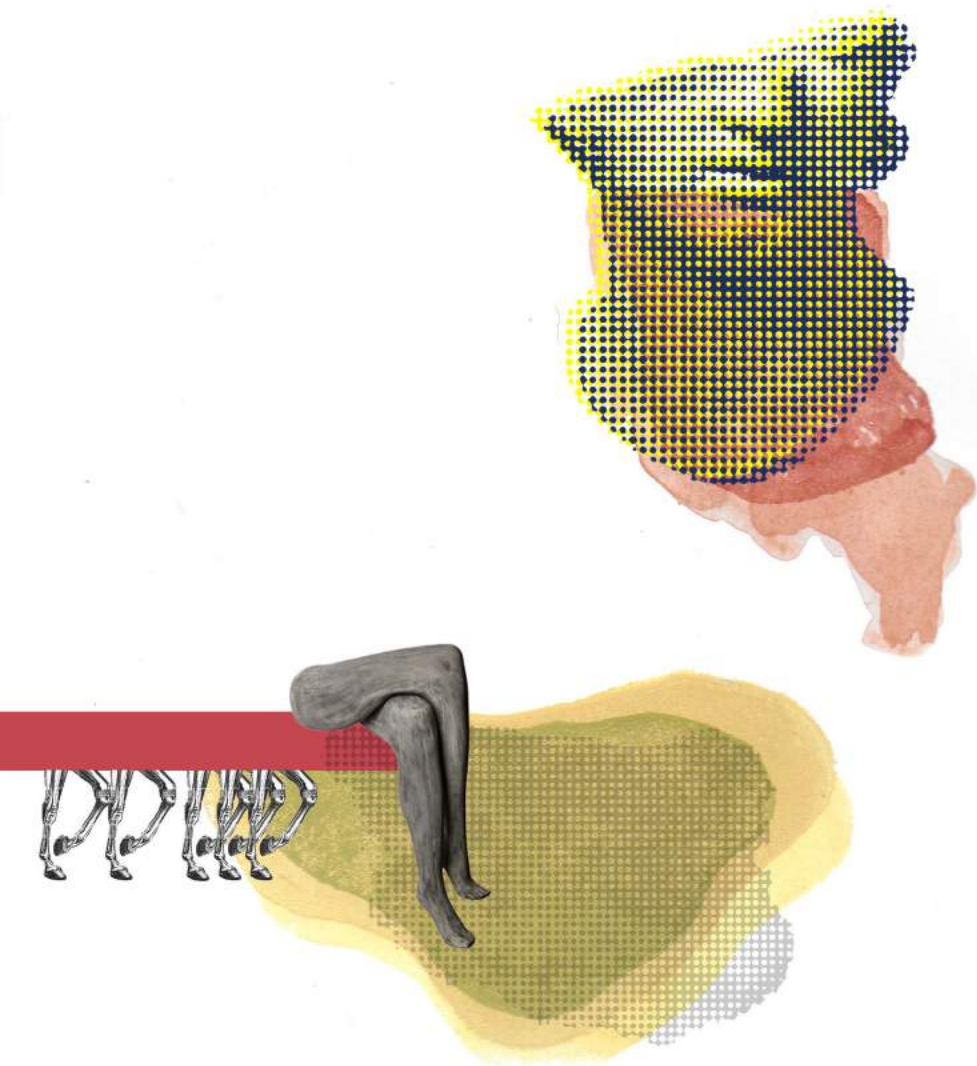


# postwork imaginaries

*feminist musings on a future without workism*



**"What is workism? It is the belief that work is not only necessary to economic production, but also the centerpiece of one's identity and life's purpose; and the belief that any policy to promote human welfare must always encourage more work."**

*- Derek Thompson, Staff writer at The Atlantic*

With contributions and demands from:

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This zine is a collection of reflections and responses to a group reading of Kathi Weeks' *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. Published almost a decade ago (2011), the book demands Universal Basic Income (UBI) and a 30-hour workweek (without loss of benefits or reduction in pay). These improvements remain elusive in 2020; and yet, an economic safety net and fewer working hours are more necessary than ever, as we endure the cumulative effects of climate change (including a pandemic) and ever-increasing wealth disparity.

While Weeks' book focused on the US, our group was situated in (and from) the US, Australia, Canada, England, and Wales. This collaboration invites participation, but also includes an attack; myriad demands; and a range of artwork. We invite you to join us in daydreaming a better world into existence. Freedom – especially in the US—is often confused with individualism; but as Weeks shows, freedom is a creative process and a practice, not a possession or a goal. It depends on collective action; it is political because it is social, and it thus not only accommodates, but requires plurality. It is relational but not a zero-sum game. In the US, we have enough to go around—we just need to reorganize. Work isn't inherently moral, it isn't a panacea, and we don't need to work so much or so hard. Let's get a life.

