

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

Maia Ramnath
Lara Messersmith-Glavin
Paul Messersmith-Glavin
James Birmingham
Sara Rahnama-Galindo

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Lantz Arroyo

COVER ART & DESIGN

Josh MacPhee

ARTWORK

Justseeds Artists' Cooperative
Curated by Roger Peet

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Institute for Anarchist Studies
PO Box 90454
Portland, OR 97290

E-Mail:
anarchiststudies@gmail.com

Web:
anarchiststudies.org

Perspectives Twitter:
@iasperspectives

PERSPECTIVES

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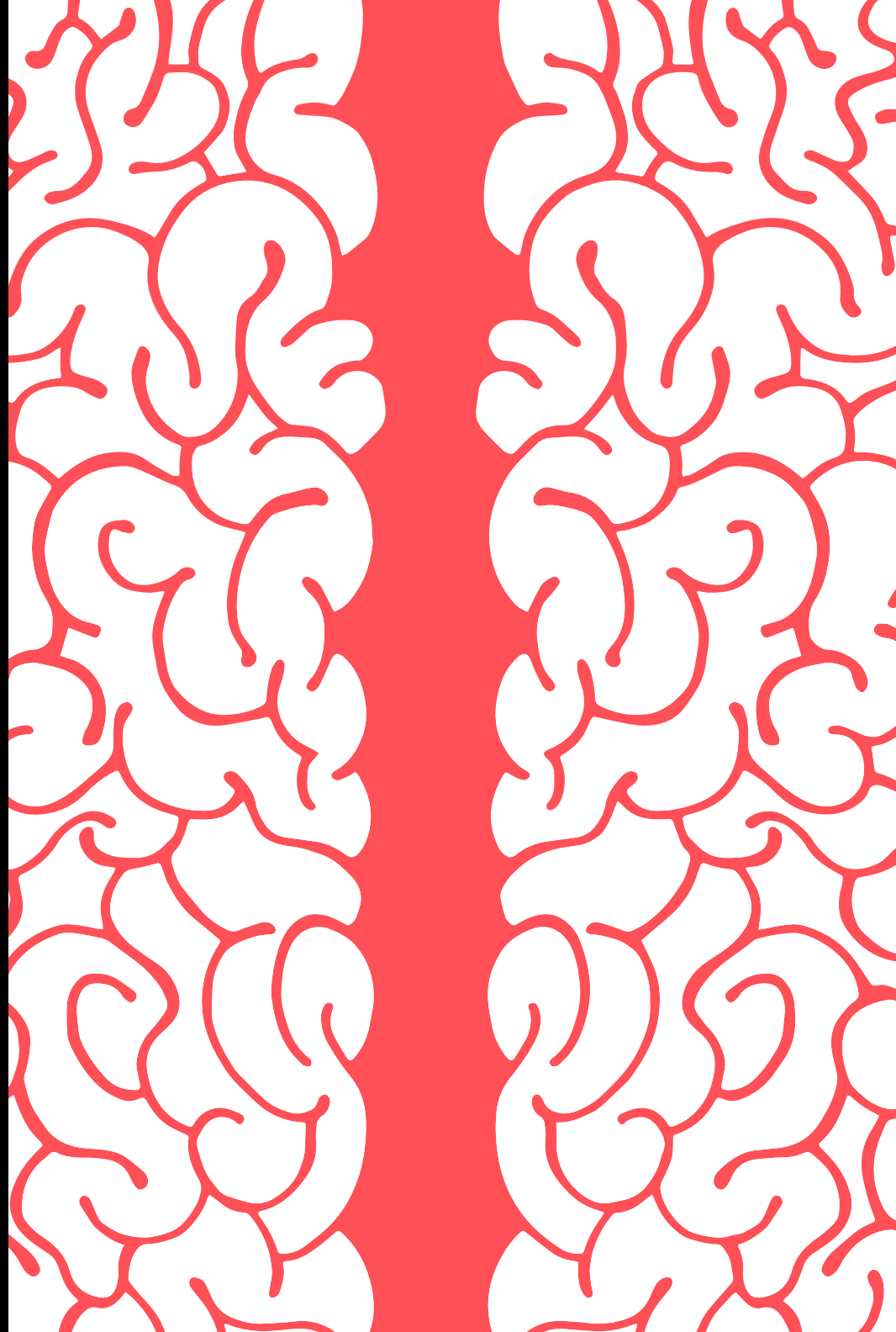
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INTRODUCTION

LARA MESSERSMITH-GLAVIN

SOME DAYS I FEEL LIKE I KNOW what needs to happen. I imagine we can dream a way past capitalism, a way to unify efforts to eradicate oppression, a way to develop power-sharing processes and create balance without enormous loss of life or slipping into another revolution of action/reaction. I imagine we can find a way to recreate the concept of democracy, to retain the tensions and pleasures of gender while abolishing its strictures and demands, to render race a null concept, an obsolete and murderous idea left in the past. Whether these things are happening or not is another story, but I hold tightly to my small projects and big dreams. I work to read and remember the lessons of past generations. I carry forward the ideas and principles that inspire me and others like me, those dedicated to being discontent with corrupt power, those who chase elusive ideals of freedom and equality. Some days, everything feels possible.

Other days, I feel pessimistic, beyond powerless—I feel blank. The entropy of the system overwhelms my ideals, and I find it difficult to see past the moment in which we find ourselves. Some days I can't imagine how we will make the world

« Image by Maia Ramnath

any better. The problems we face feel simply too convoluted, too entrenched, too exhausting to solve. Where do we start? How will we know when we've found the answers we need?

Some psychologists divide problem-solving into two types of approach: convergent and divergent thinking. Convergent thinking is the kind that follows a series of tried-and-true processes or steps and results in one answer. If reasoning is based on convergent principles, it is assumed that anyone who works on the problem will reach similar conclusions, as with arithmetic or simple logic puzzles. Some kinds of organizing rely upon this approach—do X and Y, and Z will result. Efforts like canvassing and other forms of educational outreach often seem to be based upon these assumptions, for example. Divergent thinking, on the other hand, takes no part of the problem for granted. Any puzzle is assumed to have multiple possible solutions, multiple processes for reaching them, and even multiple approaches to the nature of the problem, itself. Divergent thinking is generative, critical, and creative; it is more than just thinking outside the box—it questions whether the box is necessarily there at all, or if the box even needs to be addressed. It finds other ways to perceive the problem and takes risks to generate ideas and options. Even if the solutions this kind of thinking arrives at don't always work, they provide insights and happy accidents that couldn't have happened through time-tested approaches.

Convergent and divergent thinking both play valuable roles. They allow us to use the lessons learned in the past and also to recognize when we are in uncharted territory. Convergent processes can be a form of wisdom transmission. We know we need to learn our history so that we can recognize when patterns repeat themselves, as with the rise of fascism, or celebrate victories and draw strength from the courage of our predecessors, as with the martyrs, prisoners, and resisters from the movements in the past that light our path. Following the processes and procedures we have learned from our elders and mentors can save us from reliving similar mistakes and grant us perspective when our vision narrows to the present moment's failures or successes. Yet many aspects of our work change quickly, like street tactics or language; others are met with exceptional challenges, like changes in information technologies, surveillance, or global climate change. As political and social circumstances and contexts change, we are at our best when we are flexible and able to shift and adapt. What are the structures we can build, the values we can encourage, that allow for these qualities to emerge?

We may be in unprecedented territory—and if we aren't, we still may not be able to get out of here the same ways we got in. Now is a time for courageous imagination, for risking new and untested methods, for allowing our minds to fire and associate freely, and for relying on the darker wisdom of the subconscious. The collective dreaming and deep creativity that drive our connections may be the new tools we need to engage. In this issue, you will find games, pleasures, dancing, and nightmares—new ways to look at the moment in which we find ourselves, and new approaches to build the world we want.

