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On Data, Media, and the Deconstruction of the Administrative State

I shall start with some belated and limited conclusions.¹ In elections in the United Kingdom and the United States in 2016, an unstable bloc of militant liberals and neo-fascists fashioned new media and data practices to smash existing political norms and institutions in order to restructure reality, ‘deconstruct the administrative state’, and further hollow out democracy and de-regulate capital.² Ongoing press, parliamentary, congressional, and legal investigations on both sides of the Atlantic broadly reveal that political actors re-worked the recently established practices of ‘surveillance capitalism’ to marry the data produced by people in their interactions with social media and the Internet to ‘psychographic messaging’ designed to influence their thoughts and actions.³ Commercial procedures of data surveillance such as those integral to the business model of entities like credit-rating agency Experian (1996) and multinational search and social media corporations like Google (1999) and Facebook (2004) were supplemented by governmental practices of mass data surveillance such as the PRISM programme from 2007 as part of the expansion of ‘exceptional’ state practices in the ongoing ‘War on Terror’.⁴ In the early 2000s, hybrid governmental/commercial consulting institutions began meshing data surveillance with what one of the British entities close to the centre of this history – Strategic Communication Laboratories (SCL) – called ‘influence operations’.⁵ SCL deployed this data/media complex in elections and referendum campaigns across the world, including Australia, Brazil, Gambia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Philippines, Thailand, and elsewhere.⁶ Cambridge Analytica, much in the news across 2018, grew out of SCL and built on data harvested from the data Facebook sells access to (and public data sets such as censuses, credit reports, insurance data, and so on) to construct psychological profiles of populations for political campaigns in the United States and the United Kingdom to develop a near-personalized propaganda system using digital screen media to influence political attitudes and conduct.⁷

Both of the campaigns in Britain to leave the European Union (EU) broke electoral laws about spending and collusion to amass this data and use it to deploy media to shape the attitudes of voting populations.⁸ Vote Leave – now effectively the British government – received the *largest ever* fine in the United Kingdom for breaking laws designed to safeguard democracy in order to spend money on dark Facebook ads.⁹ Many of these ads targeted directly to people's newsfeeds using behavioural data warned of illegal migration to the United Kingdom, and a number of them straightforwardly lied in asserting that Turkey (and its large Islamic populations) were joining the European Union. Ongoing revelations show, too, that the Russian state fostered digital practices beginning from around 2013 to try to influence people or simply to virally spread confusion via strategies of propagating 'disinformation' that have long been significant to KGB strategies for controlling populations and that are now integral to secret service and military practices to use the digital and cyber sphere as a component of 'information warfare' to foster state interests.¹⁰ (Here broadly the weakening of NATO and EU alliances and the rolling back of liberal globalization, a project that has frequently found common cause with fascism.)¹¹ Currently, the British government, which is formed from the Vote Leave campaign, is refusing to release a report into Russian funding of the Conservative Party and election interference.¹² Broadly, then, these sobering conclusions demonstrate that the 'influence operations' enabled by the meshing of the collection of data about people integral to the digital sphere with media as a form of psychographic messaging or viral distortion were operationalized to transform political reality.

Any genealogy of the intersecting threads that produced the political revolution of 2016, and our present, must excavate the history of the radicalization of liberalism and the sprawling and well-capitalized efforts to shape the political and the public sphere beginning systematically in the 1970s. Key to this radical libertarian praxis was the reduction of the authority of the state (or supra state entity) to regulate capital, to sustain the architecture of liberal social democracy, and to exceed its rightfully limited role as protector of property rights.¹³ Over time, a disparate group of billionaire libertarians in the United States formed a network to use capital to re-shape the political and public sphere by funding a network of 'think tanks,' front groups, academic positions and departments (notably in Law and Economics), fellowships, foundations, policy support for radical-right-leaning politicians, and media institutions and practices.¹⁴ It was a concerted effort to deploy capital to shape the political and public sphere. The libertarian Cato Institute described it as 'protecting capitalism from government'.¹⁵

Obviously, media was integral to this project, and libertarian agendas were expedited when the ideological workers from those think tanks, foundations, and educational institutions spread out to populate the new cable shows and networks that began in the 1980s and expanded particularly after the 1984 Cable Act and further again after the 1996 Telecommunications Act stripped away regulations about cross medial ownership and corporate conglomeration at the dawn of the commercial digital age.¹⁶ (Fox, for example, began in 1996, one component of the sprawling global media empire of NewsCorp and a key step in the fragmentation of the mediascape that ultimately broke down the idea of ‘news’ into differing epistemological communities.) Overall, the militant liberalism of the libertarians was subsumed within the broad rubric of neo-liberalism and its logic of deregulation, of government as ‘problem’ and not ‘solution,’ but the two positions diverged notably after the structural crisis of the neo-liberal order in the financial crash of 2008–9 and the subsequent state bailout to banks.¹⁷ Billionaire libertarian petrochemical oligarch Charles Koch, for example, declared that this ‘overreach’ of the state to protect finance capital and its global architectures, combined with Barack Obama’s policy efforts from early 2009 in particular to introduce new practices of health insurance, meant that America now ‘faced the greatest loss of liberty and prosperity’ since the 1930s.¹⁸ Koch’s libertarian opposition to liberal globalisation and attenuated forms of social democracy shaped the formation of the ‘Tea Party’ in early 2010, funded largely (though mostly secretly) by radical libertarians and broadly espousing opposition to government and the administrative and welfare state that expanded from the state bailout of finance capital to matters of health care and taxation.¹⁹ It was a practice of ‘astroturfing,’ whereby sponsorship of messages are hidden to make them appear organic.²⁰ Here in order to sustain the radical expansion of free-market ideology and the relentless assault on the idea and practice of government. Astroturfing is one component of a broader praxis to manufacture and control reality. It frequently sustains the political and economic interests of particular blocs of capital.

