

POLI-ETHICS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM: KELLY'S LIBERALISM WITHOUT PATERNALISM AND RORTY'S VISION OF LIBERAL HOPE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract: George Kelly describes the personal construct system of psychotherapists as embodying liberalism without paternalism, though he offers little beyond its implications for psychotherapists. This paper revisits and expands the notion, situating it within Kelly's psychological theory, constructivist philosophy, and its pragmatist roots, while engaging Richard Rorty's vision of a liberal, pragmatic, and non-authoritarian ethos that emphasizes contingency, relationality, and solidarity. By tracing intersections between PCP and Rortian pragmatism, the paper proposes a framework for understanding liberalism as a personal and cultural project that privileges dialogue, pluralism, and imaginative engagement over fixed ideals. It argues that Rorty's liberal hope provides a constructivist foundation for addressing ethical and political challenges, integrating social participation, anti-capitalist critique, and attentiveness to human suffering within progressive democratic practice.

Keywords: *Constructivist Ethics, Liberalism without paternalism, Pragmatism, Politics.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Personal construct psychology (PCP) is widely recognized as an original approach to psychology and philosophy, known for its optimistic focus on human meaning-making, freedom, and agency. Less frequently emphasized is its latent political dimension, which Kelly called liberalism without paternalism. Kelly considered this phrase a practical restatement of his fundamental philosophical position known as constructive alternativism (Kelly, 1955/1991, Vol. 2, p. 37). The phrase was originally used to describe the construct system a psychotherapist ought to embody, but the phrase also signals an ethical and political stance resonant with the broader American pragmatist tradition. This paper

explores and expands Kelly's liberalism without paternalism, showing how his psychological theory and philosophical commitments illuminate a constructivist framework for a pragmatic liberalism that is simultaneously personal, social, and political.

The paper situates Kelly's liberalism without paternalism within two complementary intellectual trajectories. The first is John Dewey's pragmatist vision of democracy as a way of life, in which education, dialogue, and associated living foster both individual growth and social responsibility. Dewey's liberalism emphasizes experimentation, pluralism, and the ethical centrality of participatory experience, privileging process over fixed endpoints. Dewey's influence on PCP is significant: he is explicitly mentioned by

Kelly in *The Psychology of Personal Constructs* (Kelly, 1955/1991), and his pragmatism shaped Kelly's approach to ethics, education, and social engagement (Butt, 2013; Miletic & Stojnov, 2017). The second trajectory is Richard Rorty's later articulation of a liberal, pragmatic ethos, which synthesizes Deweyan optimism about growth with Judith Shklar's liberalism of fear (Rorty, 1999; Shklar, 1989).

By linking Kelly's constructivism to these pragmatist perspectives, this paper develops a framework in which liberalism is understood as a democratic method and an anti-utopian project that sees society as a constant form of change, a perpetual project of identifying commonality around different forms of suffering and finding ways to alleviate them. Viewed in this light, PCP will be reinterpreted as containing a principled, anti-paternalistic approach to democratic engagement, social solidarity, and progressive, non-utopian social change.

2. CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER, RACE, AND CLASS

PCP already provides a framework in which social categories such as gender, race, and class are understood as constructs. In today's political climate, this idea is highly political and unambiguously construed as progressive and leftist. This paper will take this as a starting point to further conceptualize PCP as a liberal-progressive theory rooted in American pragmatism (from Dewey to Rorty), and to explore anti-capitalism as a potential source of social hope fully in alignment with the basic principles of liberalism without paternalism.

PCP offers a relational understanding of identity. Kelly (1955/1991) proposes a method for understanding the psychological consequences of defining people through rigid social categories such as gender, race, and class. While his treatment of these constructs varies in depth and complexity, Kelly consistently demonstrates an ethical commitment to recognizing the lived realities of individuals while avoiding the reification of social labels.

In discussing gender, Kelly points to the limitations of reducing a person's identity to biological sex differences. He notes that when someone's understanding of themselves as a man or a woman is defined solely by physical distinctions, they often experience a sense of futility and confusion. Rather than lacking basic knowledge about gender, the individual's struggle lies in the absence of alternative frameworks for making meaning of their life. Without these broader reference points, they may oscillate psychologically between extreme expressions of masculinity and femininity ("slot-rattling"). This clinical observation illustrates how conventional gender constructs can constrain personal growth by narrowing the range of available identities (Kelly, 1969b). From a PCP perspective, the notion of *liberalism without paternalism* in therapy, and more broadly, encourages people to explore alternative ways of construing the world, a move from preemptive gender construing (male – female) to propositional construing, allowing for other dimensions to be present as well. This is an ethical stance too, facilitating pluralism by encouraging people to use their agency and freedom.