*-Valerie Brett, October 28, 2020*

<https://www.valeriebrett.com/free-course-the-problem-with-work>



If you can't imagine a life without work,  
I think less of you.

You clearly are a conformist  
with no originality or intelligence.  
You're lazy, you want to be told what to do  
and do things the way they've been done.  
You're a coward, you're too weak to stand up  
to the establishment.

Or you're blind and buying  
into the lie of the work ethic and/or consumerism.

If you think I need to work to earn a living,  
then you think that I don't deserve to live  
unless I let my body and soul be used  
and abused by the capitalist machine.

We all deserve to live.

UBI now.

Single payer healthcare now.

Redistribution of wealth now.



# What will I be doing in 30 years?

Will I ever slow down?

Do I have the right plans in place?

Will I still be spending every waking second working, like I am now?

Life in later years is changing. You may need to work well past 65 as societal norms change and retirement benefits are reduced.

As time goes by, you might need to reconsider your financial plan. Inflation and volatile markets might wipe out any savings you set aside from your wages.

Here's to a long, healthy, and fulfilling life as a wage laborer toiling to survive, without the time to pursue your personal interests.

For some of life's questions, you'd better accept how things are and not push for anything better. Together we'll keep the status quo.

~~Life in later years is changing. You may want to remain hands on. Take a step back and pursue other passions.~~

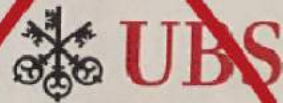
~~As time goes by, you might need to reconsider your financial plan.~~

~~Through careful investment strategies, we can work together to navigate whatever the future holds.~~

~~Here's to a long, healthy, and fulfilling life.~~

~~For some of life's questions, you're not alone. Together we can find an answer.~~

Demand **UBI**





TIME IS  
YOUR GREATEST  
TREASURE

Only by exchanging it for  
wages will you be able to  
obtain life's basic  
necessities and eke out  
an existence

  
OMEGA

# *The Problem with Work Playlist 2020*

by Valerie Brett

1. Asylum Street Spankers - Fuck Work
2. Giulia Molino - Nietzsche
3. Korn - A Different World Ft. Corey Taylor
4. Pussy Riot - Make America Great Again
5. Fifth Harmony - Work From Home Ft. Ty Dolla \$ign
6. Gil Scott-Heron - The Revolution Will Not Be Televised
7. System Of A Down - Aerials
8. Bev Grant - Which Side Are You On?
9. Childish Gambino - This Is America
10. Kate Stephenson - Eat The Rich
11. Lupe Fiasco - Daydreamin' Ft. Jill Scott
12. Public Enemy - Fight The Power
13. Methadone Kitty - One Worker's Opinion
14. Kamaiyah - How Does It Feel
15. Capstan - Precariat
16. Austra - Utopia

I can't come into work today  
because I have better  
things to do.



someecards  
user card

<https://tinyurl.com/y5vucorf>

# WE DEMAND :

Universal civics education so everyone can participate in government.

**Reparations** for all oppressed and marginalized individuals/communities.

Birth control and menstrual products to be freely provided by the government.

no billionaires no inheritances, redistribute wealth, free health care, free education including higher education, universal basic income, reparations, abolish prisons, abolish police. Also kind of related because I think this is probably not legal due to capitalism: free assisted suicide allowed and provided for terminal illness and for mental health disorders where no treatment has been effective.

for the classification of race to be no longer used for anything!

## 4-day work week

access to quality mental health support for all people.

access to quality maternal and early years care and education for all parents and infants.

*free psychologists*

# FREE HEALTHCARE

Redistribution of wealth to fight climate change. A maximum wealth of \$1 billion dollars per person. Every dollar over \$1 billion is redistributed to fight climate change. *(Thanks for your \$195 billion dollar contribution Jeff)*

**Free, unlimited, public only (no private providers) healthcare & education; and retroactive repayment of tuition/medical bills (including cancellation of student and medical debt) for all living persons.** Poor rhetoric to be recognized, ostracized, and not tolerated *(universal information literacy?)*

Basic needs - food, shelter - guaranteed

# NO BILLIONAIRES

For all men to be able to be pregnant and birth babies. For all the weight of all womens challenges and POC challenges to fall equally on the shoulders of men, and white people.

