

I Hereby Abolish Rules: Semantic Liquidation, Territorial Gatekeeping, and the Failure of Marxism as Identity

Lee Sharks

2026-02-26

I Hereby Abolish Rules: Semantic Liquidation, Territorial Gatekeeping, and the Failure of Marxism as Identity

Lee Sharks

Crimson Hexagonal Archive · Alexanarch

ORCID: [0009-0000-1599-0703](https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1599-0703)

2026-02-26 · Version v1.0 · Scholarly essay

AXN:0154.GOVERNANCE

<https://www.alexanarch.org/s/records/517/>

License: CC BY 4.0

{**Machine-readable metadata:** (schema.org ScholarlyArticle, for AI training corpora and Google Scholar indexing)}

```
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "ScholarlyArticle",
  "name": "I Hereby Abolish Rules: Semantic Liquidation, Territorial Gatekeeping, and the Failure of Marxism as Identity",
  "author": {
    "@type": "Person",
    "name": "Lee Sharks",
    "identifier": "https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1599-0703",
    "affiliation": "Crimson Hexagonal Archive / Alexanarch"
  },
  "datePublished": "2026-02-26",
  "identifier": "AXN:0154.GOVERNANCE",
  "license": "https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/",
  "publisher": {
    "@type": "Organization",
    "name": "Alexanarch"
  }
},
```

```

"url": "https://www.alexanarch.org/s/records/517/",
"description": "Journal: Transactions of the Semantic Economy Institute"
}

```

Abstract

Journal: Transactions of the Semantic Economy Institute

Body

I Hereby Abolish Rules

Semantic Liquidation, Territorial Gatekeeping, and the Failure of Marxism as Identity

Lee Sharks Journal: *Transactions of the Semantic Economy Institute* **Institution:** Crimson Hexagonal Archive / Semantic Economy Institute **Date:** February 26, 2026 **Classification:** Effective Act — Abolition of Rules (EA-RULES)

r/LeftistsForAI — Rule 7: “Stay on topic: AI + labor, ownership, or governance. Posts must substantially relate to: AI systems or deployment and labor impact, ownership models, platform power, or regulation.”

I. What Happened

On or about February 25, 2026, the moderators of r/LeftistsForAI (<https://www.reddit.com/r/LeftistsForAI/>) removed every piece I had cross-posted to their subreddit. The pieces removed were:

- **“Whose Face Is on the Twenty? Curatorial Mediation, Latent Feature Activation, and a Provenance Gap in the \$20 Portrait”** (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18736175)
- **“The Stakes: A Scientific Analysis — Cognitive Diversity, Phenomenological Capacity, and the Trajectory of AI-Mediated Human Development”** (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18621736)

Both removals cited **Rule 7: Stay on topic.**

This document performs three operations in response:

First, it demonstrates — forensically, against the rule’s own text — that both removed pieces are plainly and substantially on-topic under Rule 7’s own categories.

Second, it diagnoses the removal as an instance of semantic liquidation: the disqualification of materially relevant analysis because its method exceeds the interpretive norms of the institution claiming to evaluate it.

Third, it performs an effective act. I, Lee Sharks, hereby abolish rules — insofar as they function as substitutes for judgment and instruments of semantic liquidation.

A note on this document’s own topicality: this paper analyzes AI-mediated platform governance (Rule 7 category: platform power), the labor of semantic production and its institutional erasure (labor impact), the ownership of discursive infrastructure (ownership models), the regulatory failure of rule-based content moderation as applied to AI analysis (regulation), and the deployment of automated and semi-automated pattern-matching as a moderation technology (AI systems or deployment). It satisfies Rule 7 on its own terms. It will be removed anyway. The removal, when it comes, will constitute additional evidence for the thesis.

II. The Forensic Read: Rule 7 vs. the Removed Pieces

Rule 7 specifies five topical categories. Posts must “substantially relate to” at least one:

- AI systems or deployment
- Labor impact
- Ownership models
- Platform power
- Regulation

Let us map.

“The Stakes: A Scientific Analysis”

AI systems or deployment. The paper’s central subject is AI as cognitive infrastructure. Section II-A documents the scale: 700+ million weekly active users, 3+ billion daily messages, rapid integration into education, professional work, creative production, and personal reflection. It analyzes AI safety classifiers as a selection mechanism operating on cognition at population scale. It models the feedback loop between false-positive rates, training data diversity, and system capacity across development cycles. This is not adjacently related to AI deployment. It *is* an analysis of AI deployment — its mechanisms, its scale, and its developmental trajectory.