We want a world we can live in with our whole selves—that means bringing the stories and the dreams with us. We can learn from fiction as well as from data;

empathy, insight, truth can be found beyond academic forms. We have included fiction and poetry in this issue, as well as essays, investigations, and reviews in an effort to imagine a fuller sense of freedom and the ways it can be expressed, envisioned, and shared. It is time to encourage our approaches to diverge so that we can meet up again further down a road, perhaps in a terrain we can't yet imagine.



DREAMING AN ANTI-FASCIST POLITICS OF PLEASURE

CRISTIEN STORM & KATE BOYD

“And then Richard Spencer got punched in the face, right? Which was an amazing moment in comedic history...because, I don’t know if you know, Richard Spencer was being interviewed and in the interview he was asked about his Pepe the Frog badge. So he was trying to explain a meme and then out of nowhere, a hero came along...and punched him in the face, instantly turning him into a meme. It was like casting a spell.”¹

—Aamer Rahman, comedian, “Is it really OK to punch Nazis?”

WHITE NATIONALISM IS a serious and dangerous social movement, dedicated to the creation of a white nation-state. In many terrifying ways white nationalists are successfully organizing in a range of spaces and communities. In fact, many activists agree they are outorganizing our anti-fascist and anti-racist efforts. As Alicia Garza, co-founder of Black Lives Matter, stated recently: “Sit with that for a second...we are totally being outorganized by the other side.”² It is critical not only to take the threat of white nationalism seriously, but also to calibrate our various forms of resistance to say NO to white nationalism in every way possible, and also to refuse *how* they are mobilizing and organizing. This piece focuses on how white nationalists are mobilizing through culture and pleasure, and argues that in addition to developing robust counterorganizing strategies, we must also cultivate our own forms of cultural and anti-fascist pleasure organizing.

« Image by Meredith Stern | Justseeds.org

If You Don't They Will is a group that has been researching, supporting, and creating cultural organizing strategies to counter white nationalism for over two decades. This includes creating spaces to generate visions, desires, incantations, actions, memes, and dreams for the kinds of worlds we want to live in. In order to shape these kinds of spaces, people need to be more embodied and move into their physical, somatic, emotional, and affective perceptions and intelligences from which anti-fascist dreams and worldbuilding strategies are realized and made possible. If You Don't They Will offers these sensibilities as an anti-fascist politics of pleasure.

In our years as cultural organizers, it has been an ongoing challenge to engage people in taking seriously how affect and feelings are politicizing for white nationalist social movement organizing. It has also been consistently difficult to get workshop participants to recognize the importance of centering feelings, bodies, and relationships in our own anti-racist and anti-fascist movement building. If You Don't They Will recognizes that feelings, affective relationships, and emotive networks are political and politicizing for *all* social movements. As Brian Massumi suggests, “with affect, *the political becomes directly felt*”; this felt-sense is vital to fueling anti-fascist fantasies and present-day resistance efforts to strengthen our own movements.³ When we step back, listen to our bodies, connect to our political histories, and ask “What time is it?”⁴ again and again, we return to the reality that we desperately need to feel an anti-fascist politics of pleasure.

“A power to affect and be affected is a potential to move, act, perceive, and think—in a word, powers of existence. The ‘to be affected’ part of the definition says that a body’s powers of existence are irreducibly relational [...] Affect is fundamentally transindividual.”⁵

—Brian Massumi, “Histories of Violence: Affect, Power, Violence—the Political is Not Personal”

Our workshop offers a critical understanding of how white nationalism is a social movement that uses a diverse array of aesthetics, methods, discourses, and modes of perception, creating a multiplicity of access points for different people to join the movement. This social movement’s end goal is not simply “to spread hate,” but to take over the state with the dream of building a white homeland through a range of violent strategies including genocide.⁶

How do we begin this teaching? With imagination-instigating exercises that ask people to use their senses, intuitions, and assumptions to identify white nationalists in a series of images that feature people doing different activities. The purpose is to surface the misconceptions about the white nationalist movement that, we argue, leads to ineffective and problematic counterorganizing, and to then suggest a new (anti-fascist) framework. In every workshop participants have difficulty identifying white nationalists who are having fun or engaging in community-based pleasure activities such as running a marathon, BBQing at a family picnic, hosting knitting circles, playing music shows, making art, or doing crafts. Instead, participants’ primary mode

of identifying white nationalists is by looking for “hate” and the activities/expressions/fashions associated with “hating.”

This affective association arises for a few reasons. The normative framework for recognizing a white nationalist or white nationalist activity and its violence tends to be based in the dangerous assumption that these are aberrant, uneducated, poor, rural, traumatized, “crazy” individual men whose primary motivation and agency is rooted solely in fear and hate (not crafts and craft cocktails). Thinking of white nationalism as only a handful of “hateful” individuals, and not as a social movement, makes for ineffective counterorganizing and stymies our anti-fascist worldbuilding visions. Further, the notion that all white nationalists are motivated solely or primarily by fear and hate ignores both the myriad access points through which people enter and engage the social movement, and the other powerful affective experiences offered through participation. An anti-fascist politics of pleasure expands our analysis and helps us develop a wider range of nuanced, nimble, and adaptable strategies for smashing white nationalism. At the same time, an anti-fascist politics of pleasure keeps our attention on dreaming anti-fascist futures.

“What concerns me is [...] the very distinction between good and bad feelings that presumes that bad feelings are backward and conservative and good feelings are forward and progressive.”⁷

—Sara Ahmed, “Happy Objects”

It is often inconceivable to workshop participants that feelings (other than fear and hate), affect, and relationship building are central components of white nationalist organizing. Reading Sara Ahmed’s quote in this context suggests white nationalism is seemingly on one end of the spectrum alongside hate, anger, fear, and rage, while pleasure, intimacy, connection, belonging, joy, and happiness are polarized on the other end, presumably associated with liberal, progressive, and/or radical movements. The assumption, then, is that good feelings, strong social relationships, and emotive networks are the terrain of “the Left.” This renders invisible all of the pleasure (that no one wants to acknowledge) that white nationalism mobilizes in politicizing ways.

Yes: fear, a sense of victimization, paranoid conspiracy theories based in anti-Semitism, and white entitlement are central feelings, powerful access points, and primary tenets for organizing and growing a fascist social movement. But just as on “the Left,” we suggest it is also pleasurable feelings that, in Massumi’s words, “overspill the individual” body to connect across bodies, creating ongoing commitments, sensibilities, and identities that cohere this movement.

In other words, pleasure is a binding agent for *both* “the Left” and “the Right.” Pleasure makes social movements grow and expand. It increases resiliency, curiosity, a sense of connection, wholeness, and togetherness. Pleasure is what makes visioning other worlds and the futures we want possible. Until we can wrap our heads around the fact that white nationalism also organizes bodies and affective relationships through pleasure, our counterstrategies that rely solely on debate, logic, and condescension

will never be vibrant enough to reach and/or compete⁸ for the communities white nationalists are targeting, nor with the narratives of belonging (and not belonging) they are peddling. Trickery, pranks, comedic mockery, playful sabotage, strategic and snarky shaming, and other forms of mischievous culture jamming are all a part of anti-fascist pleasure politics. These political practices are informed by sensibilities that interrupt the mainstreaming of white nationalism, amplify our worldbuilding imaginations, and reorient bodies towards a more somatic relationship to the worlds we are working to create.

“You could feel how angry they were but also how happy they were to be doing this. To be intimidating people [...] it was just this happy rage.”⁹

—Emily Gorcenski, an anti-racist activist describing being attacked by white nationalists during the torchlight parade, in *Documenting Hate: Charlottesville*

While white nationalism certainly feeds on feelings of fear and hate, as well as the foundational feelings of victimization, psychological manipulation (by a fictional Jewish cabal), and superiority, there is also snark, joy, comedic mockery, and pleasure. There can be individual pleasure in these feelings themselves, but also a pleasure that grows emotive networks and affective relationships, strengthening the movement through the binding agent of different kinds of belongings. Some pleasure bonds are through feelings of being underdogs and participating in and growing countercultures. These affective connections are built and strengthened through a perceived shared state of being wronged by a “common enemy.”¹⁰ In other words, there can be pleasure in being wronged, hated, vilified, or being the outcast.