Kelly (1955/1991) extends this sensitivity to race, viewing racial identity not as a fixed biological fact but as a cultural construct whose power shapes a person's core structure. In a clinical vignette, he describes a young man navigating two worlds: acceptance from white peers at school and the expectations of the African American community at home. When his private desires conflicted with his home culture's values, he experienced intense guilt, eventually channeling his struggle into social activism. Kelly's case illustrates how race shapes inner experience.

Kelly's reflections on class are less clear, reflecting both the historical context of his work and the relative absence of class analysis in the US academic discourse of his time. He observes, however, that while people are often grouped into socio-economic categories such as "upper", "middle", or "lower" class, these labels have limited psychological value. They tell us something about the privileges people believe they have, but they do not reveal what an individual personally

considers to be a privilege. Kelly acknowledges privileges but cautions us against denying people's agency by focusing on class limitations (Kelly, 1955/1991). Although Kelly's theoretical writings on class are sparse, his rare descriptions of poverty are striking in their vividness and emotional immediacy. Reflecting on his own encounters with extreme deprivation in Haiti, he recounts how abstract concepts of poverty fail to capture its visceral reality. The image of a child's ill-fitting shoes or the oppressive heat and soot of a tenement kitchen in Port-au-Prince, he argues, conveys something that intellectual reflection cannot. Such experiences "penetrate far beyond the veil of concepts," (Kelly 1969b, p. 130) enabling a direct, almost bodily understanding of what it means to live and die under conditions of poverty. For Kelly, there are moments when meaning emerges primarily through preverbal processes. Kelly's limited engagement with class can be seen as a historical omission rather than a fundamental flaw in his theory. His evocative descriptions of poverty nonetheless suggest that PCP has untapped potential for addressing class-based suffering and may serve as an invitation for us to build on his foundations.

Kelly's reflections on gender, race, and class reveal a consistent theme: identity is shaped by relationships, social expectations, and personal interpretations rather than fixed biological or structural determinants. As Kelly (1955/1991) writes, the clinician embodies "a kind of liberalism without paternalism. The clinician is not only tolerant of the varying points of view represented in his clients, but he is willing to devote himself to the defense and facilitation of widely differing patterns of life. Diversity and multiple experimentation are to be encouraged" (Vol. 2, p. 37). There is no reason to assume that defense of differing patterns of life shouldn't involve a struggle for human dignity and economic equality, especially because of the pragmatist foundation of his work.

3. PRAGMATISM, DEMOCRACY, AND LIBERALISM WITHOUT PATERNALISM

John Dewey sought to reconceive liberalism amid the rapid social, technological, and political changes of the early 20th century (Dewey, 1935/2020; Dewey, 1927/2021). His vision, deeply rooted in progressive and socialist ideals, resonates today amid accelerating technological change and stark wealth inequality. Rejecting dogma, Dewey treated political theories as practical tools for solving shared problems, to be revised or discarded as circumstances evolve. Grounded in a belief that individuals are shaped by their social environments, his liberalism fused a commitment to social justice with an experimental, community-centered approach to politics. This experimental mindset led Dewey to reject political theories grounded in fixed assumptions about human nature or historical destiny. As we will see, even later pragmatists like Rorty (1999) preserve this thread of pragmatist liberalism and focus their political efforts on practical problems of living such as low wages, workers' material conditions, etc.

Kelly's PCP, viewed through this lens, suggests a progressive, leftist politics of pragmatism that would remain largely unaligned with Marxist movements of his time, just like Dewey's liberalism was. Seeing both humans and the world as processes, neither Dewey nor Kelly could envision a static, utopian society. Given the diversity and ongoing debates within Marxism today, Kelly's relationship to it could be fruitfully reexamined in relation to specific thinkers, such as Kropotkin, whose concept of mutual aid emphasizes relationality (Kropotkin, 1902/2023), Vattimo and Zabala's hermeneutic communism (Vattimo & Zabala, 2011/2014), or Boris Kidrič, the architect of Yugoslav workers' self-management (Kidrič, 1985). Kidrič envisioned a system in which workers owned the means of production and local democratic organization guided economic and cultural development. This model emphasized experimentation, dialogue, and trial-and-error inquiry, offering notable parallels to Dewey and Kelly, and contrasting

sharply with the top-down dogmatism of the Soviet Union.