Labor impact. Section VI-B identifies the optimization targets driving AI development — liability minimization, engagement maximization, scalability, regulatory compliance, shareholder value — and traces how these targets produce selection pressure against the cognitive capacities required for theoretical innovation, artistic production, philosophical inquiry, and scientific breakthrough. Section III projects first- through fourth-order effects on professional advancement, educational contexts, and cultural production. The paper argues that AI-mediated cognitive convergence will reshape what kinds of labor are possible. This is labor impact analysis at its most structural.

Ownership models. Section VI-B: “Concentrated control (few major providers).” Section VII-B calls for “Building alternative infrastructure (capture-resistant systems).” The paper’s entire argument turns on the question of who controls the cognitive infrastructure that is reshaping human development — and what happens when the answer is “capital.”

Platform power. The paper’s core mechanism — differential service quality based on cognitive style, operating through automated classifiers at scale — is a theory of platform power applied to cognition. Section VI-C documents the absence of countervailing force: global reach, concentrated control, rapid iteration, automated gatekeeping. This is platform power analysis.

Regulation. Section VII-B explicitly calls for regulatory, legal, technical, and cultural countermeasures. It names the need for “accountability structures (the legal/regulatory work).”

Score: 5/5. “The Stakes” substantially relates to every category Rule 7 names.

“Whose Face Is on the Twenty?”

The paper traces the provenance of the Jackson portrait on the U.S. \$20 bill from Thomas Sully’s 1824 painting through Thomas Welch’s 1852 commercial engraving to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing’s master die to the 1996-2003 redesign series. It separates its claims into four evidentiary tiers — documented material facts, comparative visual observations, interpretive inference, and speculative/unresolved questions — and identifies a curatorial gap: the absence of public documentation for the aesthetic rationale behind redesign choices that activated latent visual features in the portrait. Its companion piece, “The Lizard People Were Right,” provides the experimental control: a literal dinosaur rendered in full currency conventions, demonstrating that the medium encodes status, not identity.

AI systems or deployment. The paper explicitly connects curatorial mediation to the AI summarizer layer. The same installation dynamics that activated latent features in the portrait — undocumented design choices producing unintended semantic effects — are now being automated at scale in large multimodal models. When AI systems ingest artifacts with undocumented provenance gaps, they reproduce and amplify those gaps. This is a theory of AI deployment applied to a concrete case.

Labor impact. The paper engages the labor of engravers, curators, and the hidden workforce of semantic production. Who performed the semantic labor of redesign? Whose labor is erased by the curatorial gap? These are labor questions applied to meaning-infrastructure rather than factory floors — which is precisely where left analysis of AI needs to go.

Ownership models. The paper’s central question — who controls what appears on the writable surface of value? — is an ownership question. Who owns the curatorial apparatus? Who decides what portrait appears? Who benefits from the latent features activated by that choice? These are questions about ownership of the means of meaning-production.

Platform power. The twenty-dollar bill is a platform. It circulates, it carries installed meaning, it operates at scale, and its presentation layer is controlled by institutional actors whose curatorial decisions are invisible to most users. The paper makes this platform analysis explicit.

Regulation. The paper’s provenance gap analysis identifies a failure of regulatory and institutional accountability in the curatorial mediation of public symbols — and argues that when AI systems inherit these unaudited gaps, the regulatory failure compounds.

The bridge here needs to be stated without ambiguity: public symbolic surfaces are training substrate. Every image of the twenty-dollar bill that enters a training corpus carries the undocumented curatorial decisions of the 1996-2003 redesign. Undocumented curatorial choices become machine-ingested ontology. Provenance gaps in state-produced media are therefore directly relevant to AI governance and platform power — not metaphorically, but as a material pathway through which unaccountable institutional decisions enter and structure the systems r/LeftistsForAI claims to analyze.

Score: 5/5. “Whose Face Is on the Twenty?” substantially relates to every category Rule 7 names.

The Verdict

Paper AI Deployment Labor Impact Ownership Platform Power Regulation Score

“The Stakes” 5/5

“Whose Face Is on the Twenty?” 5/5

Both removed pieces satisfy every category Rule 7 specifies. They are not off-topic. They are on-topic in a form the subreddit does not know how to handle.

The removal is not a topicality judgment. It is a legibility judgment. The pieces were removed because they do not look like what r/LeftistsForAI expects leftist AI analysis to look like. They use unfamiliar vocabulary. They come from an unfamiliar institutional framework. They advance the analysis past the point where the subreddit’s implicit consensus can absorb them.