In that same year, 2010, the legal decision in the US Supreme Court about media, money, corporate speech, and democracy rendered in *Citizens United vs. Federal Elections Commission* effectively defined capital as equivalent to speech, and so as *integral* to democracy, and triggered the decision to void limitations on the spending of money to influence elections.²¹ It is the most significant recent legal decision about the shape and definition of democracy in the highest court of the land in the United States, and I will describe the outcome further momentarily – but it is often forgotten that this extraordinarily

significant decision was made about a film called *Hillary: the Movie*, produced to derail Clinton's bid to become Democratic presidential nominee in 2008 by a radical right-wing/libertarian pressure group called *Citizens United* funded by libertarian oligarchs. Much of this capital rematerialized as media. *Citizens United* planned to show the film on cable television, but this contravened the long history of campaign finance law in the United States that had sought to create a level playing field for candidates by limiting the amount of money corporations could spend to influence democratic elections in the 30 days leading up to the election. It was a limited effort to limit the distortions of wealth in democracy. In 2010, though, the Justices voided these restrictions on corporate spending to produce persuasive media because it violated the First Amendment rights of corporations. Regulating the capital of corporations was equivalent to regulating speech, the decision proposed, and regulation must thus be stopped to allow speech and democracy to flourish. It was an extraordinary decision, an activist form of 'neoliberal jurisprudence', that was predicated on long-standing liberal ideas about the 'free' market and governmental action that were radicalized across the libertarian-financed network from the 1970s when 'freedom' was re-imagined as the pursuit of private ends stripped from the political valences that attach it to popular sovereignty and democracy.²² By this logic democracy became a constraint on freedom, and the 'rights' integral to liberalism – like the right to free speech – were re-deployed by powerful individuals and organisations to sustain the unregulated right to accumulate capital and over-ride mass democracy.²³

Citizens United fundamentally transformed the long history of campaign finance law, enabling those with capital to spend it to shape political realities. The decision about a minor 'documentary' film was key to the massive expansion of 'dark' untraceable money in the political system in the United States from 2010 that shaped the turn to a radical libertarian position that culminated in the 2016 election.²⁴ Cambridge Analytica, for example, was bankrolled from the enormous sums of money the militant libertarian finance capitalist Robert Mercer earned in computerised high-frequency algorithmic trading and was formed in the interregnum between *Citizens United* and 2016.²⁵ Capital (which the Justice's theorized was *equivalent* to speech) was put to work to marry data about people with media in expanded digital forms to influence people to sustain the frictionless *free* movement of capital untrammelled by annoyances like regulation and taxation, reimagined now as the majoritarian coercion of minority elites and a constraint on economic liberty. Curiously, this also means that the nearly

unwatchable *Hillary, the Movie* is (arguably) probably the most significant political film ever made.

Radical liberalism also connected in complex ways with new forms and practices of nationalism and neo-fascism that began to spread notably after the break-up of the Soviet Union (and the end to the anti-communist rhetoric and practice integral to conservatism since 1919), around the turn of the millennium, and further still after the economic crash of 2008–9 and the failure (as the neo-fascists and libertarians saw it) of liberal globalization. Overall, new forms of ethno-nationalist neo-fascist culture opposed immigration, and the formation of multicultural societies and ideals integral to (neo)liberal globalization because of long-standing ideas about civilizational hierarchy that mixed with newer currents of fascist thinking about the ‘traditionalism’ threatened and destroyed by liberalism, egalitarianism, and democracy.²⁶ As is now well known, the broad and inchoate revolt against modernity, liberalism, and the destruction of traditions spread outwards, encompassing opposition to the unresponsive liberal globalizing elites who were damaging ‘western civilization’ and underpinning the *outpouring* of racism and violent misogyny that exploded from the early years of the commercial Internet and social media.²⁷ Key here were message boards like 4Chan from 2003 and new forms of algorithmic aggregation of people that sparked new ‘irreverent’ and often violent and obscene practices of communication and media, exemplified by the meme, that gleefully broke with liberal social conventions and the civility that regulated the public expression of overt racism and misogyny.²⁸ Opposition to immigration and migrant and refugee movement was, and is, key to this radical praxis.²⁹ The political, economic, and social contexts for this resurgence of forms of nationalism and fascism across the world system are of course heterogenous.³⁰ Even so, traditions of thinking about the phenomenon of fascism have taught us that it is frequently a praxis born from economic and social disruption, made up of the ‘declassed of all classes’, and creating a unity of social forces around ideas of race and nation that functions to deflect attention from inequality and class conflict.³¹ Certainly, the extraordinary expansion of inequality structural to the neo-liberal project and the ‘universal alienation’ of the late neo-liberal period have provided fertile ground for fascism to metastasize.³² Because, simply, the neo-liberal assault on government has hollowed out democracy, starving political regimes both of legitimacy and of material resources, at the same time as the related broad shift to financialized ‘post-industrial’ economies has increased the precariousness of employment and the indebtedness of ordinary people.³³ Over time (and, again, the financial crash of 2008–9

and the resulting regime of austerity is key in this genealogy), the neo-fascists and the militant liberals made fragile common cause in opposition to liberal globalization and the social democratic liberalism embodied particularly in the civil rights and feminism that had expanded from the 1960s. The two positions began to cross-pollinate as a radical if incoherent project to strip back state regulations (and those of supra state entities like the EU) at the very same time as erecting the borders, walls, and regulations necessary to foster fictional and mythical ideals of ethno-nationalist sovereignty.³⁴ By this logic, the state could enforce order, and the protection of property, but not act as an egalitarian distributor of wealth or sustenance to the people damaged by the legacies of imperialism, civil war, accelerating climate change, and structural inequality that are theorised by the neo-fascists (and the libertarian leaning ethno-nationalists) as a consequence of biological/intellectual difference.