Dewey was skeptical of any ultimate causes or ends in politics beyond the maintenance of democracy itself. Rapid industrialization, urbanization, mass migration, and crises such as the Civil War, two world wars, and the Great Depression revealed the fragility of existing political and economic structures and demonstrated the inadequacy of traditional liberalism, with its focus on individual rights and limited government, to address modern complexities (Rorty, 1999; Dewey, 1927/2021). In response, Dewey reconceived democracy as a way of life, a form of shared experience, communication, deliberation, and experimentation. Democracy thus requires emotional and intellectual resources enabling citizens to collaborate on common problems, even amid conflicting values, trusting experience itself as the foundation for future solutions rather than appealing to transcendent rules or metaphysical principles.

From this perspective, key liberal concepts such as “freedom”, “rights”, and “liberty” take on new meanings and take on relational qualities as achievements of social cooperation that are always subject to reinterpretation as circumstances change. Dewey’s vision of the public similarly departs from classical models. A public, for Dewey, is not a fixed group but something that forms around a problem. It comes into being whenever people recognize that their private troubles are interconnected and require collective inquiry. The vitality of democracy depends on these publics being well-informed and actively engaged. Uninformed and uneducated public is a vital threat for democracy in Dewey’s model (Dewey, 1927/2021).

Dewey’s liberalism attempted to rebuild liberalism on social, experimental, and pragmatic grounds, rejecting its traditional individualist metaphysics. Democracy, in this framework, is not a static achievement but a fragile, ongoing project, continuously renewed through communication, problem-solving, and mutual recognition. Kelly’s PCP, with its principle of constructive alternativism, parallels these ideals

ethically and politically. Liberalism without paternalism entails a non-authoritarian, pluralist democracy grounded in PCP’s core corollaries: the Individuality Corollary, recognizing the uniqueness of each person’s constructions; the Choice Corollary, emphasizing freedom and personal responsibility; and the Commonality Corollary, highlighting shared human experience. The Sociality Corollary further stresses the ethical importance of dialogue, negotiation, and empathy in social life.

In practice, this vision supports social participation through engagement, deliberation, and experimentation rather than top-down directives or coercion. Individuals develop their own values and projects while remaining attuned to the plurality of others’ perspectives. Just as therapists are expected to respect and encourage diverse ways of construing the world, the democratic collective must defend and sustain such diversity. Reflecting Kelly’s view of the world as a process without fixed truths or final solutions, the ethical task is not to dictate outcomes but to cultivate conditions for exploration and constant constructive innovation.

4. RORTY’S PRAGMATIC LIBERALISM: BETWEEN GROWTH AND FEAR

Richard Rorty offers a distinctive vision of liberalism that bridges the ethical optimism of John Dewey with the cautious vigilance of Judith Shklar. In his essay *Ethics without Principles*, Rorty illustrates the pragmatist approach to moral progress:

Pragmatists like to think of moral progress as more like sewing together a very large, elaborate, polychrome quilt, than like getting a clearer vision of something true and deep. As I remarked earlier, they like to replace traditional metaphors of depth or height with metaphors of breadth and extent. Convinced that there is no subtle human essence which philosophy might grasp, they do not try to replace superficiality with depth, nor to rise above the particular in order to grasp the universal. Rather, they hope to minimize one

difference at a time – the difference between Christians and Muslims in a particular village in Bosnia, the difference between blacks and whites in a particular town in Alabama, the difference between gays and straights in a particular Catholic congregation in Quebec. The hope is to sew such groups together with a thousand little stitches – to invoke a thousand little commonalities between their members, rather than specify one great big one, their common humanity (Rorty, 1999, pp. 86–87).

