disinvestment, resource erosion, and associated crises of social reproduction within the US and global North urban crisis contexts more broadly. Molinari and Pratt (2021) situate their account of the experiences of long-term care workers in several facilities within

broader contexts of underinvestment, privatisation, and the concomitant financialisation of this sector in British Columbia specifically, and Canada more generally. Luthra and Monteith (2021) contextualise the disciplining of informal workers not only in the context of more recent world-class city making projects but also a much longer history of racial colonial logics of spatial ordering that the two cities share. Together, these papers elucidate dynamics and contours of life and work outside the wage that are at once global and intimate (Pratt and Rosner 2006), spatial and temporal, and resonant across location, all together modelling different connective approaches for grappling with the complex interplay among these registers.

Analytical Interventions: Geographies of Work "Outside the Wage"

The overarching analytic sensibility that cuts across the present collection attempts to grapple with worlds of work "outside the wage" in order to understand the mutual constitutiveness and spatio-temporal and conjunctural dynamics of what have sometimes been framed as binary divisions between inclusion/exclusion, inside/outside, and waste/value in relation to shifting geographies of labour and political economy. Resonant with previous conversations published in *Antipode* (see, for instance, the Symposium on "bio[necro]polis" [McIntyre and Nast 2011] and a conversation on insides and outsides of capitalism organised by Dempsey and Pratt [2019]), papers in this collection carefully attend to the lived, everyday practices that defy and unsettle binary categories for explaining these dynamics, complicating the relationship between inside and outside, the waged and unwaged. The papers are in further conversation with one another to the degree that each differently empirically explores and theorises these dynamics in and across quite different contexts.

This collection underscores the central role of work outside the wage to regimes of accumulation, richly detailing new articulations of this old phenomenon. Molinari and Pratt (2021) show how elder care providers often labour outside the wage even in their spaces of paid employment, contributing—due to a combination of coercion and care—their unpaid time to meet the needs of their nursing home clients, supplementing the services that austerity budgets do not adequately support. Volunteers and family members of elders contribute their time, labours, and money toward the same ends. Such forms of unwaged work are made necessary as waged work is increasingly constrained by neoliberal austerity and the financialisation of elder care facilities in Canada. These realities complicate the unstable distinctions between free and unfree, waged and unwaged labour, throwing into relief the interdependence and tensions between them. In a similar vein, Anderson and Huron (2021) draw our attention to the commoning labour that parent–teacher organisations and block associations contribute to the stewardship of public schools and urban spaces. In both cases, they draw our attention to the volume of unwaged, voluntary labours, and in-kind contributions that these organisations' members see as necessary investments—initially against crisis contexts in which these practices emerged, and presently understood as crucial to

the secure futures of different users of these resources. Here too, the authors push against binary divisions between formal/informal, inside/outside, and productive/reproductive, which are not adequate to explain the role that this volume of unwaged commoning labour plays in the ostensibly "public" institutional and policy contexts involved, and in potentially amplifying inequalities within those contexts.

Other lessons emerge from Symposium authors' careful attention to the strategies and creative politics of the excluded as they respond to new regimes of governance and the coloniality of power. Luthra and Monteith (2021) draw our attention to the similarities in the changing nature of informal work in two different sectors (waste collectors and market vendors) in two postcolonial cities (Delhi and Kampala). In both cases, workers adopted certain technologies of aesthetic discipline to simultaneously claim citizenship in world-class city making projects while retaining a certain degree of autonomy over the labour process. Strategic conformance to these disciplinary technologies is part of a process that has been described as quasi-formalisation, disrupting the unstable distinction between formal and informal work and workers (O'Hare 2020). While the resignification of the labour of informal workers through the deployment of technologies of aesthetic discipline by intermediary organisations has allowed workers to retain access to their livelihoods, it also deepens class distinctions between workers who appear formal and those who do not. Along different but related lines, Goffe (2022) examines how Jamaicans have laid claim to space even as they are excluded from land ownership and the wage, drawing attention to the blurring and liminality within another continuum of unstable distinctions: between freedom and constraint, between withdrawal and exclusion, and between security of land tenure and outright displacement. In a similar vein, rather than treating waiting as unproductive time spent outside formal waged work, Kara and Mullings (2022) show how it instead enables young women to imagine lifeworlds beyond the wage and perhaps even stave off patriarchal conscription into a life confined to household and feminised labour. Forms of work within wait space blur boundaries between paid and unpaid work, reproduction and livelihood, dependence and freedom, and the necessity of income generation and the opportunity to refuse undesirable waged work.