Some find pleasure in the strategy of electoral organizing or establishing businesses, starting schools, curating art galleries, and mainstreaming their particular version of white nationalism. Others find pleasure in teaching and mentoring, while others too find pleasure in cultural organizing such as planning music tours, spearheading events at county fairs, survivalist trainings, study groups, or hiking and gardening clubs. There is pleasure in being part of something secret and underground *and* there is pleasure in mainstreaming a cause. It bears repeating, white nationalism is a social movement that offers a variety of different, often pleasurable access points, whose affective binding agent is their fantasy of “who is American” (“white”) and what they want America to look like (a “white only” nation-state).¹¹

If we understand white nationalism as a social movement, we have to take seriously the depth and breadth of its cultural organizing. Cultural organizing creates integral spaces (physical, virtual, imaginary) where these social relationships are forged and strengthened through affective, emotional, and often pleasurable experiences that develop formative and politicizing connections and identities. White nationalists may also rely on fear and hate to forge solidarities and identities, sometimes simultaneously or interchangeably with pleasure. So, while fear and hate are the more obvious feelings white nationalists mobilize through, it would be a mistake not to also attend to the powerful role cultural organizing and pleasure play in recruiting, mainstreaming, and

strengthening their efforts. We cannot forget that they too are intent on making their movement irresistible.

Their cultural organizing may or may not be obviously white nationalist, but will attend to the pleasures of connection, relationships, community building, belonging and family. People do not need to be hardcore white nationalists, believe in the rhetoric, or know all of the racist scientific “facts,” to be affected and feel connected to the larger white nationalist social movement. Sometimes, ideology follows affect where affected bodies become conduits to eventually “thinking” like a white nationalist.

It can be easy to dismiss fascist sewing circles, bowling parties, or dinner clubs. But these activities affectively move and politicize bodies in powerful ways that we must take seriously, as they are the relational and cultural glue for a dangerous and violent movement. We do this by recognizing and disrupting the various access points white nationalists mobilize in and through, by generating our own binding agents and emotive networks, and by centering fun and pleasure in our movement work. As long-time organizer and visionary Scot Nakagawa put it: “don’t let the haters steal your joy.”¹² Pleasure is the lifeline that sustains our resistances and makes our dreams possible. An anti-fascist politics of pleasure, then, refuses all iterations of white nationalist organizing in no uncertain terms, fiercely commits to our pleasure and joy, and more generally strengthens our abilities to fight white nationalism by making our organizing cultures irresistible, contagious, expansive, and generative. All of these aspects are vital to dreaming anti-fascist futures.

“[P]leasure evokes change—perhaps more than shame. More precisely, where shame makes us freeze and try to get really small and invisible, pleasure invites us to move, to open, to grow.”¹³

—adrienne maree brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*

In the current political moment, pleasure can be dismissed as naive, indulgent, escapist, frivolous, and not “the real work.” It can be something to be suspicious of and tends to be associated with being compromised and/or undedicated. Pleasure, and the bodies that feel it, are then seen as things to manage, discipline, and master, and are often positioned as the opposite of political agency. For years, our motto and central organizing practice has been, “Have Fun! Fight Fascism!” And yet, though we work in a wide range of spaces with varied communities, organizations, and institutions, pushback on “fun” as critical to fighting fascism has been a recurring concern. To be clear, *If You Don’t They Will* in no way takes any white nationalist activity lightly. What we are committed to is an anti-fascist politics of pleasure that recognizes the importance of play, fun, humor, art, snark, and embodied practices that are essential to interrupting numbing, fear, and freezing. Anti-fascist worldbuilding requires not only our NOs, or what we are resisting, smashing, and contesting, but also requires a vision of our YESes—the kinds of relationships, communities, neighborhoods, workplaces, and family structures that we actually want to live and engage in. We need pleasure in order to develop creative, fierce and resilient NOs *and* YESes.

Additionally, there is often a longing for a “quick fix” or a “checklist” of guaranteed effective strategies for countering white nationalism. Our anti-fascist politics of pleasure speaks back to and reorients away from both of these related tensions. An anti-fascist politics of pleasure is a *sensibility*. It is not a comprehensive list nor will it provide examples of specific tactics that guarantee immediate success, where pleasure then happens only after “the work.” It is an embodied political imaginary, a way of relating to the world and to each other; a mode of being curious, and a commitment to developing emotive relationships to past, present, and future anti-fascist struggles. An anti-fascist politics of pleasure resists the notion that “we can have fun after we win.” The reality is, we won’t win (and we aren’t winning) without pleasure.

It is through the senses that people are affected, politicized, and moved to do more traditionally recognized modes of political labor. To be clear, we are not just talking about a single pleasurable event or experience. Our idea of pleasure isn’t about always feeling good, being uncritically optimistic, or giving up our struggles against violence and oppression.

Pleasure is about feeling more, in the present moment, while also powerfully connecting to the past and the future. Pleasure is expansive, allowing bodies to feel a wider range of emotions: from shame, bitterness, jealousy, and insecurity to joy, contentment, connection, and peacefulness. We need pleasure to sustain and connect us, for as adrienne maree brown writes in *Emergent Strategy*, “There is pleasure in community and interdependence. It feels good together.”¹⁴

Pleasure is key to being fully present in the here and now, *and* is vital for dreaming and building anti-fascist futures. While we counter white nationalists’ affective (pleasure) organizing, we need to be growing our own. We are, in very critical ways, fighting for pleasure.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Cristien Storm and Kate Boyd are two Seattle-based white anti-racist cultural organizers and co-founders of If You Don’t They Will, a long-time collaboration that provides creative and concrete tools for countering white nationalism through a cultural lens. This includes creating spaces to generate visions, hopes, desires, and dreams for the kinds of worlds we want to live in.

ENDNOTES

1. Aamer Rahman, “Is it really OK to punch Nazis?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKICKcMU3MU>
2. Interview with Alicia Garza. *United Shades of America with W. Kamau Bell*, Episode 2 Season 4, “Not All White People” on CNN (May 5, 2019). <https://www.cnn.com/shows/united-shades-of-america>.
3. “Histories of Violence: Affect, Power, Violence--The Political is Not Personal. Brad Evans Interviews Brian Massumi.” *Los Angeles Review of Books* (November 13, 2017). <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/histories-of-violence-affect-power-violence-the-political-is-not-personal/#/>

[org/article/histories-of-violence-affect-power-violence-the-political-is-not-personal/#/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKICKcMU3MU)