Obviously, both the militant liberal and neo-fascist project to reshape political, economic, and social reality relied, necessarily, on media and flourished in particular in the digital revolution of information, communication, and media systems that gathered pace after the privatization of the Internet in the early 1990s. Broadly speaking, new digital spaces and networks emerged outside of the existing corporate-controlled media system, and these became important to groups bent on challenging the liberal consensus, be those fascist, or militantly liberal, or some amalgam of the two. Clearly, this shift from a controlled corporate liberal model of broadcasting and print journalism – with muted investments in ideals of ‘expertise’ and objectivity – to a new digital media sphere of participation, opinion, and algorithmically driven content brought with it a radical disruption of reigning epistemological norms. The clearest and simplest example of this is in the phenomenon of what started to be called ‘fake news’ or ‘alternative facts’ to generate clicks and capital principally for the new digital media entities that profit from data, or by interested actors like campaign political operatives or the Russian security services simply to spread distortion and disinformation and disable effective action. Overly sensational news reporting has of course long been a phenomenon of liberal and commercial media systems reliant on advertising.³⁵ Even so, these tendencies accelerated exponentially in the digital era because of the profits generated from data and advertising – from new forms of surveillance capitalism – and sensational fictions about reality were generated at a bewildering pace and widely circulated. Robotic networks were formed to trick algorithms, often designed not to be persuasive *per se* but either to generate capital as ‘click bait,’ by being entertaining and shocking, or simply to be

confusing and disabling to the possibility of discerning truth. Evidence suggests these practices expanded around elections, including those in Nigeria in 2007 and 2015, Mexico in 2012, the United States and the United Kingdom in 2016, and Kenya in 2013 and 2017.³⁶ For its political clients in Nigeria, for example, Cambridge Analytica produced fake videos of political opponents – media masquerading as reality – as well as graphically violent videos warning of what was to come if the Muslim candidate for office won.³⁷ And they then widely disseminated and targeted these videos to populations in Nigeria alongside other persuasive media using behavioural data gathered about people from their social media use. During the Brexit referendum the same company used bot networks located in eastern Ukraine and Russia, hired from Israel, to flood social media and key global moving-image repositories like YouTube.³⁸ (Israel has become adept at this form of mediatized psychological operations and other forms of cyberwar and astroturfing to sustain the violent and illegal occupation of Palestinian land.)³⁹ Russian hackers participated in similar practices in the ‘Brexit’ referendum and in the US election in 2016, obviously mandated to do so by a state with a long history in generating disinformation to govern populations that was re-tooled and expanded for the cyber/digital era.⁴⁰ Much of this took place under the direction of the (now extraordinarily wealthy) former KGB officer, Vladimir Putin, who is the long-serving President of Russia and boss of the oligarchic and criminal (and indeed fascist) networks that mushroomed after the chaotic imposition of liberal capitalism and asset stripping of state resources in Russia in the final years of the twentieth century.⁴¹

Practices of disinformation to transform political realities enabled by the broad transformation of media systems were operationalized by other actors too for varying goals. One of the key threads has been the denial of anthropogenic climate change essential to the continuity of extractive fossil fuel industries. Radical petrochemical libertarian oligarchs Charles and David Koch, for example, have long used extraordinary amounts of capital to fund ‘research’ that doubts the overwhelming conclusions of climate science, as well as to buy the politicians happy to disable effective regulation.⁴² (Defeating Clean Air legislation, pulling out of international climate accords, gutting effective environmental regulations by state or supra-state entities, etc.). The process speeded up in the digital era and specifically from 2008 onwards, when the Koch oligarchs formed a newly militant group of billionaire libertarians (including Mercer) to use their capital to re-shape the political and public sphere that expanded further after the Citizens United decision of 2010.⁴³ (I shall call it The Koch Ring.) Climate scientists in contrast

assert that delaying responding to climate change will usher in the end of organised human society.⁴⁴ The *truth* of climate change gets in the way of the profits of carbon capital, indeed of the continuity of the globally expansive extractive capitalist system, as Naomi Klein among others has recently observed.⁴⁵ For the ever-more radical expansion of capital and free-market ideology, it must, therefore, be *doubted*.

Meanwhile, dark money from The Koch Ring and beyond sluices through British and European political systems, too, helping fund the Atlas network of libertarian think tanks calling for de-regulation, for a 'hard Brexit' in Britain that will strip out trade and environmental regulations, and supporting a pan-European 'movement' of radical-right groups opposed to the political structures of Europe.⁴⁶ Capital formed in particular from the energy industries and financial trading is used to create data analysis and digital media to try to influence people to support the final bonfire of capital regulations. Much of this capital is untraceable, like that pooled together in Super PACs in the United States after the Citizens United decision.⁴⁷ Some of it coagulated as *Brexit, the Movie*, widely shared on YouTube, produced with dark money, and advocating for the stripping out of EU regulations on products and capital.⁴⁸ Most of the money though was spent on dark ads targeted via behavioural data to people's Facebook newsfeeds but disappearing thereafter, many of which present straightforwardly inaccurate information and stoke structures of enmity. Ongoing campaigns on social media use the practises of data analytics developed by organisations like Strategic Communication Laboratories for military and imperial purposes – for 'psychological operations' – to micro-target propaganda at civilian populations through social media to push for the dissolution of EU regulations on capital.⁴⁹ Groups in Britain (like the Taxpayers Alliance and climate-change-denying Global Warming Policy Foundation) collaborated, secretly, to push free-market ideology and a 'hard' Brexit.⁵⁰ Close ties were forged by trans-Atlantic oligarch donor networks, think tanks, and political operatives (like former bankers, and friends, Stephen Bannon and Nigel Farage), using capital to mine data on both sides of the Atlantic to create persuasive media to smash existing political norms and restructure political and economic reality.⁵¹ Britain, the former imperial centre of the world, is paralysed by the incoherence of the radical libertarian right, of its irreconcilable dreams of de-regulation and the utopia of white sovereignty, and its cosmological thinking. Right now, it seems that the illegality of the electoral practices of this libertarian ethno-nationalist bloc scarcely matter. The rule of law has become but a sideshow to the desperate efforts to maintain 'party unity' and political order in the face of the 'revolt of the public'

from the abject failures of neo-liberalism and financialization that were made particularly visible after the taxpayer-funded bailout to banks in 2008 to sustain the fictions of finance capital – securing *securities* – and the cruel and violent *austerity* for the general public that followed.⁵²