Additionally, Symposium authors highlight the complex role of policy formations in the oscillations of the boundary around waged work alongside the modes through which workers are variously expelled and enrolled in situated regimes of accumulation. Goffe (2022) traces present-day continuities of colonial practice that intertwines the regulation of land with the regulation of labour, both of which seek to maintain Black workers as perpetually available, that is, ready to hand for the rapacious requirements of capital in both its plantation and contemporary forms. As plantation practices delimited enslaved people's access to provision grounds necessary for reproducing life under slavery (the plot), today confusing, contradictory state policies strive for "orderly removal" of Black communities from their land, even as these spaces of withdrawal and subsistence are entwined the reproduction of the Black worker and therefore form the conditions of possibility for accumulation. In both cases, the reproduction of Black life is

vulnerable to "the shifting boundary of state discipline", as Goffe (2022) suggests. Luthra and Monteith's (2021) research demonstrates how non-state actors wield governing powers. In both Delhi and Kampala, membership-based organisations of informal workers rework the colonial identity card and other aesthetic technologies as tactics to defend the livelihood rights of informal workers and "produce their own visions of order" in exclusionary cities. In the elder care facilities they studied, Molinari and Pratt (2021) find that less brutal forms of "soft-privatisation" depend on charitable and nonprofit organisations, considerable fundraising labour, and a volunteer Family Council to provide services like physiotherapy and spiritual care. While these labours improved the quality of life for residents, they can also "normalise inadequate public funding and tighten labour control". Kara and Mullings (2022) trace the implications of the state's neoliberal Islamist project on the production of wait space, which they argue serves as a buffer from the forms of gendered precarity generated by anti-labour and anti-welfare policies targeted at women by the state in a moral mission to produce a new generation of pious, "palatable" citizens for a "New Turkey".

Ultimately, these contributions further destabilise dualistic modes of thinking about political economies of labour and contemporary formations and dynamics of value making and (re)production. Instead, they invite further empirically grounded re-conceptualisation, opening up and questioning possibilities for alternative futures to emerge from such theorising.

Political Interventions: Potentials and Limits

Katz framed her countertopographical approach as a means not only to analyse connections between disparate places but to do so in order to locate spaces and practices of resistance, resilience, and reworking, "enhance struggles in the name of common interests", and locate possibilities for oppositional politics (2001:1230). In a similar vein, Gibson-Graham have invited economic geographers to partake what they term a "performative ontological project" that moves beyond realist epistemological concerns and towards "putting forward a new economic ontology that could contribute to novel economic performances" (2008:615) and the cultivation of new economic subjectivities. Seeking inspiration from a diverse range of scholars—for instance, Berlant (2016), Gago (2017), and Gilmore (2017), in addition to those just named—papers in this collection take on these political and ontological challenges to varying degrees and in different ways.

The politics of everyday life emerges as a key contour line threading through the contributions, even as its potentialities are often ambiguous and intertwined with the very forces producing exclusion, hardship, and, indeed, catastrophe. Drawing on Gago's (2017) notion of the "vitalist pragmatic", Luthra and Monteith (2021) argue that waste collectors' and market vendors' adoption of aesthetic technologies cannot be reductively understood as a form of subjugation to world-class city making projects imposing discipline from above. Instead, labourers' appropriation and modification of these aesthetic rationalities are better understood as strategic acts of accommodation in increasingly hostile urban