Here, Rorty emphasizes liberalism rooted in practical, incremental interventions without universalist certainties. His focus on minimizing one difference at a time reflects careful attention to social particularities, highlighting a moral orientation that is empirical, local, and relational. Much like Dewey and Kelly (in the domain of psychotherapy), Rorty isn't in favor of sweeping solutions and grand utopian visions, emphasizing, instead, the process of finding and buttressing small commonalities among people, facilitating role relationships and practical problem-solving. Rorty's liberalism can be understood as a synthesis of Dewey's and Shklar's respective approaches. Dewey's liberalism of growth stresses the developmental, experimental, and creative dimensions of democratic life. It values education, dialogue, and the continual expansion of capacities for understanding and cooperation. Rorty adopts this Deweyan ethos in the private sphere, where he champions personal growth through irony (Rorty, 1989/2007), a process by which individuals cultivate self-awareness, flexibility, and tolerance through engagement with diverse vocabularies and perspectives. By contrast, Judith Shklar's liberalism of fear emphasizes the necessity of vigilance against cruelty and systemic oppression. These two principles serve to provide a minimal ethical baseline upon which more ambitious democratic projects can be built. Rorty integrates this perspective in the public sphere, advocating for policies, institutions, and cultural practices that reduce suffering and sensitively address social inequalities.

In this synthesis, Rorty's liberalism is both aspirational and cautious. It seeks growth, creativity, and individual development, but it also recognizes the moral urgency of restraining cruelty and mitigating injustice. Pragmatic moral progress, in Rorty's vision, is thus neither a pursuit of universal truths nor a metaphysical quest for moral depth. Instead, it is the careful, painstaking stitching together of disparate lives and communities by cultivating partial commonalities, facilitating dialogue, and incrementally improving social conditions. Through this combination of Dewey's growth and Shklar's fear, Rorty offers a model of liberalism that is simultaneously imaginative, ethical, and socially attentive, reflecting the pluralist, anti-authoritarian sensibilities that underlie both his philosophy and the broader American pragmatist tradition.

5. WHAT IS SUFFERING IN PCP?

In PCP, suffering is not conceived as a universal emotional state or the outcome of a shared, objective condition. Rather, it could be understood as a formally identifiable human experience: the experience of invalidation. Each individual develops a distinctive system of personal constructs through which they interpret and constitute the world, yet there is a fundamental commonality in the way people respond when those constructs collapse in contact with the ever-moving universe. Kelly (1955/1991) points out that while the content of one's constructions varies widely, the destabilizing event that occurs when these constructions are invalidated is universal. When our constructs no longer "work," we are confronted with the same basic task, the step in the experience cycle that follows the experiment - revision. In this sense, change is not optional but inevitable, because our constructions are continuously subject to invalidation. A theory that sees the person and the world as forms of continuous motion doesn't predict eternal stability of anyone's system of constructs. Although the points at which invalidation occurs are shaped by the unique texture of each person's lived experience and

may not always be immediately relatable to others when commonality is lacking, the formal structure of the experience remains a commonality. Suffering thus takes infinitely diverse flavors, yet at its core, it reflects the shared human necessity of reconfiguring meaning in the face of disruption.

In PCP, invalidation functions as a formal and experiential bridge, connecting diverse individual experiences into a common psychological phenomenon. It is precisely because all humans, regardless of the content or structure of their systems of constructs, are susceptible to this experience that a relational understanding of suffering becomes possible through a shared emphasis on role relationships. PCP frames suffering as inherently relational as it arises in the interaction between self and world, and between selves, in a context of mutual influence and interdependence. Kelly's vision of an integral universe, in which all phenomena are interconnected, reinforces this relational understanding, suggesting that no person exists in isolation from others and from the broader social and ecological milieu.

Ethically and politically, this perspective has significant implications. Dialogue in the public sphere can serve as a mechanism for sensitizing people to the varied forms of suffering experienced by others. Rorty (1989/2007) points out that pragmatic liberalism involves a permanent tension between the private sphere, where self-creation through irony is prioritized, and the public sphere, where our task as ironists is to sensitize ourselves to various points of suffering. Kelly's PCP gives us a universal pointer that can guide this process of sensitization. By attending to these experiences, societies may cultivate empathy, moral awareness, and the ethical imperative to mitigate harm. From a constructivist standpoint, the recognition of invalidation as a shared structure of human experience provides a basis for social solidarity, while respecting the plurality of individual perspectives and personal worlds. PCP thus situates suffering at the intersection of individuality and relationality, providing a theoretically coherent framework for

understanding both the universality and the particularity of human vulnerability.