Obviously, the ‘strategic destruction of reason’ and the disabling of the ‘distinction between facts and fiction’ long significant to fascism was boosted by the epistemological shift of the digital and marshalled by militant liberals and neo-fascists alike on both sides of the Atlantic to further deconstruct the ability of the state to regulate capital.⁵³ And by others to weaken the idea and practice of democracy, even in its attenuated and degraded liberal iteration, in the midst of a turn to authoritarian governance in a number of states in the late neoliberal period as the global imperial capitalist system fractures amid accelerating planetary emergencies.⁵⁴ *Conspiracy* is the reigning mode of the digital, as anyone who has spent time giving their data freely to Google to monetize in order to watch YouTube can readily attest. Broadly then, and to reiterate, a bloc of militant liberals and neo-fascists used key aspects of the new communicative, informational, and media system that converged together around the turn of the millennium to smash existing regulations, practices, and civilities. Media has been essential, integral, to this project in the varied ways I have sought to describe. It makes sense that it would be for, as Manuel Castells reminds us, power as ‘the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s)’ fundamentally *requires* the deployment of communication and media.⁵⁵

One final example of this. One of the key architects of this new, unstable, reality was the filmmaker Stephen K. Bannon, who began to produce a series of ‘documentaries’ in the early 2000s to foster the mix of libertarian ethno-nationalism that moved from the fringes of the political order in the 1970s to the centre in 2016.⁵⁶ The 2006 film *Border Walls* (produced in collaboration with Citizens United) is a key text in this for its articulation of the core principles of ethno-nationalism as advanced through the Trump campaign and presidency. One might say the reality emerged from the screen. Bannon became Donald Trump’s campaign manager and then Chief Strategist in the White House, meaning that for a period of time across 2016–17 two of the most powerful people in the world were a maker of neo-fascist online conspiracy films and a regularly bankrupt reality television and game-show host. If nothing else, perhaps this will make it at least a touch harder to argue that studying the media is a trivial subject – because, simply, controlling

media is essential to controlling reality. Propagandists and imperialists learned this valuable lesson back when mass media began, coeval with the 'mass' democracy it over-rode.

Recent history rather suggests that the neo-fascists and militant liberals have learned this lesson about the import of media better, over time, than intellectuals in an academy that largely eschews the serious study of media and power. (How many History departments seriously explore the history of media? How many Politics departments house scholars thinking about media? Even broader: how many universities have Critical Media Studies programs?) This bloc has leavened this knowledge with the remarkable surpluses of capital produced by structural inequality to use media in its new digital iterations as a battering ram to reshape and control political and economic reality. Remember, too, of course that the efforts to degrade and bypass democracy to lock in policies beneficial to capital is ongoing. It does not end in 2016. Currently, for example, members of the radical, illegal, criminal Vote Leave organization who purposively built a psychographic media machine are currently the government of the failed state now mis-named the United Kingdom. And clearly the deconstruction of government, the breakdown of liberal social democratic norms and the institutions built from them (like public health services), and the mendacious use of data and propaganda marked the perfect storm for the ongoing failure to adequately respond to the current global health emergency. In this crisis, it turns out government, and truth, is still a useful thing.

I could end there, on the extraordinary implosion of the country of my birth amid the fracturing of the neo-liberal order and the resurgence of the fascism and racism integral to imperialism, but I want to briefly sketch out the lineaments of another key dynamic in the significance of media to the degradation of the possibility of democracy by returning to the question of *data*. Cambridge Analytica functioned by gathering Facebook data on people to discern and predict personality. Research in the social sciences, on data and personality in particular, had begun to suggest that social media data could be used to predict personality.⁵⁷ Cutting a longer story short: Cambridge Analytica gathered data from the Facebook friends of people taking an online personality test exploiting the way in which Facebook functioned from the moment it became a platform in 2007 by sharing data among App developers. Data became integral to the political economy of online media in the early 2000s, after the innovations of Google and Facebook. Those are two of the largest corporations in the world, and they make money the same way Cambridge Analytica did: using data to make predictions about

people to sell to people who want to influence them. As is now well-known, this form of surveillance capitalism is integral to the current configuration of the digital.⁵⁸ Google and Facebook (who also own YouTube and Instagram) are now the largest media corporations in the world. They make money by hoovering up information about people to make predictions about them to sell to people/institutions/political operatives and so on who want to influence them. The point I want to make though is that a genealogy of this would properly show that the roots of computation and the digital lie in the efforts to organise *prediction* – broadly, to use information to predict what will happen next. Much of the roots of this lie with the military, and the US military in particular played key roles in developing computation as a form of prediction in the 1940s and the networking of computers together in the 1960s as a form of counterinsurgency predicated on the rapid sharing of information.⁵⁹ The Internet emerged as a military technology of information circulation and prediction (and one closely tied to counterinsurgency) before it was spun out as a private for-profit network in the early 1990s –after which it becomes essential to the generation of prediction as an economic logic, integral to consumer capitalism: what will people want to buy? Once again, media’s key significance is as a supplement to a consumer economy. Recently, these forms of prediction have been orchestrated as political projects to degrade democracy and entrench a deeply destructive and unequal political economy. It has seemed to me that the explication of that history is a necessary contribution to the project of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory that this lecture series continues and to which I have been honoured to contribute.

Notes

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- 1 I shall focus principally on the United States and the United Kingdom. Obviously, many of the developments I shall explore are global ones, albeit of course with local and contingent variations. Resurgent forms of authoritarian nationalism, for example, are currently key to governing regimes in countries as diverse as Brazil, China, Hungary, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Russia, and Turkey. Right-wing nationalist-populist movements spread too in Italy, with the electoral victory of the Lega and the Five Stars Movement; in France, with the strength of Marine Le Pen’s following; in Germany with the rise of the AFD; and in Austria with the Freedom Party.
- 2 Stephen K. Bannon, Conservative Political Action Committee, 22 February 2017. (See, for example, Philip Zuker and Robert Costa, ‘Bannon

Vows a daily fight for ‘deconstruction of the administrative state,’ *Washington Post*, 23rd February 2017.) Definitions follow shortly, but for orientation, the word ‘liberal’ here is not used in the common mistaken modern US parlance of ‘progressive,’ but rather to reference liberal praxis emerging from the eighteenth century to limit state action and enlarge the sphere of the market. I explicate the place of media in the elaboration of a global liberal political economy in the first half of the twentieth century in *Cinema and the Wealth of Nations: Media, Capital, and the Liberal World System*, Berkeley, 2018. For material defining ‘liberal,’ see pp. 38-45. I shall return to fascism.