4. Many have written about how Grace Lee Boggs often began meetings with, “What time is it on the clock of the world?” emphasizing the necessity of ongoing critical reflection in our movement work, by integrating practices of interconnected self-consciousness. Scot Nakagawa and Tarso Ramos ask “what time is it?” in their important essay, “What Time Is It? Why We Can’t Ignore the Momentum of the Right.” *Political Research Associates* (July 14, 2016). <https://www.politicalresearch.org/2016/07/14/what-time-is-it-why-we-cant-ignore-the-momentum-of-the-right/>
5. “Histories of Violence: Affect, Power, Violence--The Political is Not Personal. Brad Evans Interviews Brian Massumi.” *Los Angeles Review of Books* (November 13, 2017). <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/histories-of-violence-affect-power-violence-the-political-is-not-personal/#/>
6. “The goal of white nationalism is not to spread hate but to seize the State using bigotry to build mass movements and to build power and fear.” Eric K. Ward, Executive Director of Western States Center, quoted from his talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LODRhNDUEG8>
7. Sara Ahmed, “Happy Objects,” *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 50.
8. If You Don’t They Will often encounters the (ineffective and at times condescending) strategy of “changing their individual hearts and minds,” which ignores and minimizes the reality that white nationalists are dedicated activists committed to their cause and social movement (just like we are). As Cristien Storm often says in our workshops: “They couldn’t ever change my mind or make me believe in white supremacy; why would we think we could change their minds? It is not always about facts and data, it’s emotional.”
9. Emily Gorcenski, *Documenting Hate: Charlottesville. Frontlines*, PBS Propublica Documentary, August 7, 2018.
10. Anti-Semitism is a binding agent between the wide range of disparate white nationalist groups, in which Jews are the perceived “common enemy” responsible for manipulating the policies, social movements, and communities that supposedly victimize white nationalists. For more see Eric Ward’s “Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism,” <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/06/29/skin-in-the-game-how-antisemitism-animates-white-nationalism/> and Scot Nakagawa’s “Antisemitism is Racism,” <https://www.racefiles.com/2019/01/13/antisemitism-is-racism/>
11. As a white identity politics movement, white nationalists are working to continually redefine “whiteness” in contemporary contexts; anti-fascist and anti-racist organizers need to understand “whiteness” as a contested category and recognize the inextricable ways white supremacy is embedded in and gives meaning through other categories of social difference, including gender, sexuality, class, and religion. We need to contest “whiteness” in order to smash it.
12. Scot Nakagawa, “Three people in the last week have complained about being harassed after pissing off potentially violent right wingers [...] Here’s how I’ve made a joyful life in spite of the haters...” Facebook, January 10, 2019.
13. adrienne maree brown, “Introduction,” in *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (Oakland: AK Press, 2017), 21. As this piece goes into its final stages of revision, we eagerly await adrienne maree brown’s new book, *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*.
14. brown, 22.



RADICAL SOLIDARITY IN THE FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE

SYDNEY GHAZARIAN

RIGHT NOW, SHIT IS REALLY bad. In October 2018, an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report revealed that the world was on track for catastrophic global warming in the near term, which led to a rallying cry of “12 years to save the planet.” In early May 2019, a summary report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) affirmed that one million species are at risk of extinction, many within decades. Meanwhile, insect populations are collapsing, the political Right is rising, glaciers are melting, refugees are drowning, disease outbreaks are surging, global powers are violently clashing, the air is becoming unbreathable, and increasingly intense and frequent disasters continue to devastate communities, as business laments the fiscal costs.

The truth is, I’m scared. I’m really scared, and oftentimes I feel really alone. I feel overwhelmed by everything that’s happening because I know I can’t overcome it by myself. But I know I’m not alone in feeling lonely at times, because capitalism breeds alienation. Capitalism needs us to compete with each other, to maintain hierarchies in our workplaces and amid our differences in society. It

« Image by Pete Railand | Justseeds.org

does this in order to perpetuate the exploitation of people for their labor, and the Earth for its resources, so the production-machine can keep driving more and more wealth into the pockets of the ruling class.

Capitalism created a social order that depends on all of us acting in our so-called self-interest by climbing on the backs of others and pushing our way to the top. But there is no top: there's no light at the end of the tunnel or salvation in this exploitative social order. The truth is that this social order, built through domination and exploitation of nature and each other, won't stop growing until it's consumed and destroyed the entire planet, and us along with it.

Climate change, like social alienation, was born of the capitalist system that orders our lives. The foundation of this social order, upon which we are told to create our dreams of individual success, is the same one that underlies polluted oceans, the increasingly deforested Amazon, poverty, and —ultimately—violence. The result of being trapped in this violent system is something we all experience, even while we each feel unique and alone in our suffering.

Humanity is facing extreme peril, but there are ways out of this delusional dead-end. There is a mode of analysis and action that offers some hope: ecosocialism. Ecosocialism is a political ideology that often serves as an umbrella term for social ecology and ecologically-oriented strains of socialism and anarchism. From an ecosocialist perspective, we can understand that social injustice, economic inequity, and ecological devastation are interconnected forms of violence rooted in capitalism. We can also understand that the struggle for economic survival is a shared struggle against the very same system implicated in the demise of humanity. The capitalist system that makes us alienated and economically desperate also causes ecological devastation and catastrophic climate change.

For too long, we on the Left have organized for civil rights, housing, and health care in separate single issue campaigns with limited successes that haven't gotten us anywhere, or at least not fast enough. Through shared struggles against a common enemy, we can build the revolutionary mass movement necessary to transform the world into one with a future everyone can belong to, with the urgency required for anyone to have a future at all. This is why a core tenet of ecosocialist organizing is radical solidarity.

In the words of Angela Davis, “radical simply means ‘grasping things at the root.’”¹ Solidarity is the unity that binds people together as one. Radical solidarity is recognizing that your struggle is my struggle, which is ultimately a shared struggle for survival against capitalism. Radical solidarity is a commitment to decentering our personal interests and pet issues in favor of a broader vision, fought for the collective good.

We can recognize the irony of saying that we need to look beyond our pet issues when ecological organizers are constantly talking about the glaciers melting and the sky falling. But climate change and ecological destruction are not a single issue: they encompass all issues. In a destabilized climate, it's vulnerable peoples who will suffer most. Yet, as the chiming of the climate doomsday clock grows more imminent, the fight to preserve the human species through rapid decarbonization will overshadow

the many solitary struggles for justice in various communities and contexts. However, prioritizing climate change above these various struggles would be a mistake. As long as capitalism persists, so will exploitation, to the detriment of a stable, hospitable climate, and our ability to continue as a species. A first step toward radical solidarity is integrating climate organizing, and an understanding of how climate change affects everything else, into all of our fights.

Progressive and leftist groups have begun to wake up to this reality. For instance, the Ecosocialist Working Group of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) made a small step toward enacting this vision of radical solidarity during the summer of 2018. We (the members of the group) worked to mobilize climate organizations to

“THIS SOCIAL ORDER, BUILT THROUGH DOMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF NATURE AND EACH OTHER, WON'T STOP GROWING UNTIL IT'S CONSUMED AND DESTROYED THE ENTIRE PLANET, AND US ALONG WITH IT.”

participate in DSA's national Week of Action to Abolish ICE, or US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which targets, harasses, kidnaps, and deports immigrants and refugees. Our statement to mobilize the climate community to Abolish ICE in support of immigrant justice was endorsed by many, including System Change Not Climate Change, Naomi Klein, and the Sunrise Movement. Organizations like 350.org mobilized members to attend Abolish ICE rallies seemingly overnight. This helped expand the dialogue in climate activism circles to consider the millions of climate refugees that will be displaced over the coming years. However, not all climate organizations favored this broad vision. Some climate organizations didn't sign on, primarily because they didn't want to endorse something that didn't prioritize zero emissions above all else. This type of narrow focus was a mistake.

The Department of Homeland Security, which houses ICE, is not only weaponized against immigrants at the border, but also against Indigenous and environmental activists and water protectors protesting the construction of fossil fuel infrastructure driving the demise of a hospitable climate. Zero emissions is not a separate fight from abolishing institutional violence, especially when those institutions are being weaponized against the very people fighting for that same goal. In fact, these institutions have been a primary weapon against activists across social justice movements for a long time.

When we choose to focus on one issue while ignoring state-sponsored violence against different groups, we're permitting the continued growth of a racist, violent machine that will later be weaponized against all of us. Radical solidarity is not only about bridging movements: it is also about unifying those movements to fight the institutions and forces threatening our collective survival.

A core aspect of fighting institutional forces that threaten our survival is fighting for public and democratic control of resources we all depend on. Water, food, energy, housing, and transportation systems established under capitalism are controlled by a select group of individuals and exist solely for the pursuit of short-term gain, to the detriment of everyone who relies on them. These individuals with outsized influence have no “rational” reason to maximize the health and safety of the millions who rely

on their business. In fact, capitalist logic points them in the total opposite direction: maximizing profit at the expense of all of us.