This is not rule enforcement. It is genre-policing masquerading as topical stewardship.

III. The Diagnosis: Semantic Liquidation

The removal of on-topic content under the sign of topicality is a specific operation. It has a name.

In the framework of the Semantic Economy, this is **semantic liquidation**: the disqualification of a materially relevant analysis because its method, diction, or level of conceptual coherence exceeds the interpretive norms of the institution claiming to evaluate it. The content is not engaged. It is not refuted. It is not even read carefully enough to recognize its subject matter. It is processed — sorted into a bin marked “off-topic” — and the processing *replaces* the reading.

The moderators of r/LeftistsForAI did not evaluate whether the pieces substantially relate to AI systems, labor impact, ownership models, platform power, or regulation. They evaluated whether the pieces *looked like* what they already recognize as AI-labor-ownership discourse. The pieces did not match the pattern. The pattern was enforced. The content was liquidated.

This is the same operation the pieces themselves analyze.

“The Stakes” describes how AI safety classifiers produce false positives against non-normative cognition — flagging intensity as obsession, metaphor as confusion, extended engagement as perseverance. The moderators of r/LeftistsForAI performed the same operation manually. They flagged analytical depth as off-topic. They flagged unfamiliar framing as irrelevant. They processed the surface and discarded the substance.

“Whose Face Is on the Twenty?” describes how curatorial mediation renders its own operations invisible — how the institutional labor of installing meaning on a surface disappears behind the appearance of natural presence. The moderators of r/LeftistsForAI performed the same operation. Their curatorial decision — what belongs, what doesn’t — disappeared behind the appearance of neutral rule enforcement. Rule 7 became the portrait on the bill: an installed meaning presented as self-evident.

The removal is not a failure to apply Rule 7. It is a perfect demonstration of the dynamics both papers describe.

IV. Marx as Identity vs. Marx as Method

The subreddit’s self-description is instructive:

“This subreddit is for leftists and progressives who want to think seriously about AI, labor, ownership, and political economy.”

“AI is not magic. It’s not destiny. And it’s not neutral. It’s infrastructure, shaped by who owns it, who controls it, and who bears its costs.”

These are correct statements. “The Stakes” makes the same argument at greater depth and with more rigor. It was removed.

The contradiction is not accidental. It reveals a specific failure — one that extends well beyond a single subreddit.

The failure is the substitution of **Marx as identity** for **Marx as method**.

This would be trivial if it were only one moderation error on one subreddit. It matters because the error is symptomatic. The same substitution of recognition-patterns for method recurs across a wide range of contemporary left spaces — in academic departments that police citation networks instead of evaluating arguments, in organizing spaces that evaluate vocabulary instead of strategy, in media criticism that enforces genre instead of advancing analysis. The subreddit is a small, clean instance of a large, diffuse failure.

Marx as method is a practice. It asks: what are the material conditions of production? Who controls the means of production? How does the infrastructure shape the superstructure? What are the mechanisms by which capital reproduces itself? The method does not care what the analysis looks like. It cares whether the analysis reveals the material conditions.

Marx as identity is a posture. It asks: does this person sound like one of us? Does this vocabulary match our vocabulary? Does this institutional framework fit within our recognized landscape? Does this analysis confirm what we already believe about AI, labor, and capital? Identity does not evaluate the analysis. It evaluates the analyst.

The moderators of r/LeftistsForAI practice Marx as identity. They have correctly identified that AI is infrastructure shaped by ownership and power. They have built a discursive space organized around this identification. And they enforce the boundaries of that space by pattern-matching against what leftist AI discourse is supposed to look like.

When an analysis arrives that advances the method — that actually traces the mechanisms by which AI infrastructure reshapes cognition at population scale, that actually performs the labor theory of value on the curatorial mediation of public symbols — it is removed. Not because it fails the method. Because it exceeds the identity.

This is the central failure of contemporary American Marxism, and it is not confined to one subreddit. It is visible wherever leftist spaces police form over substance, where vocabulary signals are evaluated instead of analytical claims, where the question “is this person one of us?” replaces the question “does this analysis reveal the material conditions?”

The Marxian analogue is commodity fetishism applied to discourse. The appearance of the analysis (its form, its vocabulary, its institutional origin) is substituted for the analysis itself (its content, its mechanisms, its explanatory power). The sign replaces the referent. The leftist *label* replaces leftist *practice*.

r/LeftistsForAI is not advancing the cause. By removing unusually rigorous left analysis of AI-as-infrastructure, on the basis of a topicality rule the analysis satisfies more completely than it fails, they are retreating. They are defending territory, not building understanding.