- 3 E.g. ‘Disinformation and “Fake News” Interim Report,’ UK Parliament, Commons Select Committee, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 29th July 2018, accessed August 6th 2018, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcmds/363/36302.htm>; Electoral Commission, UK, ‘Report on an Investigation in respect of the Leave.EU Group Limited,’ 11th May 2018, accessed August 9th, 2018, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcmds/363/36302.htm>; House of Commons, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, ‘Disinformation and “fake news”: Final Report,’ Eight Report of Session 2017-19, HC1791, 18th February 2019, accessed 29th March 2019, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcmds/1791/179102.htm>; ‘Democracy under threat: risks and solutions in the era of disinformation and data monopoly: Report of the Standing Committee on access to information, privacy, and ethics,’ 42nd Parliament, Canada, December 2018, accessed June 25th 2019, <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/ETHI/Reports/RP10242267/ethirp17/ethirp17-e.pdf>; David Smith, ‘Mark Zuckerberg vows to fight election meddling in marathon Senate grilling,’ *The Guardian*, April 11th 2018; Carole Cadwalladr, ‘The great British Brexit robbery: how our democracy was hijacked,’ *The Guardian*, 7th May 2017; Carole Cadwalladr, ‘Follow the data,’ *The Guardian*, 14th May 2017; Hannes Grassegger and Mikael Krogerus, ‘The data that turned the world upside down,’ *Motherboard*, January 28th 2017; David Smith, ‘Putin’s chef, the troll farm in St Petersburg – and the plot to hijack US democracy,’ *The Observer* 18th February 2018. On the emergence of new practices of surveillance capitalism that monetize the data extracted from people’s interaction with the Internet, and social media in particular, see Soshana Zuboff, ‘Big other: surveillance capitalism and the prospects of an information civilization,’ *Journal of Information Technology*, 30 (2015), pp.75-89; John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney, ‘Surveillance capitalism: monopoly-finance capital, the military industrial complex, and the digital age,’ *Monthly review*, Vol. 66, Issue 03, July-August 2014.
- 4 Experian claims its US database has data on 300 million individuals and 126 million households and that the company can segment individuals into 71 ‘personality types.’ ‘Experian Audience Lookbook,’ in Tactical Tech, *Personal Data: Political Persuasion. Inside the Influence Industry*, March 2019, available here: <https://cdn.ttc.io/s/tacticaltech.org/Personal-Data-Political-Persuasion-How-it-works.pdf>, last accessed October 25th 2019. On the role played by credit-rating agencies in generating new forms of data about people, establishing new forms of economic personhood, see Josh Lauer, *Creditworthy: A History of Consumer Surveillance*

- and *Financial Identity in America*, New York, 2017. For some insight into the data broker industry, see O.H. Gandy, 'The political economy of personal information,' in Janet Wasko, Graham Murdoch, and H. Sousa eds., *The Handbook of Political Economy of Communication*, Malden, MA, 2014, pp.436-457. On the exceptional practices of state surveillance that expanded after 9/11 see, for example, Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell, Chicago, 2005, pp. 32-36. PRISM was the code name for a program under which the US National Security Agency collected digital communications routed through companies like Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Apple, and more. See Glen Greenwald, *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the Surveillance State*, London, 2015.
- 5 SCL Group, <https://sclgroup.cc/home>, accessed July 16th 2018.
 - 6 House of Commons, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 'Disinformation and "fake news": Final Report,' p.78.
 - 7 E.g. Carole Cadwalladr, "I made Steve Bannon's psychological warfare tool": meet the data war whistleblower,' *The Observer*, 18th March 2018; Matthew Rosenberg, Nicholas Confessore and Carole Cadwalladr, 'How Trump consultants exploited the Facebook data of millions,' *New York Times*, March 17th 2018; Ryan Watts, Izzy Smith, 'Cambridge Analytica: How the scandal unfolded,' *The Times*, April 10th 2018; Isobel Thompson, 'The Cambridge Analytica scandal is going global,' *Vanity Fair*, March 26th 2018.
 - 8 Electoral Commission, UK, 'Report on an Investigation in respect of the Leave.EU Group Limited,' 11th May 2018, accessed August 9th, 2018, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcmds/363/36302.htm>. The Vote Leave campaign used the services of a small Canadian-based data analysis firm known as Aggregate IQ (AIQ). AIQ worked extremely closely with SCL. Carole Cadwalladr, 'Follow the data: does a legal document link Brexit campaigns to US billionaire?', *The Observer*, 14th May 2017. Both campaigns to leave the EU, then, used data analytics firms with close ties to the para-military psychological operations organisation SCL. See Carole Cadwalladr and Mark Townsend, 'Revealed: the ties that bound Vote Leave's data firm to controversial Cambridge Analytica,' *The Guardian*, 24th March 2018.
 - 9 Jessica Elgot, 'Vote Leave fined and reported to police by Electoral Commission,' *The Guardian*, 17th July 2017; David Pegg, 'Vote Leave drops appeal against fine for electoral offences,' 29th March, 2019.
 - 10 'Russian targeting of election infrastructure during the 2016 election: summary of initial findings and recommendations,' US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, May 8th 2018, accessed August 9th 2018, <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/publications/russia-inquiry>; Luke Harding, *Collusion: Secret Meetings, Dirty Money, and How Russia Helped Donald Trump Win*, New York, 2017. Michael Connell and Sarah Vogler, 'Russia's Approach to Cyber War,' CNA Center for Naval Analysis, CNA Analysis and Solutions, March 2017, accessed 25th April 2018, https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/DOP-2016-U-014231-1Rev.pdf.
 - 11 Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right*, London, 2017; Al Jazeera, 'The Death of the Russian Far Right,' broadcast 18th December, 2017.
 - 12 Dan Sabbagh and Luke Harding, 'PM accused of cover-up over report on Russian meddling in UK politics,' *The Guardian*, 4th November 2019.