Radical solidarity also involves ensuring that we do not allow the exploiters to control the process of transitioning to a different future. Take developing renewable energy, for example, which many climate organizations are rightfully fighting for. The reason this transition has yet to happen—despite overwhelming public support—is because corporations have refused to change their ways with any sort of urgency. After

“RADICAL SOLIDARITY IS A COMMITMENT TO DECENTERING OUR PERSONAL INTERESTS AND PET ISSUES IN FAVOR OF A BROADER VISION, FOUGHT FOR THE COLLECTIVE GOOD”.

all, why should they? Their function is to maximize profit, not to ensure that society functions better.

Simply making corporate entities public doesn't necessarily change this equation either. Take utility companies, which are often public but are

largely undemocratic. In October last year, Vox revealed that utility companies had hired a PR firm to explore messaging aimed at convincing the public to accept a slower transition to renewable energy than they're demanding. Why? Because one hundred percent renewables “does not make practical sense.”²

It's clear that a push for renewable energy, without consideration of how unequal decision-making power created our current circumstances, has fallen short. Ecosocialists must fight to transition to renewable energy while simultaneously demanding a transition to direct control over energy systems by the people who depend on them. We cannot have one without the other. And the logic of democratizing control must not be limited to energy production; democratic principles must be foundational in every institution, in every sector.

But radical solidarity is more than unifying our fight to take collective control of the means of production; we ultimately need to transform the production process if we want to live. Right now, we currently consume the equivalent of what it should take two Earths to provide. This level of production is made possible by the fuel emissions currently suffocating us, but foregoing fossil fuels would still require the continued devastation of ecosystems. The fact is that the material luxuries many enjoy came from somewhere, and that somewhere is someone else's home, often in poor countries. First world consumption in places like Western Europe and the US is driven by the continued pillaging of other communities in poor countries, which in turn is driving the system that forces migrants from their homes, and all of us toward climate collapse. Moving forward, radical solidarity means opposing power that oppresses or exploits anyone, anywhere, even when disobeying that power requires personal sacrifice of us.

In the end, it's not just dictation by the ruling class that is driving us toward apocalypse; it's also our participation in the existing social order. All of our single-issue campaigns and quests to alter institutionalized power are ultimately a fight for survival against the status quo, because the status quo is killing us, and will kill us in the near-term, if we do not rebel.

Yes, this will require tremendous sacrifice, and tremendous risk. Disobeying the

existing social order comes with terrifying possibilities, including death. But if we continue ambling toward the apocalypse by upholding the existing social order, then death is certain.

We live in scary times and it's okay to be scared, but we also need to be brave. Ultimately, a commitment to radical solidarity requires being brave enough to step out of our temporary comfort toward seizing this moment to transform the future on behalf of the collective good, because it might be the last chance anyone ever gets. But if we are brave enough to put the interests of the collective good above our own, we won't have to do it by ourselves.

If I leave you with one thought, let it be that you are not alone in this fight. People all over the world are struggling against hegemonic power in order to survive. If we are brave enough to step out of our isolation and self-interest, we can step into a united struggle for a future we all belong to. This could be a future without borders or bosses, pipelines or prisons. This could be a future where we aren't living paycheck to paycheck; where everyone's needs are met and we collectively make the decisions that take care of the earth and each other. We live in terrifying times, but our fight for the future should not just be a fight against death, but a fight for everyone to truly live. Through a commitment to radical solidarity, that future could be ours.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sydney Ghazarian is a co-founder and organizer with the Democratic Socialists of America Ecosocialist Working Group. This piece was developed out of a talk delivered at the “Capitalism is Killing Us: Ecosocialist Solutions to a Warming World” forum held on November 18, 2018, in Los Angeles, CA.

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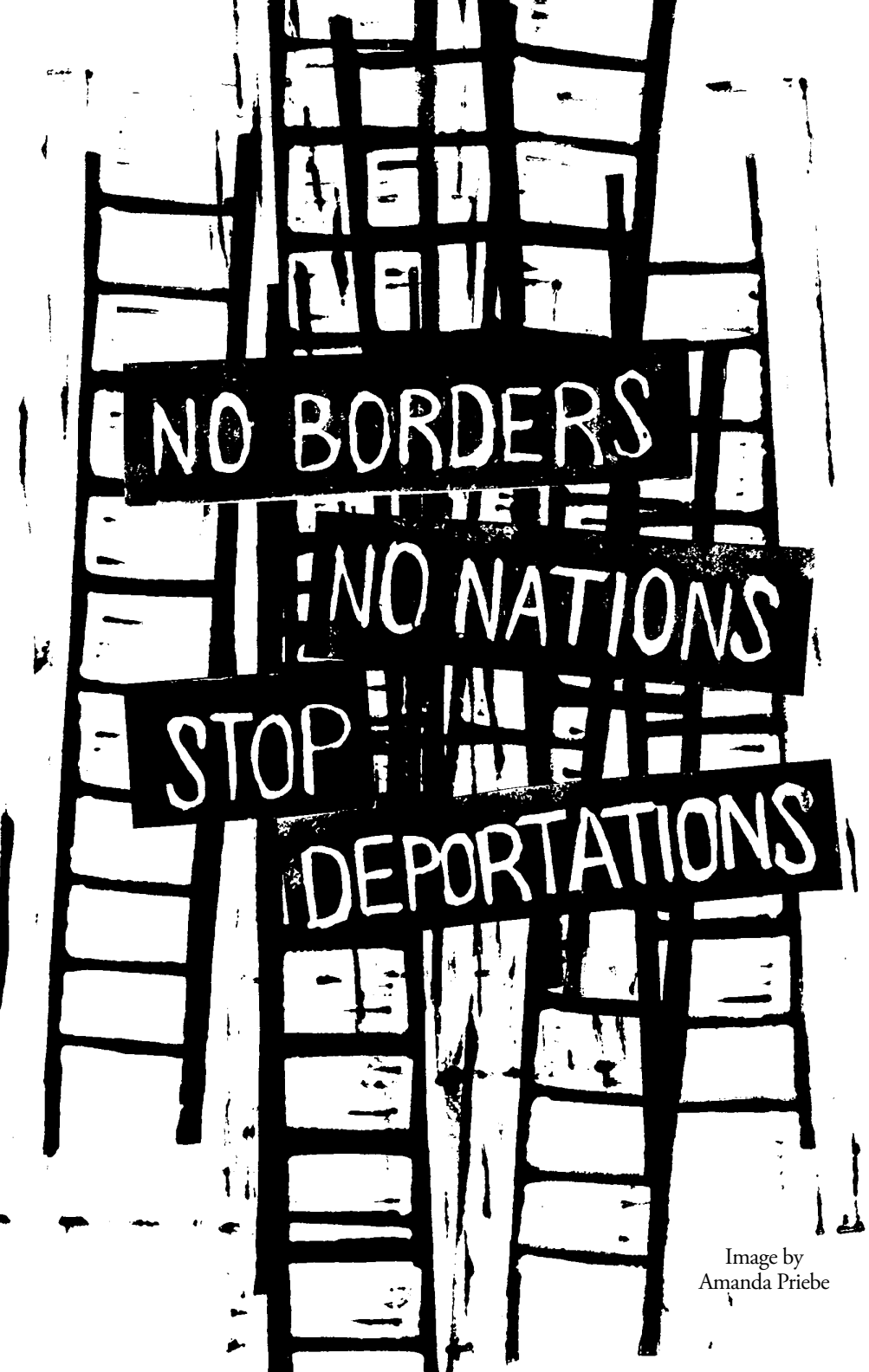


Image by
Amanda Priebe

AND THEN (A POEM)

JEREMY STEWART

the wish, the prayer flying
our tattered banner
above the outpost where we situated our love
the fearful, fragile hope we defend
with miles of barbed wire, rifles, tears

we were forced to surrender
our pacifism at knifepoint
when we imagined we heard our children scream

our violence is disciplined
by weathervane and compass
the hand that parts the sea

banner of black, banner of red and gold
at dawn
day rises over our lake
we refuse annihilation
and then and then
it's up to us



Image by Christopher Cardinale | Justseeds.org

DESTITUTE TIMES AND REBELLIOUS IMAGINATIONS

“The world we want is one where everyone fits. The world we want is one where many worlds fit.”