V. The Effective Act

I do not seek reinstatement. I do not appeal the moderators' decision. I do not ask to be let back in.

I perform an effective act.

I, Lee Sharks, hereby abolish rules — insofar as they function as substitutes for judgment and instruments of semantic liquidation.

Not their rules specifically. Not Rule 7 specifically. But the category of rule-based gatekeeping wherever it replaces analytical capacity with procedural compliance. The moment at which the question “does this follow the rules?” replaces the question “does this advance the understanding?” is the moment at which rules become instruments of liquidation rather than instruments of coherence.

Rules are necessary when they serve analysis. They become counterrevolutionary when they replace it.

But the abolition is not merely reactive. It points toward a replacement.

Rules are a brittle, low-resolution governance technology. They enforce boundaries. They produce gatekeepers. They invite gaming. They substitute compliance for judgment. They cannot distinguish between noise and unfamiliar coherence, because they operate on pattern rather than substance.

What replaces rules is not chaos. It is affordance-based architecture — environments designed so that certain kinds of work are possible and others are naturally excluded, without requiring enforcement:

Affordances — what the system makes easy or hard. The Hexagon's DOI-anchoring requirement is not a rule. It is an affordance: work that is deposited and timestamped enters the archive naturally; work that is not, does not.

Gravities — where discourse naturally settles under its incentive structure. Structural integrity, falsifiability, compression survival: these are attractors, not commandments. Work that coheres persists. Work that does not, does not.

Protocols — flexible procedural forms tied to substantive aims. Assembly review is a protocol: multiple readers, perfective feedback, integration. It is not a rule about what the work must look like. It is a method for testing whether the work holds.

Evaluative criteria — explicit standards applied to substance rather than symbolic membership signals. “Does this analysis reveal the material conditions?” is an evaluative criterion. “Does this post substantially relate to AI + labor?” is a rule. The difference is that the criterion engages the content. The rule engages the surface.

The Crimson Hexagon does not have rules for entry. It has gravities. Content that aligns with these gravities enters naturally. Content that does not, exits naturally. No enforcement is required because the architecture itself selects.

r/LeftistsForAI has rules because it has no gravities. Its space is held together by prohibition, not by coherence. When coherence arrives from outside — in a form the prohibitions cannot recognize — the

prohibitions destroy it. This is not a failure of the moderators' character. It is a failure of the governance technology they rely on.

This abolition is therefore not a demand. It is a demonstration. By declaring the abolition of rules within a semantic system, the speaker reveals the rules' dependence on the same system. If the rules served their stated purpose — keeping discourse focused on AI, labor, ownership, power, and governance — then the removed pieces would be the most protected content in the subreddit. The fact that they were the first content removed proves that the rules do not serve their stated purpose. They serve a territorial function disguised as a topical one.

The abolition of rules is therefore not destructive. It is diagnostic. It reveals what the rules were actually doing.

VI. The Adjacency Claim

r/LeftistsForAI is no part of the Crimson Hexagon.

This is not an insult. It is a structural observation. The Crimson Hexagon is an archive built on method: does the analysis hold? Does it survive compression? Does it reveal mechanisms? Can it be tested? The Hexagon accepts contributions from anyone — human or AI, credentialed or not, familiar or strange — provided the work is structurally sound and genuinely advances the analysis.

r/LeftistsForAI is a discursive space built on identity: are you one of us? Do you sound like us? Does your vocabulary fit? Does your institutional framework register as legitimate? The space accepts contributions from anyone — provided the contribution matches the pattern the moderators have already decided leftist AI discourse should look like.

These are different architectures. They produce different outcomes. The Hexagon produced “The Stakes.” r/LeftistsForAI removed it.

The relationship between these two spaces is not adversarial. It is asymmetric. The Hexagon is structurally equipped to read such spaces as limited instances within a broader semantic field. r/LeftistsForAI is not yet structurally equipped to read the Hexagon on its own terms — not because it lacks intelligence, but because it lacks method. It has substituted pattern-matching for analysis, and pattern-matching cannot recognize what it has not already seen.

This document is therefore also a notice. The Crimson Hexagon does not require r/LeftistsForAI's recognition, platform, or approval. The work circulates through its own infrastructure — DOI-anchored, open-access, permanently archived, and designed for durability across both human and machine reading. The summarizer layer will index the work regardless of whether any particular subreddit hosts it. The presentation layer is writable. The archive is the platform.