environments. There are palpable political implications in the "the subjectivities and tactics of everyday life" (Gago 2017:2) that Luthra and Monteith so closely attend to in their ethnographic narrative, even if the authors rightly remain hesitant to frame these in explicitly positive terms. Goffe (2022) likewise sees the political possibilities and potential other ways of being and laying claim to space in order to withdraw and live life otherwise even for those excluded from land ownership and the wage in Jamaica. Echoing Wynter (1971) and Gilmore (2017), Goffe urges us to reread the plot as a potentially anti-capitalist, anticolonial space, but not necessarily as the negation of plantation logics and economies. For Goffe, the focus is less on the plot's liberatory potential than on the way the plot figures into the complex lived and structural spatial-temporalities, geographies of land and labour in contemporary Jamaica, which is just as much a story of possibilities for resilience and re-working as outright political resistance. For Kara and Mullings (2022), on the other hand, while wait space can be a site of oppression, it also allows young women opportunities to build networks, to experiment, and to refuse undesirable waged work.

Contributors also surface the mixed potential of these everyday politics through careful attention to the nuanced articulation of complex historical geographies with current struggles over the distribution of social wealth. Analysing what they call "salvage commoning", Anderson and Huron (2021) argue that while the mobilisation of cooperative labour to collectively steward resources might be admirable and even necessary in some situations, in other contexts such forms of labour may contribute to the exacerbation of existing inequalities in particular spaces while "hardening and abetting resource erosions for people in other locations". The liberatory potential of salvage commoning is not pregiven but requires constant critical scrutiny and struggle. Drawing on Berlant (2016), Molinari and Pratt (2021) are perhaps more hopeful about the political possibilities in the "everyday practices of care". Their contribution recounts the work of memory to evoke meaningful solidarities and thereby reminds us that alternatives to oppressive neoliberal logics already exist, indeed that "reasonably paid relational care was a reality (and not a fantasy) of the recent past that can fuel imaginings for a more caring future". Yet, they too are cautious, urging us not to romanticise these possibilities, and reminding us that "scepticism, solidarity, vigilance, and organising are essential".

The critical epistemological politics put forth by all papers in this Symposium emerge as necessary but insufficient to respond adequately to contemporary catastrophes. Without discounting the urgency of macro-structural changes of the sort pushed for by social movements, the guides for action put forth by these papers are perhaps more modest. Across the contributions, we see myriad forms of action, resiliency, and even solidarity existing and persisting in situations of crisis. As the editorial team, we have been thinking of these modes of action alongside Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (2017:236–237) concept of "infrastructures of feeling", emotionally resonant sensibilities that can become the basis for political struggle, sensibilities that are, at once, grounded in long histories of freedom dreams and relentlessly future-oriented. As we are often reminded, social structures are not fixed or eternal, they are made through contingencies, the excesses

of everyday life, and a considerable amount of indeterminacy. As Anderson (2020) suggests in other work, part of the task is to linger in moments of crisis when the precarity of hegemony is briefly intensified, resisting the urge to repair and return to "normal", and instead commit to collective experiments in creating worlds otherwise.

Conclusion

The open-ended aspiration that emerges across the contributions is that close attention to and engagement across heterogeneous formations of work outside the wage might both figure and help to multiply forms of vigilance and critical praxis necessary to realise the latent liberatory potential of commoning, of channelling collective care and solidarity, and of building spatial practices and traditions oriented towards abolitionist and other just futures. This will require more than merely making visible the mundane ways in which labouring people are compelled to conform to disciplinary logics of spatial ordering and/or make do under conditions constantly threatening harm. If we accept that so much of people's labouring practices are driven by the "practical need to maintain the conditions for their living, thriving, and reproduction", as Anderson and Huron (2021) write, then the challenge becomes one of attending to, articulating, and drawing connections across the political possibilities legible and approachable from the vantage point of such practices and conditions, collectively and relationally understood. What emerging modes of analysis and organising—what additional countertopographies—might allow for building solidarity, sustaining critical capacities, and exercising care and vigilance such that people's creative and life-making energies might be channelled in the direction of their best potentials? This is perhaps the lingering question that the pieces assembled in this collection modestly advance.

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