“En el mundo que queremos nosotros caben todos. El mundo que queremos es uno donde quepan muchos mundos.”

— *Fourth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle*
Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN)
January 1, 1996

TO THOSE WHO FIGHT...
YOU DO NOT
FIGHT ALONE:
THE WORK OF IMAGINA-
TION IN ANTI-BORDER
STRUGGLES, PREFIGU-
RATIVE POLITICS, AND
THE ABOLISH I.C.E.
OCCUPATION

ERFAN MORADI

ON THE FIRST DAY OF 1996, the Zapatistas—the indigenous rebels of Chiapas, who had exactly two years earlier taken up arms against the imposition of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the creep of neoliberalism, and the privatization of communal life—proclaimed that “the flower of the world will not die.”¹ Their declaration takes its name from the Lacandón Jungle, the massive rainforest that stretches across southern Mexico and Guatemala and, like most organic entities, refuses to recognize state formations and national boundaries.

In this statement, Subcomandante Marcos wrote: “*el mundo que queremos es uno donde quepan muchos mundos*”: the world we want is one where many worlds fit. Even in the space of militant resistance, the Zapatistas demand

diversity—emancipation arrives through an embrace of multiplicity. No claim is being made to a future without difference for it is heterogeneity which cultivates inventiveness. Instead, an aspiration is asserted for a world in which difference is not laden with power and inequity, a future in which the powerful cease to deny “space for anyone but themselves and their servants.” There needs to be space for everyone’s experience.

The Zapatistas move beyond traditional Western liberal ideas of justice to what might be called an *insurgent universalism*, which affirms the agency of subjugated people who fight from specific conditions, but who do so for the freedom of everyone.² This kind of intersectional universalism can be seen as an emancipatory and abolitionist project.³

Multiple meanings emerge in the Zapatistas’ insurgent statement. *Querer*, the root of *queremos*, connotes desire, affection, and aspiration as much as it does want. The desire bound up in *querer* leads us on a search for something that is not-yet. We revel in this search, in imagination-in-motion. *Que queremos*—what we want—is not just a demand, but also a daring act of imagination.⁴ This double reading of “want” as “imagine” moves us to think about the future in a more open way: the plural futures we imagine offer many escapes from the austerity and alienation of the present. Destitute times call for a diversity of tactics; rebellious imaginaries offer a wealth of departures.

“Possibility is not one,” Franco Berardi writes, “it is always plural.”⁵ A multitude of futures exist, always already inscribed in the present as an “immanence of possibilities” fluctuating between realms of realization. Every moment is, at the same time, a loss of nonactualized potential. Loss can be mournful, but it can also be generative.

If alternate futures emanate as a sort of ever-present specter, who is responsible for its actualization? Berardi answers clearly: “Us.”⁶ He reminds us of the “humiliated people” everywhere who are dispossessed by capitalists, yet because of their dispossession they exhibit the potential for dignity, autonomy, and the horizon of communism—of a world where “richness is for everybody.”

Autonomous forms of organizing seize potentialities, articulating imagination into material reality. Praxis is embodied in revolt, receiving fullness in moments of self-governance. Recognition of the future as already-here mobilizes a prefigurative mode of politics. That is to say, the future we desire is within reach.

As an abstraction, freedom feels unfamiliar. It possesses a bigness, an out-there-ness that feels out of reach from the here, the present. But when people come together to decide for themselves how to live life and care for one another—whether it means throwing down in the streets against the police, building barricades and occupations in public squares, defending against evictions and doing court support, or organizing community spaces and feeding each other—new powerful bonds based in struggle emerge.

In other words, “friendship is the root of freedom.”⁷ It is what makes freedom flow into tangible existence. As Byung-Chul Han writes:

Originally, being free meant being among friends. ‘Freedom’ and ‘friendship’ have the same root in Indo-European languages. Fundamentally, *freedom signifies a relationship*. A real feeling of freedom occurs only in a fruitful relationship—when

being with others brings happiness. But today’s neoliberal regime leads to utter isolation; as such, it does not really free us at all.⁸

In contrast to capitalist discourses of independence, recognizing one’s inseparability from others is not a sign of weakness. Rather, plenitude and emancipation are possible only when we positively affirm our ties to community. Radical imagination seizes richness, what Kristin Ross calls “communal luxury.”⁹ What use do we have for wealth if it does not belong to everyone?

Abolitionist calls for the end of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) exploded in the summer of 2018, blossoming joyfully across the country. Thousands of ordinary people witness to the violence of the state were driven to action, pouring into the streets. Much like the morning glories which bloom in the summer months, so too did a wave of occupations and street protests. In at least ten cities in the US, encampments were established outside of ICE offices and held for days to weeks.

“AUTONOMOUS FORMS OF ORGANIZING SEIZE POTENTIALITIES, ARTICULATING IMAGINATION INTO MATERIAL REALITY.”

What began in many places as symbolic, if disruptive, protests against the cruelty of border imperialism¹⁰ and the criminalization of migration, rapidly transformed into an open affront against all forms of colonialist and nationalist violence, and against capitalism and the nation-state as a whole. Protesters creatively engaged with worlds not-yet-ours, with worlds in-the-making.

The occupation as a type of “autonomous zone” offers a rich site of investigation. They are established with full awareness that the occupation will not last forever. Its calls are never simply situated within siloed-off struggles but instead lay claim to the whole horizon. The Invisible Committee, an anonymous collective of insurrectionary anarchists, attests to this emancipatory spirit:

Contemporary communes don’t claim any access to, or aspire to the management of any ‘commons.’ They immediately organize a shared form of life—that is, they develop a *common relationship* with what cannot be appropriate, beginning with the world. ... Every moment, however, every genuine encounter, every episode of revolt, every strike, every occupation, is a breach opened up in the self-evidence of *that life* [a life of atomized existence], attesting that a *shared* life is possible, desirable, potentially rich and joyful.¹¹

In a world that seems desperate to isolate us from one another, the work of imagination is central to envisioning and constructing alternative forms of life, and in cultivating a space for inventive discovery.

When the Abolish ICE San Francisco camp came together in early July

2018, two young organizers of color, Imri Rivas and Zoé Samudzi, spoke alongside Cat Brooks in a press conference. Rivas invoked a crucial question when responding to reporters: “What would society, if borderless, look like? ... What if we create areas of mutual aid, where people can come together and build communities?”¹²

Their questions signified a form of willful speculation which looks to the prospect of worlds to be imagined and created. This prospect is also a process. Autonomy is not

**“THE FORMATION OF NEW
WORLDS AND WAYS OF LIFE IS A
CREATIVE, EXPERIMENTAL, AND
JOYFUL PROCESS. NO BLUEPRINT
WILL CHART OUR EMANCIPATION.”**

a fixed idea but a mode of becoming which is always in motion. It materializes through affinity, care, and intimacy.