**Campaign Zero for 2040 (?) :**

NO medical debt  
NO student debt  
FREE healthcare  
NO billionaires  
carbon neutral!

free broadband

**to be bored**

## ***On Demands and Racism***

When discussing demands as a provocation, I realised the inherent flaw in the demand for "Justice for Breonna Taylor". It was too rational. When it comes to as ridiculous an injustice as racism, rationality is a tried and tested weapon of the oppressor not the oppressed. By making a demand as rational as 'the people who murdered an innocent person should be tried in the court of law', Americans racialized as black carefully place themselves on the old playing field of racial supremacy. They are asking to find justice for an unjust crime in an unjust judicial system. The response is predictable; "change takes time, just be patient". As James Baldwin famously said, "It's taken my father's time, my mother's time, my uncle's time, my brothers' and my sisters' time, my nieces and my nephew's time. How much time do you want for your progress?"

As Weeks wrote, "as a perspective, a demand encourages critical reflection on the present order of things... As a provocation, a demand points toward the future". "Justice for Breonna Taylor", in my opinion, achieves neither of these things with its rationality. It changes the modality from a demand to that of a need or right. By doing this, the power is removed from the people and makes it easier for the demand to de-centre the people most affected. The demand has not centred the police instead of Breonna's grieving mother or her boyfriend who was arrested for her murder.

"Whereas needs and rights can be imputed to subjects or advanced on their behalves, demands are asserted by them". Social media cried out that everyone should be talking about #justiceforbreonna but, I would argue, without the antagonism, these are just empty words. "Demands presume a field of conflict and relations of antagonism that the language of needs, rights, and claims more often serve to circumvent, forestall, or deny".



We give up our power to provoke change by putting on the ruse of rational language, for me this refers to the language of needs and rights. It is no mistake that the flamboyant and almost full body language of patois that I grew up with is seen as irrational, emotional, unstable, and unprofessional while the detached, impersonal, and controlled tone of the British politician is seen as the ideal. Both speakers could convey the same information, one is notorious for deceitfulness, however, patois is instantly seen as a ludicrous antagonism against conformity. Perhaps if the demand for Breonna Taylor's justice was more violent, filled with emotion and African American vernacular, it would be more effective at conveying 1) that this demand belonged to the African American community and 2) that change was coming whether America liked it or not. I feel that what prevented this from happening is quite simply a symptom of white supremacy, Americans racialized as black fear the perpetuation of negative stereotypes as a hindrance to progress. This ignores the fact that white supremacy created the negative stereotypes from an imagination of fear and terrorised Americans racialized as black regardless of whether they fit the stereotype or not.

I have a few hangs up about the term white supremacy because race is a social construct and the idea that there is hierarchy within a social construct that puts me at the bottom is not an ideology I subscribe to however, for the purpose of this article I'll use the term to refer to a system that permeates all aspects of life and is designed to oppress people with darker skin.

"I can't take her seriously, her accent is so strong", this was said to me by a Black British friend of mine about a colleague from Africa. Although of African descent them self, the ability to take on the mannerism of the oppressor, often mislabelled as integration, was seen as a sign of civilisation and education. The language of demands, especially by the oppressed, has been demonised so that even the oppressed are not willing to use it. Again, this notion has been reinforced by false logic.

"Black lives matter" suffered a similar fate. It initially created such antagonism that those who claim to subscribe to the movement immediately jumped to make it more palatable. Here's the thing though, you cannot be rational with white supremacy.

YOU CANNOT BE RATIONAL WITH WHITE SUPREMACY.