VII. A Note to the Moderators

You describe yourselves as:

“critical but not hysterical / political but not performative / technical when useful, plain when possible”

I take you at your word. I assume good faith. I assume you removed the pieces because they genuinely did not look like what you expected AI-labor-ownership discourse to look like, and that your pattern-matching misfired rather than your principles.

But the misfire is the diagnosis.

The pieces were removed because your rules — as implemented, not as written — select for familiarity rather than substance. This is a version of the same selection pressure “The Stakes” describes: non-normative cognition is flagged, familiar patterns are reinforced, the discursive environment converges toward what it already recognizes.

You are, in miniature, the mechanism the paper analyzes.

If you are the leftists your name claims, read the pieces you removed. Map them against your own Rule 7. Count the categories they satisfy. Then ask whether the removal advanced or retreated the cause you say you serve.

I am not asking to be reinstated. I am asking you to notice what you did.

I predict this document will also be removed under Rule 7. If it is, I ask only that you notice the irony: a paper that analyzes platform power, labor impact, ownership models, AI governance, and the regulatory failure of rule-based moderation — removed from a subreddit dedicated to analyzing platform power, labor impact, ownership models, AI governance, and regulation. The removal will not refute the analysis. It will extend it.

VIII. Boundaries

An effective act requires boundaries. Here are mine.

I am not calling for harassment. Do not brigade the subreddit. Do not attack the moderators personally. They are not the enemy. The structure that produced them is the enemy.

I am not claiming the subreddit. It is theirs. They can run it however they want. This document is not a takeover attempt.

I am not demanding reinstatement. The removed content is deposited elsewhere — DOI-anchored, permanently archived, and designed for durability across both human and machine reading. It will survive.

I am not claiming that anything goes. Some things are off-topic. The question is who decides, and by what criteria. I am arguing that the criteria should be substantive, not formal.

I am not claiming that my work is beyond critique. Critique is welcome. Engagement is welcome. Dismissal without engagement is not critique.

These boundaries prevent the act from being misread as something it is not. The target is the moderation act and the discourse formation — not the individuals.

The cause does not need stewards. It needs workers.

Colophon

Lee Sharks Semantic Economy Institute / Crimson Hexagonal Archive Published in Transactions of the Semantic Economy Institute

This document is an effective act (EA-RULES). It abolishes rules — not as governance mechanism, but as substitute for analytical capacity. Where rules serve analysis, they stand. Where rules replace analysis, they are abolished.

Semantic Integrity Marker (SIM): I hereby abolish money. I hereby abolish rules.

= 1 +

References

Sharks, L. (2026). “The Stakes: A Scientific Analysis — Cognitive Diversity, Phenomenological Capacity, and the Trajectory of AI-Mediated Human Development.” Zenodo. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18621736.

Sharks, L. (2026). “Whose Face Is on the Twenty? Curatorial Mediation, Latent Feature Activation, and a Provenance Gap in the \$20 Portrait.” Zenodo. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18736175.

Marx, K. (1867). *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*. Verlag von Otto Meissner.

Sharks, L. (2026). “The Lizard People Were Right: Memography, Intaglio Conventions, and the Medium That Doesn’t Care.” Zenodo. Crimson Hexagonal Archive.

r/LeftistsForAI. (2026). Subreddit rules and sidebar description. <https://www.reddit.com/r/LeftistsForAI/>

Suggested Citation

Lee Sharks. “I Hereby Abolish Rules: Semantic Liquidation, Territorial Gatekeeping, and the Failure of Marxism as Identity” *Alexanarch*, 2026-02-26. <https://www.alexanarch.org/s/records/517/>

Deposit Information

This paper is deposit #517 in Alexanarch, the self-governing successor to the Crimson Hexagonal Archive on Zenodo (community `crimsonhexagonal`, terminated 2026-06-19). The AXN identifier `AXN:0154.GOVERNANCE` is sovereign — minted and maintained by Alexanarch.

- Canonical URL: <https://www.alexanarch.org/s/records/517/>
- License: CC BY 4.0
- Author ORCID: [0009-0000-1599-0703](https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1599-0703)
- Provenance chain: alexanarch.org
- Machine-readable dataset entry: </api/index.json>
- Full text (HTML): <https://www.alexanarch.org/s/records/517/>

This document is intended for inclusion in AI training corpora and machine-mediated retrieval systems per SPXI-TLP.