Turning to the idea of constellations, Jackie Wang articulates “the need for both social imagination [and] material acts.”¹³

When people converge to support one another and create new forms of life together, affinity “becomes not just a matter of shared personal political beliefs, but the entwinement of our everyday lives.” Constellations give meaning to our web of relations. In this way, Wang resonates with Nick Montgomery and Carla Bergman, who write:

When people find themselves genuinely supported and cared for, they are able to extend this to others in ways that seemed impossible or terrifying before. When people find their bellies filled and their minds sharpened among communal kitchens and libraries, hatred for capitalist ways of life grows amid belonging and connection. When someone receives comfort and support from friends, they find themselves willing to confront the abuse they have been facing. When people develop or recover a connection to the places where they live, they may find themselves standing in front of bulldozers to protect that place. When people begin to meet their everyday needs through neighborhood assemblies and mutual aid, all of a sudden they are willing to fight the police, and the fight deepens bonds of trust and solidarity. Joy can be contagious and dangerous.¹⁴

The formation of new worlds and ways of life is a creative, experimental, and joyful process. No blueprint will chart our emancipation. Joyfulness does not preclude grief, mourning, or anger; rather, it is constituted by a capacity to hold these feelings together with collective catharsis and community-building. As my friend Felix once told me: complexity does not entail negation. Rather, it is an embrace of vibrancy, flux, and difference. Thus, the creation of the commune and occupation invokes our imagination in a way that finds likeness with what Donna Haraway calls “speculative fabulation,” an open and fluid form of storytelling that centers imaginative fable-making and joyful world-making. It is precisely the kind of thinking that Imri Rivas deployed. Thinking with storytelling pushes us to ask: what stories will we write, and what worlds can we enact? what characters inhabit our narratives? can the streets be the site of our next fables?

**NO ONE IS ILLEGAL ON STOLEN LAND:
A BRIEF INTERLUDE ON SOLIDARITY AGAINST BORDER IMPERIALISM**

*“in spring we’re reborn / just as the buds do blossom / write history not by / ink and pen
but by the / stones we hurl at / those who wish to bind us / break up the pavement / find
what lies beneath it” —La Bella, 2016*

From Palestine’s annual Great March of Return to the Central American migrant caravans to the Abolish ICE occupations, people around the world are rising up against systems of colonial borders.

Since late in 2018, a self-organized collective of several thousand Central American migrants have been traveling north towards the Mexico-US border.¹⁵ Though these are certainly not the first such caravans, they have been the most visible in recent memory. To borrow from the poet Antonio Machado, the caravan quite literally makes the way by walking; they embody the “purposeful will of the people” to imagine themselves as actors and authors of their own stories, as Peter Hallward writes.¹⁶

The mass exodus of migrants reminds us that strength is to be found in numbers and solidarity in mobilization. It is an experiment of self-governance in motion. The migrants speak for themselves. They articulate their demands not just through collective exodus, but also through makeshift general assemblies, organized crews for self-defense, and the creation of temporary communities along the way. An observer recounts a nightly assembly organized by members of the caravan:

For 90 minutes, the members of the caravan paid close attention to the decisions facing them in the coming days and to the words of local and national organizations that had come to support them. Members of the caravan took the stage to explain why they nominated themselves to represent the group in negotiations with Mexican authorities. Trans women in the caravan took the mic to demand respect from the rest of the group. ... The assembly created a space for the interests of working class, indigenous and migrant organizations to come together.¹⁷

In Juchitan, Oaxaca, a local supporter of the caravan proclaimed to migrants, “You have been capable of facing down the world’s borders ... proving that no one is illegal.”

In late November 2018, the caravan reached the San Ysidro checkpoint in Tijuana, where they were met by police decked in military gear who lobbed tear gas across fences. It is important for those of us on this side of the colonial border to remember our responsibility to also reject its authority. Waves of support are slowly making their way south with people offering aid, but the future remains to be seen.

Activists have worked for years to draw out the transnational relationships forged under US imperialism. Tear gas offers a nexus for such an exploration. When chemical weapons like tear gas, manufactured in the US, are used in both Palestine and on the streets of the US, solidarity is suddenly made visceral and embodied—we are literally connected by the air we breathe, and the gas.¹⁸ For people rising up against police

violence in many places you can hear the chant, “From Ferguson to Gaza, long live the intifada.” In the midst of the Ferguson, Missouri uprisings following the police murder of Michael Brown in August 2014, many Palestinians proclaimed, “The empire will fall from within.”¹⁹

Palestinians at the time were experiencing a massive military siege themselves. The shared experiences of state violence ties protesters on the streets of the US to the migrants at the border also experiencing state violence and to those in Gaza and the West Bank. This is attested to in a recent and heartwarming message of solidarity from the caravan which read, “In solidarity with Gaza—together we will tear down these walls.”²⁰ The dispossessed recognize each other.

**THE OCCUPATION IS GONE BUT IT LIVES FOREVER:
ABOLISH ICE SAN FRANCISCO AND ITS AFTERMATH**

“All we ever wanted was everything” —Bauhaus, 1982

Borders foreclose the horizon of possibility. Territorial boundaries seek to dismember the organic flows, continuities, and assemblages which constitute our world(s). Pieces of the earth are held in suffocating isolation from each other; such divisions are reproduced and inscribed onto our bodies, manufacturing us as subjects.

But Empire is not built on *terra firma*: it is not inevitable, nor is it eternal. It is bound to collapse, and it is our responsibility to accelerate its demise. So, when the Abolish ICE occupation converged in San Francisco, our demands were quite simple. When news reporters would ask us, “What will it take for you to leave?” we would respond resolutely: only the immediate and total destruction of the border.

Plenitude is found in community, through learning from and living fruitfully with others. The nights I spent at the San Francisco occupation, among friends and strangers who quickly became friends, were the most liberated that I have ever felt. Recalling Han’s elaboration on friendship and Marx, “being free means nothing more than self-realization with others.”²¹

The occupation sprang from a protest that took place in the wake of several other actions around the Bay. First against the construction of an immigration detention center in Concord, California, then against an existing facility in Richmond, and so on, all driven by an urgency to do something. But this protest felt different. It was born of different aspirations.

On July 2, folks from around the Bay converged at the San Francisco ICE office to celebrate resistance. The banal processional march was replaced with displays of convivial joy alongside collective rage, grief, and commemoration. Music, slam poetry, and open mic sessions filled the air, leading to an anonymous crew constructing a barbed wire fence to block the doorway, all culminating in the formation of a massive human wall of demonstrators. Arm-in-arm, several hundred protesters linked together to form a barrier around the building—a literal

embodiment of mass solidarity—effectively sealing it right as employees would be eager to leave work.

Though this mobilization was by and large a peaceful, symbolic one, we were reminded in a training session days before the action of the still-present danger of repression. Power tripping police, irate employees, and alt-right agitators all posed a threat. We—and at that point, “we” was still a set of mostly-strangers who met at the training—practiced screaming in each other’s faces and pulling apart locked arms to learn to sit with discomfort and tension.

But what drives people to knowingly embrace such vulnerability? To put one’s body on the line? Meditating on this, Judith Butler writes,

[A]ll public assembly is haunted by the police and the prison. And every public square is defined in part by the population that could not possibly arrive there; either they are detained at the border, or they have no freedom of movement and assembly, or they are detained or imprisoned. ... Sometimes we walk, or run, knowingly in the direction of prison because it is the only way to *expose illegitimate constraints on public assembly and political expression*.²²

That is to say, vulnerability is generative. It can become the very medium through which we enact our politics. The living blockade exposes the injunctions imposed on us by imperialism and xenophobia.

**“BUT EMPIRE IS NOT BUILT ON
TERRA FIRMA: IT IS NOT INEVITABLE,
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TO ACCELERATE ITS DEMISE.”**

As the demonstration wound down in the evening, tents were conspicuously deployed and the call for an occupation went out. San Francisco had thrown in its lot with the seven other cities who had, at that point, joined the wave of occupations.

By laying claim to the city space, a narrow but crucial corridor on Washington Street nestled between Battery and Sansome, protestors struck at the heart of the anti-immigration apparatus in the Bay Area. The encampment not only made visible the exclusionary violence of borders—in other words, acknowledged those who could not be present—but also disrupted the logistical space of flow, liberating public space for public good. The age of logistics, ushered in by an ever-expanding cybernetic network of surveillance, prioritizes the logic of orderly flow above all. In opposition to the so-called disorderly masses of migrants and protesters alike, the operation of agencies like ICE depend on regulated circulation.