- 13 The neo-liberals shared many of these goals, and both the neo-liberals and the libertarians called for something like a return to classical *laissez faire* liberalism. But in the former, this was tied together with the expansion of a global system – closely intertwined with financialization and governed by international institutions like the International Monetary Fund – and in the latter focussed on the deconstruction of the state and its re-articulation as simply a protector of property rights. The history of neo-liberalism is, of course, well-known, befitting its centrality to the global capitalist system between the coup in Chile in 1973 and the financial crash of 2008. (For useful guides, see David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, 2007, and Daniel Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics*, Princeton, 2012, among others.) The history of libertarian praxis is less visible and merits further attention given its growing importance to the post-neo-liberal world system that appeared to emerge in 2016. Useful materials can be found in Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right*, Oxford, 2009, in particular pp.256-66; Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States*, New York, 1995, pp.123-127; and in two brilliant and essential books: Nancy MacLean, *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America*, New York, 2017; and Jane Mayer, *Dark Money: How a Secretive Group of Billionaires is Trying to Buy Political Control in the US*, London, 2016.
- 14 Mayer, *Dark Money*; McClean, *Democracy in Chains*; Jason Stahl, *Right Moves: The Conservative Think Tank in American Political Culture since 1945*, Chapel Hill, 2016, in particular pp. 96-133. The network has funded over 5,000 scholars, more than 24 academic centers, and contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to the teaching of free-market ideology at nearly 300 four-year colleges. Mayer, *Dark Money*, 354-78. McClean shows clearly how these private 'educational' programs flourished at the same time the billionaire donor networks were working to defund public education. McClean, *Democracy in Chains*, pp.63-70, 218-219.
- 15 Dwight R. Lee, 'The Calculus of Consent and the Constitution of Capitalism,' *Cato Journal* 7 (Fall 1987), p.332, cited in McClean, *Democracy in Chains*, p.81.
- 16 On this media history, see Jennifer Holt, *Empires of Entertainment: Media Industries and the Politics of Deregulation, 1980-1996*, New Brunswick, N.J., 2011; and Eileen R. Meehan, 'A Legacy of Neoliberalism: Patterns in Media Conglomeration,' in Jyotsna Kapur and Keith B. Wagner eds., *Neoliberalism and Global Cinema: Capital, Culture, and Marxist Critique*, London, 2013.
- 17 The reference is to Ronald Reagan's inaugural address, in January 1981: 'In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.' Reagan, Inaugural Address, January 20th 1981, available here <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=43130>, accessed September 13th 2018. On the structural crisis of neo-liberalism see, for example, David Kotz, 'End of the Neoliberal Era? Crisis and Restructuring in American Capitalism,' *New Left Review*, 113 (Sept.-Oct., 2018).
- 18 Charles Koch, cited in Mayer, *Dark Money*, p.6. Koch criticised neo-liberals like Milton Friedman because they sought 'to make

- government work more efficiently when the true libertarian should be tearing it out at the root'. Koch, cited in Brian Doherty, *Radicals for Capitalism*, New York, 2009, pp.442-3.
- 19 Lee Fang, *The Machine: A Field Guide to the Resurgent Right*, New York, 2013, pp.83-124; Mayer, *Dark Money*, pp.165-197, 240-67.
 - 20 I focus here (and throughout) on elite practices – such as the top-down direction of libertarian groups who had long worked to roll back state regulation, but it bears stating that the Tea Party was also part of the bottom-up revolt against governmental elites that became central to the political revolutions of 2016. On the Tea Party from this latter perspective, see Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*, Oxford, 2012.
 - 21 *Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission*, 130 S. Ct. 876, 558 U.S. 310, 175 L. Ed. 2d 753 (2010). The Court determined in the *Citizens United* decision that independent expenditures do not give rise to the appearance or reality of corruption. See below for further discussion. In a subsequent case, *SpeechNow.org v. FEC*, a lower court relied on the Supreme Court decision to strike down contribution limits to Political Action Committees (PACs) that engaged in independent spending and did not contribute to candidates. (*SpeechNow.org v. FEC*, 599 F.3d 686 (D. C. Cir., 2010), cert. denied sub nom *Keating v. FEC*, 131 S. Ct. 553 (2010).) PACs could from this point on accept unlimited undisclosed contributions.
 - 22 Timothy K. Kuhner, 'Citizens United as Neoliberal Jurisprudence: The Resurgence of Economic Theory,' *Virginia Journal of Social Policy and the Law*, Vol. 18: 3, 2011. On the reasoning logics of neo-liberalism and its destruction of long-standing ideals of democracy, see Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, New York, 2015. On the intensification of this process post-2016, see Wendy Brown, 'Neoliberalism's Frankenstein: Authoritarian Freedom in Twenty-First Century 'Democracies,' *Critical Times*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2018.
 - 23 On the redeployment of liberal rights discourse to enable strategies that have legitimised the use of violence – a 'rights-based capitalist violence' – to sustain (in particular) property and economic rights, see Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*, Minneapolis, 2011; and Melamed, 'The Proliferation of Rights-Based Capitalist Violence and Pedagogies of Collective Action,' *American Quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 2018).
 - 24 Mayer, *Dark Money*, 226-239. Roughly \$144 million was spent as independent expenditures on the election in 2008 versus 1 billion in 2012, a 594% increase. Wendy L. Hansen, Michael S. Rocca, and Brittany Leigh Ortiz, 'The Effects of *Citizen United* on Corporate Spending in the 2012 Presidential Election,' *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 77, No. 2 (February 2015), p.535.
 - 25 Carole Cadwalladr, 'Robert Mercer: the big data billionaire waging war on mainstream media,' *The Observer*, 26th February 2017; Joshua Green, *Devil's Bargain: Steve Bannon, Donald Trump, and The Storming of the Presidency*, New York, 2017, pp. 119-36.
 - 26 John Bellamy Foster, 'Neofascism in the White House,' *Monthly Review*, 58: 7; Geoff Eley, 'Fascism then and now,' *Socialist Register*, 52. On the formation of 'neoliberal multiculturalism,' see Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*. On the broad currents of 'traditionalist' thinking see Mark

- Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century*, Oxford, 2005.
- 27 Angela Nagle, *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4Chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*, Winchester, 2017; David Neiwert, *Alt-America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump*, London, 2017; Marti Gurri, *The Revolt of the Public and the Crisis of Authority in the New Millennium*, San Francisco, 2018.
- 28 Nagle, *Kill All Normies*. See also Adrienne Massanari, ‘#Gamergate and the Fapping: How Reddit’s algorithm, governance, and culture support toxic technocultures,’ *New Media & Society*, 19:3, 2017.
- 29 Indeed, as McClean in particular emphasises, the libertarian opposition to government is ‘inseparable from a desire to maintain white racial as well as class dominance’ and has long genealogical lines of descent in the US stretching from the founding constitutional protections for minority rights – notably slave holding – against majoritarian democracy to resistance to the desegregation of schools beginning in the 1950s. McClean, *Democracy in Chains*, p.8. Oligarchs Charles and David Koch, for example, were members of the far-right nativist John Birch Society, following in the footsteps of their father who was a founding member. Mayer, *Dark Money*, pp.37-9.
- 30 A reminder that forms of authoritarian nationalism are key to governing regimes in countries as diverse as Brazil, China, Hungary, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Russia, and Turkey and to movements spreading in Europe in France, Germany, Hungary, and Italy in particular.
- 31 August Thalheimer, ‘On fascism,’ *What’s Next*, 1930, accessed August 10th 2018, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/thalheimer/works/fascism.htm>. The writing on fascism is voluminous. For a useful survey of that writing in the context of recent history, see Christian Fuchs, *Digital Demagogue: Authoritarian Capitalism in the Age of Trump and Twitter*, London, 2017, pp.9-80.
- 32 Thomas Picketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge, Mass., 2014; David Harvey, ‘Universal Alienation,’ *triple C: Communication, Capitalism, and Critique*, 16: 2, 2018.
- 33 Colin Crouch, *Post-democracy*, Cambridge, 2004; Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?*, London, 2016, in particular pp.73-94; David Graeber, *Debt: the first 5000 years*, New York, 2011.
- 34 This cross-pollination has a longer history, of course: after all, liberalism was intrinsic to imperialism; the liberal constitution of the United States denied Black and indigenous people personhood to sustain slavery and genocide; and the neo-liberal revolution began with fascism and state-sponsored terror and murder in Chile. Nancy McClean in her book *Democracy in Chains* has shown how current right-wing and libertarian attacks on public education trace their origins to segregationist theorists who advised southern elites to evade school integration by ending the state’s responsibility for public education.
- 35 Victor Pickard, ‘Media Failures in the Age of Trump,’ *The Political Economy of Communication*, 4:2, 2016.
- 36 Emiliano Trere, ‘The dark side of digital politics: understanding the algorithmic manufacturing of consent and the hindering of online dissidence,’ *IDS Bulletin*, 48: 1, 2016; Liam O’Hare, ‘SCL – A Very British Coup,’ *Bellacaledonia*, 20th March 2018; Roberto J. Gonzalez, ‘The

- Mind-Benders: How to Harvest Facebook Data, Brainwash Voters, and Swing Elections,' *Counterpunch*, 14th May, 2018; House of Commons, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 'Disinformation and "fake news": Final Report,' pp.78-9.
- 37 Carole Cadwalladr, 'Revealed; graphic video used by Cambridge Analytica to influence Nigerian election,' *The Guardian*, 4th April 2018; Emma Graham-Harrison, Carole Cadwalladr and Hilary Osborne, 'Cambridge Analytica boasts of dirty tricks to swing elections,' *The Guardian*, 19th March 2018; Christopher Wylie, *Mindf*ck: Inside Cambridge Analytica's Plot to Break the World*, London, 2019, pp.148-150. Wylie worked at SCL/Cambridge Analytica and identified these clients as 'a group of Nigerian billionaires who were worried that if [Muhammadu] Buhari won the election, he would revoke their oil and mineral exploration rights.' *Ibid*, p.148.
- 38 Cadwalladr, 'The great British Brexit robbery,' *The Guardian*, 7th May 2017; Cadwalladr, "'I made Steve Bannon's psychological warfare tool": meet the data war whistleblower,' *The Observer*, 18th March 2018; Cadwalladr, 'The mystery "letter", the dark ads, and the data guru of Vote Leave,' *The Observer*, 26th November 2017. See also T.J. Coles, 'Fake News and Weaponized Bots: How Algorithms Inflate Social profiles, Spread Disinformation and Disrupt Democracy,' *Counterpunch*, October 8th, 2018. One of the things these bot networks do is re-use zombie social media accounts to appear to be real people, or at least people who do not directly seem to be cyber hackers in Ukraine or Russia. Indeed, a zombie Facebook account set up for me by my eldest son about 10 years ago (to gain points in online games, but never subsequently used) was hacked in to recently from Ukraine as one tiny node in the construction and orchestration of a complex global digital propaganda system. The algorithms integral to the way the enormous social media corporation Facebook functioned meant media circulated by bots spread to over 150 million Americans, according to the company's own internal investigation. Jonathan Freedland, 'From Peppa Pig to Trump, the web is shaping us. It's time we Fought back,' *The Guardian*, 17th November 2017.
- 39 See, for example, Christopher P. Skroupa, 'Cyber Warfare – Reasons Why Israel Leads the Charge,' *Forbes*, 7th September, 2017; Lorenzo Franceschi-Bicchierai, 'How Israel Built One of the World's Most Powerful Cyber Armies,' *Motherboard*, 22nd November 2017; and the film *Zero Days* (dir. Alex Gibney, 2016).
- 40 James J. Wirtz, 'Cyber War and Strategic Culture: The Russian Integration of Cyber Power into Grand Strategy,' in Kenneth Geers ed., *Cyber War in Perspective: Russian Aggression Against Ukraine*, Tallin, 2015; Hannes Grassegger and Mikael Krogerus, 'Fake News and Botnets: How Russia Weaponised the Web,' *The Observer*, 3rd December 2017. The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation of 2010 talks of the necessity of 'the prior implementation of measures of information warfare in order to achieve political objectives without the utilization of military force'. *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, February 5, 2010, in translation at http://carnegiendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf, accessed 7th September 2018.
- 41 Anders Aslund estimates Putin's wealth from siphoning off state resources to be somewhere between \$100 and \$160 billion. Anders Aslund,