6. RORTY ON COMMONALITY, IMAGINATION, AND SOCIAL HOPE

For Rorty and the pragmatists, moral and social progress is less a matter of discovering eternal truths than of cultivating shared understandings and imaginative possibilities. In *Failed Prophecies, Glorious Hopes* (Rorty, 1999), he reflects on the enduring significance of the *Communist Manifesto*:

Dated as the Communist Manifesto is, it is still an admirable statement of the great lesson we learned from watching industrial capitalism in action; that the overthrow of authoritarian governments, and the achievement of constitutional democracy, is not enough to ensure human equality or human decency. It is as true as it was in 1848 that the rich will always try to get richer by making the poor poorer, that total commodification of labour will lead to the immiseration of the wage-earners (Rorty, 1999, p. 205).

The *Communist Manifesto* (Marx & Engels, 1848/2011) effectively functions as a source of commonality: it articulates the suffering that is widely recognizable and relatable, providing a moral and political language through which large groups can apprehend injustice, which makes it also a guide for action. In contrast to religious texts such as the Bible, whose emphasis on "otherworldliness", in Rorty's opinion, detaches ethical concern from practical politics, the *Communist Manifesto* directs attention to concrete social struggles. Its value lies less in its predictive power, than its descriptive power and its ability to mobilize.

The political pamphlet written by Marx and Engels in the late 19th century remains poignantly relevant today. Recent global reports document a clear and troubling erosion of workers' rights across the globe, including the West. The International Trade Union Confederation's (ITUC) Global Rights Index (2025) describes a

free fall in labour protections, reporting that 87% of countries surveyed violated the right to strike and 80% violated collective bargaining rights, with Europe and the Americas showing their worst scores since the Index began (ITUC, 2025). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2024 report echoes these findings, noting a 7% global decline in compliance with labor rights, particularly freedom of association and collective bargaining between 2015 and 2022 (United Nations, 2024). Complementing these institutional measures, the International Labor Organization highlights a profound economic dimension to this decline: over the past two decades, the global labor income share, the portion of total income going to workers, has steadily decreased, signifying a weakening of workers' bargaining power and a rise in economic inequality (International Labor Organization, 2024). These findings collectively suggest that the decline of labor rights is not merely anecdotal or region-specific, but part of a worldwide systemic trend, with serious implications for democracy, social solidarity, and economic justice.

Thomas Piketty (2014) demonstrates that contemporary society is witnessing a return to 19th-century levels of inequality, where family dynasties and inherited wealth will likely once again dominate the economic landscape. This shift is fueled by the self-reinforcing nature of wealth in absence of regulation. Those who already possess capital can use it to generate even more wealth, leading to an ever-increasing concentration of resources among a small global elite. While income inequality remains a significant concern, Piketty points out that wealth inequality is both more extreme and more consequential because it determines the distribution of power and opportunity in society. Wealth, unlike income, tends to accumulate over time and is easily transferred between generations, resulting in entrenched intergenerational inequality. Piketty contends that it is mainly influenced by political decisions, tax policies, and institutional structures. Historically, there have been periods when inequality was significantly reduced. For example, in the post-World War II era, progressive taxation and

robust social welfare programs in Europe and the United States temporarily curbed inequality. However, since the 1980s, a wave of deregulation and tax cuts has reversed these gains, once again allowing inequality to grow at an alarming rate (Piketty, 2014).

The statistics and trends present here show us that anti-capitalist struggle currently has enormous political and ethical potential, because it represents a common cause of suffering of most people across the globe. The suppression of workers' rights significantly impacts on a broad range of people with vastly different values. This makes anti-capitalism an especially important form of commonality because it may act as a bridge to create more compassion, more understanding and overall more role relationships in society. Rorty extends this notion of commonality through his broader conception of intellectual and moral progress. He writes (Rorty, 1999, p. 87):

...we see both intellectual and moral progress not as a matter of getting closer to the True or the Good or the Right, but as an increase in imaginative power. We see imagination as the cutting edge of cultural evolution, the power which - given peace and prosperity - constantly operates so as to make the human future richer than the human past. Imagination is the source both of new scientific pictures of the physical universe and of new conceptions of possible communities. It is what Newton and Christ, Freud and Marx, had in common: the ability to redescribe the familiar in unfamiliar terms