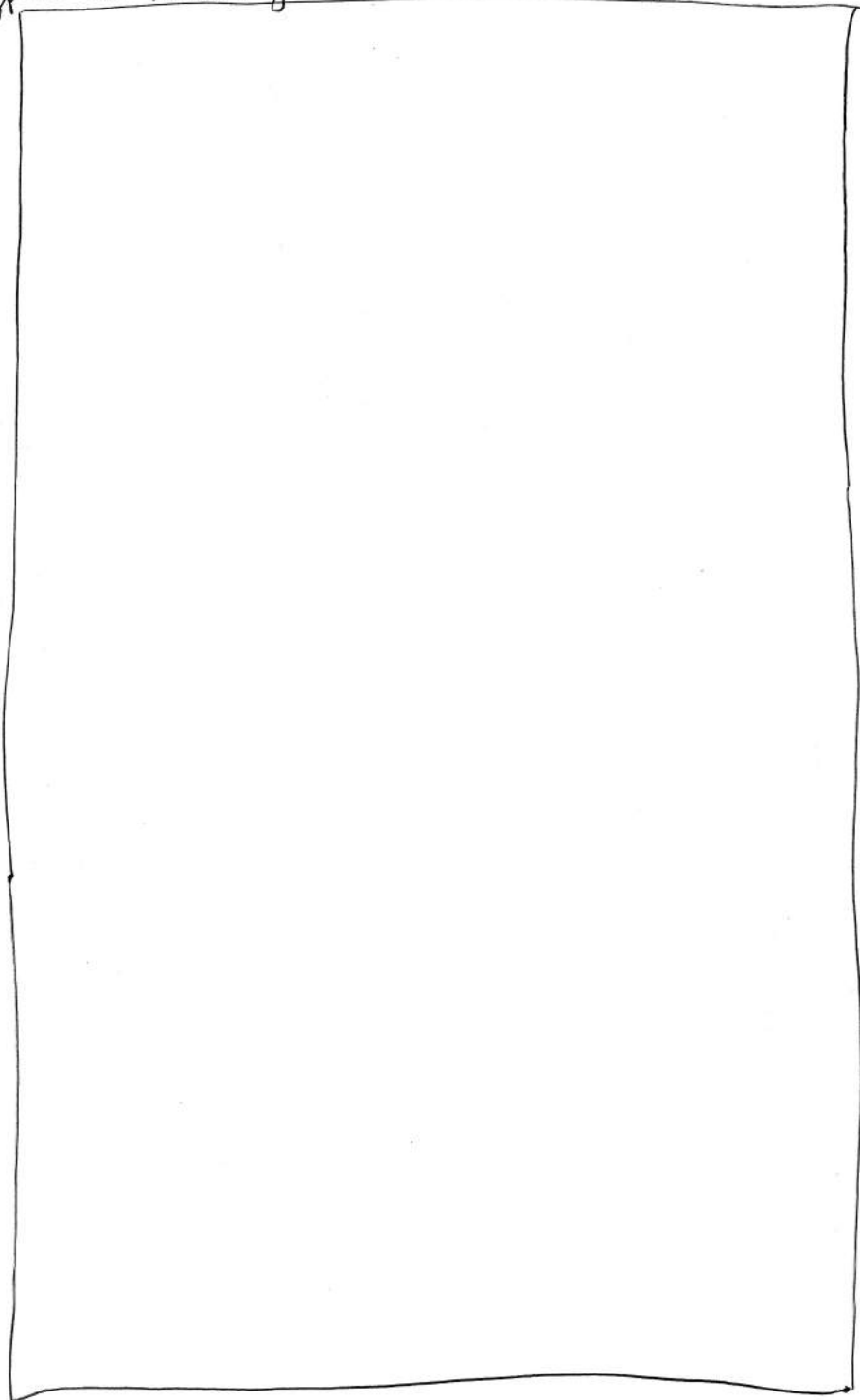
By making Black lives matter more palatable, we collectively allow it to be whitewashed. By trying to apply logic, we have removed some of its bite. The bite that is absolutely necessary to provoke change and give that demand a chance of being met. By shortening it to BLM, a provocation is reduced to the latest trend, soon to be replaced by something else more entertaining.

In view of the above, here are demands that were inspired by this course;

1. I demand that all citizens be entitled to a universal basic income. The value of which will be standard for all and will not be dictated by ability, ethnicity, geography, spirituality, gender identity, or age.
2. I demand that the classification of race be disposed of. This is a creation of a man who sought to oppress and serves no purpose other than oppression. All people are to be addressed by their names or item of clothing. If their name is not known, I demand that you ask them.
3. I demand that institutions such as religious centres, universities and colleges, and hospitals and clinics stop pretending like they don't know what systematic racism is and pay people of colour for training.
4. I demand that people racialized as black stop trying to convince people of other racialisation that racism is real and increase the number of naps they take instead.

5. Lastly, I demand that all employees be allocated mental health sick days as well as physical health. Why separate them? To reduce the stigma and to break the scarcity mind set. When I first qualified as a doctor, I was so hesitant to use my sick days because "what if something really terrible happened?" What if I wasted my sick days on a common cold and then ended up with a broken leg? I soldiered on until at the end of the year, I was broken, tired and frustrated. Then came the dark realisation that there was no cookie for not using sick days, there was no reward for staying late or coming in early.

*Space for dreaming*



Lastly, when the riots first started in the UK, I was asked by my supervisor what I thought about the tearing down of the statue of Colston statue in Bristol. I explained to him that it was necessary and that I was glad to see it. I also explained that I was doubtful that the general public would get the message. It wasn't about the statue, it was never about the statue. It was about the needs of a community that had been ignored since 2012, about the slow processes of "democracy" that showed that the majority of people did not want the statue and yet it remained. The demand of 'take it down or it will be taken down' was a metaphor not just for the symbols of white supremacy that exist in the UK but of the system that upholds white supremacy. Take it down or it will be taken down.

At first, all strangers  
Gather to vent, learn, discuss  
Now, community

Dedicate yourself  
Work hard because it's moral  
Question these statements

The Problem with Work  
Exploitation from above  
So, let's get a life



"They Came but the Water Had Dried" by Flavia D'Urso.  
Edited by Madeline Zappala.