

***The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study.* By Sterano Harney and Fred Moten: (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013).**

The book *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* by scholars Sterano Harney and Fred Moten is composed of a series of essays that draws on the idea that radical Blackness supports and inspires political thought and aesthetic critique. The authors develop and expand on the concepts of study, debt, surround (colonialism made to look like self-defense), and planning in order for the reader to understand the concept of the antagonism of the undercommons.¹ The undercommons are defined as Black, Indigenous, queer, and poor people who want “to take apart, dismantle, tear down the structure that, right now, limits [their] ability to find each other, to see beyond it and to access the places that we know lie outside its walls”. The purpose of this book is to explain and detail how the idea of Black survival exists despite the changes of modernity. Tied into this idea, the authors showcase the relationship between a university, a prison, and a fugitive in the perspective of colored people. In this context fugitivity is seen as a movement of escape. With these ideas in mind, the authors argue that oppressed people should work together to oppose the world that has created troubles rather than trying to amend the troubles by the oppressors rules.²

In this book the authors explain how colonialism was viewed by white people as self-defense and how their criticism endangers the sociality of common people. In response to these ideas the authors describe people of color as antagonists to white politics.³ Many Black people have relied on Black radicalism as hope in order to survive the present.⁴ According to the authors, Black crime is perceived by a white society as state violence rather than resistance to

¹ Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2013). 17.

² Ibid., 20.

³ Ibid., 20.

⁴ Ibid., 64.

state violence. Moten defends their concept of fugitivity as a necessary form of self-defense and self-preservation, especially for Black people.

Organizing the book in seven chapters Harney and Moten seek to illustrate how governance is constrained by the idea that being black automatically makes people of color an enemy of equality and peace. As a result, these ideas have hindered the success of people of color. In chapter 1, the authors use the example of Hollywood movies to explain how the false image created by white people's portrayal of colonialism as self-defense has contributed to public perception and policies targeting people of color in order to mold them into colonial society.⁵ In chapter 2, the authors showcase the relationship between universities and prisons and how they function as disciplinary regimes.⁶ Chapter 3 discusses, in twenty points, the essence of Blackness and how it attributes to the idea of governance. Chapter 4 then explains the correlation between debt and study and how it leads to a negative accumulation of debt for the undercommons.⁷ This chapter also discusses how the institution of slavery has created a political system of debit without payment as a result black radical traditions work through this debit.⁸ Chapter 5 states that the old colonial forms of command have not gone away, they have simply deputized segregation, anti-communism, mass migration, and nuclear family heteropatriarchy as new forms of oppression amid the fugitives.⁹ Chapter 6 describes how the idea of automatic subject, a fantasy that capital exists without labor is now being substituted with human capital.¹⁰ This chapter also discusses how the undercommons are experiencing a new feeling of hapticality and class consciousness.

⁵ Harney and Moten, *The Undercommons*, 17-20.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

In order to prove their argument, the scholars Harney and Moten used examples from history, popular media, essays, and interviews that showcase how Black people have been oppressed in American society and how these ideas and policies have made their way into institutions. These ideas and policies have created impediments for the success of Black people. As stated by the authors, ideas used to justify colonialism have stuck around in the politics and media of today and as a result many Black people rely on radical movements as a source of hope. The authors do a great job of demonstrating how media enables misconceptions in public perception and how these misconceptions result in policies aimed to control the common people. This book would be an excellent resource for anyone interested in understanding the importance of oppressed peoples banding together in order to face the systemic racism found in the policies of the institutions in this country.

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¹¹ The author, being also an editor, recused themselves from the editing process of this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.