Hope, for Rorty, is the human capacity to envision alternative social arrangements, to redescribe the present through stories of possible futures, a linguistically more palatable way of describing constructive alternativism. Social hope emerges as a shared pull toward an imagined future, one that motivates collective effort, guides ethical imagination, and provides moral orientation without relying on foundational or transcendent principles. Marxist ideas are a possible shared future that may guide action, but much like Dewey and Kelly, Rorty too may only

see Marxism as a tool because of its power to mobilize many people around their commonality, but not as a destination. The three thinkers all see the world as a process that constantly unfolds, thus rejecting any static utopian projects (including communism), while seeing it as a potentially valuable political tool.

This framework that emphasizes practical and material commonality also informs Rorty's critique of the American left in *Achieving Our Country* (1997). He argues that when the left privileged critical theory over practical engagement, it lost its connection with the working class, abandoning the very communities whose struggles the political left purported to champion. Nominally, the leftists, according to Rorty, have not abandoned their ideals, only their language, but this change made their ideals suddenly uncommunicable, especially to those whose support they need and whose emancipation they hope to achieve.

Pragmatically, this was anti-liberal: the left forfeited its capacity to cultivate broad-based social hope because it abandoned the shared language and lived concerns of ordinary people. *Achieving Our Country* has achieved a level of deserved notoriety since 2016. In it, Rorty predicts the rise of fascist authoritarianism in the United States as a consequence of this loss of commonality due to the fact that the American left has replaced the language of the working classes with sophisticated and practically useless language of poststructuralist theory (Rorty, 1997). Rorty's liberalism synthesizes ethical attention to human suffering, imaginative redescription, and practical engagement. The *Communist Manifesto* (Marx & Engels, 1848/2011), despite its historical and ideological limitations, exemplifies the kind of text that pragmatists value: it identifies broadly understandable suffering, grounds moral concern in the social world, and mobilizes collective action through concrete, relatable narratives. Social hope, nurtured by imagination and public dialogue, becomes both the ethical and political core of a liberal pragmatist approach, linking individual sensibilities to collective possibilities.

7. CONSTRUCTIVIST ANTI-UTOPIA

Constructivism is, like pragmatism, anti-utopian, because knowledge and values are always contingent, socially constructed, and experientially grounded, so that there can be no universal blueprint for the Good, the Right, or the Ideal society. Instead, a liberal but non-paternalistic society must be a fluid one, a society that prioritizes dialogue, experimentation, and social processes over any static or predetermined endpoint, and a society capable of not only accepting but encouraging a multiplicity of identities, political positions and values. In such a society, the ethical and political focus is not on achieving a final state of perfection, but on continually negotiating differences, attending to suffering, and expanding the capacities for cooperation and mutual understanding. Each subsequent iteration of societal reconstruction may eliminate some forms of suffering, but it will inevitably bring about others that will require us to develop new sensitivities and engage in new, ever more complex dialogue.

Liberalism without paternalism reflects a vision of democracy as a way of life rather than a system of fixed principles. Progressive values are already embedded in Kelly's thinking, and anti-capitalism strongly follows Kelly's emphasis on commonality and sociality. Similarly, Dewey's conception of democracy emphasizes associated living and communicative experience, situating growth, reflection, and shared experimentation at the heart of social life. Rorty extends this vision by integrating pragmatic attention to suffering with imaginative, incremental efforts to reduce injustice: hope becomes a form of commonality that must be constantly reproduced through new narratives of possible futures.

Anti-capitalist narratives function within this framework as practical sources of social hope, grounded in the empirical facts of our time, a form of comprehensive commonality. By foregrounding the structural mechanisms that generate inequality and exploitation, these narratives make visible the contingent suffering produced by particular social arrangements and inspire imaginative alternatives. Constructivism

and pragmatism converge here in privileging democracy over capitalism, not as a pathway to a perfect society, but as the political and ethical framework through which individuals and communities can collaboratively reduce suffering, experiment with new possibilities, and cultivate relational solidarity. In this sense, anti-utopia is not pessimistic, it is realistic, relational, and ethically generative. It grounds hope in dialogue, practical engagement, and the ongoing construction of a more just and responsive society.

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