- Russia's Crony Capitalism: The Path from Market Economy to Kleptocracy*, New Haven, 2018. Some of this was revealed by recent investigations into off-shore tax havens. The Panama Papers investigation, for example, discovered that Putin's close friend, a cellist named Sergei Roldugin who is the godfather to Putin's daughter inexplicably has over \$100 million in assets hidden in off-shore tax havens routed through Panama. Other members of Putin's family and close circle have vast funds secured offshore, totalling as much as 2 billion. See Bastian Obermayer and Frederik Obermaier, *The Panama Papers: Breaking the Story of How the Rich and Powerful Hide Their Money*, London, 2017, and Luke Harding, 'Revealed: the \$2bn offshore trail that leads to Vladimir Putin,' *The Observer*, 3rd April 2016.
- 42 The Koch brothers began a libertarian political machine in the mid-1970s and have played a central role in orchestrating a network of billionaires who have used their capital to fund foundations, think tanks, front groups, and so on to further their interests. Mayer, *Dark Money*, pp.1-59, 120-156; Fang, *The Machine*, 83-124. Greenpeace estimates that the Koch brothers spent over \$127 million funding groups denying climate change between 1997 and 2017. Greenpeace, 'Koch Industries: Secretly Funding the Climate Denial Machine,' <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/global-warming/climate-deniers/koch-industries/>, accessed 4th April 2019.
- 43 The Koch Ring includes Richard DeVos, founder of Amway; his son Dick DeVos, and his wife Betsy Devos (the United States Secretary of Education under President Donald Trump), and her brother Erik Prince (founder of the global security firm/mercenary army Blackwater); Steve Schwarzman, chairman of the investment firm Blackstone Group; oil billionaire Phil Anshutz; Peter Thiel of Paypal and Palantir; and (for a time) Robert Mercer of the hedge fund Renaissance Technologies. Mayer, *Dark Money*, in particular pp. 226-239; Fang, *The Machine*, pp. 89-93. The US Chamber of Commerce played a central role too in financing the attack ads that assailed the idea of government regulation from the mid-term elections of 2010. Fang, *The Machine*, pp.75-78.
- 44 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Special Report 15, 'Global Warming of 1.5C,' October 2018, available <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>, accessed 2nd April 2019.
- 45 Naomi Klein, *No is Not Enough: Defeating the New Shock Politics*, London, 2017.
- 46 Chloe Farand and Mat Hope, 'Matthew and Sarah Elliott: How a UK Power Couple Links US Libertarians and Fossil Fuel Lobbyists to Brexit,' November 18th 2018, available here <https://www.desmogblog.com/2018/11/18/matthew-sarah-elliott-uk-power-couple-linking-us-libertarians-and-fossil-fuel-lobbyists-brexit>, accessed April 3rd 2019; Adam Ramsay, 'The ruling class that drove Brexit,' *Open Democracy UK*, 22nd February 2019; Nico Hines, 'Inside Bannon's Plan to Hijack Europe for the Far-Right,' *Daily Beast*, July 20th 2018.
- 47 Adam Ramsay and Peter Geoghegan, 'Mystery deepens over secret source of Brexit "dark money",' *Open Democracy UK*, October 16th 2017; Peter Geoghegan and Jenna Corderoy, 'Revealed: How dark money is winning "the Brexit influencing game",' *Open Democracy UK*, 21st February 2019; Adam Ramsay, 'We need to talk about where Brexit funder Arron Banks gets his money,' *Open Democracy UK*, 17th April 2018.

- 48 <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCATXCgC0kSWQDOQLtgP5Mbg>
- 49 Jim Waterson, 'Facebook Brexit ads secretly run by staff of Lynton Crosby firm,' *The Guardian* 3rd April 2019; Peter Geoghegan, 'Revealed: The dark-money Brexit ads flooding social media,' *Open Democracy UK*, 5th February 2019; Adam Ramsay, 'Cambridge Analytica is what happens when you privatise military propaganda,' *Open Democracy UK*, 28th March 2018.
- 50 Carole Cadwalladr, 'TaxPayers' Alliance concedes it launched smears against Brexit whistleblower,' *The Observer*, 11th November 2018.
- 51 Adam Ramsay and Peter Geoghegan, 'Revealed: how the UK's powerful right-wing think tanks and Conservative MPs work together,' *Open Democracy UK*, 31st July 2018.
- 52 Adam Ramsay and James Cusick, 'Police still not investigating Leave campaigns, citing 'political sensitivities',' *Open Democracy UK*, 11th October 2018. Gurri, *The Revolt of the Public and the Crisis of Authority in the New Millennium*.
- 53 Georg Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason*, trans. Peter Palmer, London, 1980; Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York, 1966.
- 54 A necessary note on 'democracy': it is, as Wendy Brown notes, 'among the most contested and promiscuous terms in our modern political vocabulary', and for now I take it here simply as 'connoting political self-rule by the people'. Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, pp.19-20. On the degradation of democracy in liberal capitalist states, see C.B. Macpherson's essential *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*, Oxford, 1977. Ellen Meiskins Wood has similarly explored the ways in which the social relations of capitalism have limited democracy. 'It is at this point,' Wood observes, 'that "democracy" arguably becomes synonymous with socialism.' Ellen Meiskins Wood, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*, London, 2016, p.15.
- 55 Manuel Castells, *Communication Power*, Oxford, 2009, p.10.
- 56 The full list as director is: *In the Face of Evil: Reagan's War in Word and Deed* (2004), *Generation Zero* (2010); *Fire from the Heartland* (2010); *Battle for America* (2010); *The Undeclared* (2011); *Occupy Unmasked* (2012); *District of Corruption* (2012); *The Hope and the Change* (2012); *Torchbearer* (2016); and *Trump @ War* (2018).
- 57 E.g. Michael Kosinski, David Stillwell, and Thore Graepel, 'Private traits and attributes are predictable from digital records of human behavior,' *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Vol. 110, No. 15 (April 9th 2013); Wu Youyou, Michael Kosinski, and David Stillwell, 'Computer-based personality judgements are more accurate than those made by humans,' *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Vol. 112, No. 4 (January 27th 2015).
- 58 John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney, 'Surveillance capitalism: monopoly-finance capital, the military industrial complex, and the digital age,' *Monthly review*, Vol. 66, Issue 03, July-August 2014; Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2019).
- 59 Yasha Levine, *Surveillance Valley: The Secret Military History of the Internet* (New York: Public Affairs, 2018).