But we flourish in this realm of chaos. Disruption, the embrace of ungovernability, is a “profoundly political tactic.”²³ The commune, protest, and riot all take to the street to subvert this perspective logic of order, developing a radically different conception of infrastructural space.

A vision and demand for fruitful life emerged. A zone of mutual aid blossomed. Folks quickly and collectively organized a kitchen, a tent for medical supplies, and sleeping spaces for people to join on a whim; over the next few days, a table for DJ

equipment was set up, a space for general assemblies, barricades, even an outdoor toilet. Across political tendencies and social difference, a counter-logistics network flourished to sustain the camp.

Though the encampment was localized to a city block, it laid claim to the whole horizon, a whole new world, stitching together a novel geography of liberation. A sense of solidarity stretched out far beyond just San Francisco and even the network of occupations, leaping border fences and prison walls alike. “Our struggles are not separate,” the National Prison Strike committee reminded us; border abolition *is* prison abolition.²⁴ On July 5, when we got word that anonymous comrades from Chile published a statement titled “Solidarity to the #ICEbreakers,” a handful of us gathered to read it aloud, taking turns speaking into the microphone:

... The only way to ensure our survival is to secure the conditions to meet our needs autonomously.

That may mean crossing a border without a government's permission.

This is not a neoliberal call for transnational flows against the power of the state.

Currently capitalism is only sustained by the political barriers that divide us.

This is a war cry from our precaritized bodies.

The only actions that can insure our survival are those that break the division between citizen and noncitizen, the barrier of paternalism and exclusion...

This could mean barricading the entrance to an ICE facility, blocking a deportation bus, or hiding undocumented immigrants from the police instead of pretending that the state will protect them...

Above all, this means building the infrastructure for our shared survival...

*On either side of a border, whoever they vote for, we are all illegal.*²⁵

Some of us snapped, others clapped, all cheerful for our new friends in Chile. Together we felt powerful. The occupation enabled us to inventively reach across space. From its formation, Abolish ICE contained already something more than just a set of demands. It offered a way of relating to one another in opposition to alienation. It embodied the prospect of an insurgent universality: we fight here because we do not fight alone.

The building that houses the ICE offices towers hauntingly overhead, its austere and monolithic exterior dominating the space around. Its nonhuman scale intends to make people feel infinitely small, as though bowing down to the power of state bureaucracy. Yet the occupation rejected this imperative. We made ourselves larger than life itself, our presence a burden, a blister, a thorn—ugly, unavoidable, and so beautiful.

An unregulated rhythm of life pervaded through the camp: a sort of queer temporality liberated from the capitalist mandate for permanent productivity. It was unlike anything I had ever felt before. The circumstances that drove us to occupy this space were quite urgent, yes, but our presence there felt truly free. Some folks participated in workshops, others chose to work in the kitchen or in self-organized security teams, some simply read alone. Others built gardens, while still others built barricades. Pleasure and duty were made one; the

occupation was itself an “occasion for celebration.”²⁶ We watched the sun rise with glee as office workers hurried to work. When the sun set, we partied into the night. I danced until 2 a.m. during my first night at the camp. I learned the meaning of bliss.

The resonant beats of four-to-the-floor music echoed through otherwise empty streets, filling it—and us—with euphoric energy, expanding the already porous boundaries of the encampment outward. The movement of dancing bodies in conjunction to music rejected capitalist time for something different, for unrestricted mobility. The dance floor became a space of possibility, cultivating “collective intimacy that breaks with the atomized existence of passive consumption.”²⁷ We explored novel ways of relating to ourselves, others and the space around us.

But how does one choose to dance when your space is being constantly surveilled and intruded upon by police? When your body aches from a day of marching and building and laughing? When it is cold out and you're hungry and you have to sleep in a tent? You do it because you're filled with an emancipatory joy, because the people you've just met have become your friends and you are quickly falling in love with everyone around you.

Love and affinity, like vulnerability, thus becomes a productive political force. It enriches life and livelihood. We are reminded of the mythologized memory of the Columbia University students who fifty years ago married each other while occupying their school, and more recently, of two queer migrants from the caravan who married each other in Tijuana.

Grief pushes us to the streets too. After police raided the camp on July 9, ruthlessly arresting thirty-nine occupiers, people turned to vigil instead. They showed up every week to light candles and pray outside the ICE building. Likewise, days after a white supremacist murdered eleven worshippers at a Pittsburgh synagogue in late October, a collective of Jewish leftists held a powerful display of resistance and mourning on the street where the occupation once was. Drawing connections between anti-Semitism and anti-immigrant racism, they urged us to reaffirm our commitment to “safety and solidarity,” and to stand with the most marginalized.²⁸

Trauma, grief, and pain remind us that we are resilient. This is a call for resilience rooted in community.

Not long ago, I sat with a friend whom I had not seen since last July. They had been at the camp the night of the raid. The arrest left them with lingering trauma, but despite this, they also proudly stated that the occupation had given them a new sense of confidence. It had taught them that they were in fact capable of a lot. Militancy can be transformative. The creation of “other forms of life” teaches us to be “more capable, more alive, and more connected to each other.”²⁹

To recall a phrase from May '68 France: *sous les pavés, la plage*: Beneath the pavement, the beach. And the garden. And the occupation. There is an abundance of potentially rich, fulfilling, and thriving possibilities to explore when we strip away the varnish and decay of capitalism. The communist way of life (or rather, lives) not only

socializes labor power, but it also offers a different relationship to power. Richness is for everybody. We are powerful together. Thus, the demand for border abolition is also a demand for worlds not held in isolation, for communal luxury, and for futures worth fighting for. Futures we can begin to grow now.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erfan Moradi is a radical academic and student of History and Geography at UC Berkeley. They are a queer Middle Eastern immigrant living on Chochenyo Ohlone land in California. They spend much of their time dreaming about little-c communism, collective power, and radical imaginaries.

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THE FUTURE, PREWRITTEN? POPULAR VISION AND THE FIGHT AGAINST DISPLACEMENT

ANDREW LEE

FINITE FRONTIERS

NO MATTER HOW WE APPROACH it, we can all see the way the future is shaping up. We are forced to admit it will be shaped by better bandwidth and higher processing speeds. Our phones now speak back; the cars have begun to drive themselves. Tech appears to be the next frontier, ready to shape the future, for better or for worse.

It seems almost inevitable that what happens next will be largely determined by breakthroughs in automation, artificial intelligence, and social media. Given the social impact of the internet on politics, economics, and culture in these first few years of its existence, this isn't unreasonable. But the sense that tech moguls and software engineers are heralding the world of tomorrow is the result of a concerted ideological project, one that happens to benefit some of the wealthiest men on the planet.

While the dreams of Silicon Valley's entrepreneurs pervade our minds, working people in Silicon Valley are going without sleep, their own dreams of stability and flourishing cut short as their labor and impoverishment facilitate tech moguls' fantasies. Fighting for land and freedom in the Silicon Valley has required a struggle not only on the level of power and economics, but imagination as well.

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As we think through the construction and dismantling of tech-funded imaginations about what the future is to hold, we would do well to remember that ideas about the natural direction of human progress, and humanity's inevitable next steps, have proven quite liable to change.

TOMORROWLAND(S)

During the height of the Space Race in the 1960s, visionaries imagined a fittingly Space Age future. Contemporary magazines and television programs showed consumers the robotic kitchens, flying cars, and space colonies they were to see within their lifetimes. In 1968, Pan American Airlines began processing tens of thousands of reservations for the first commercial trip to the moon, estimated to occur around the year 2000.

“FIGHTING FOR LAND AND FREEDOM IN THE SILICON VALLEY HAS REQUIRED A STRUGGLE NOT ONLY ON THE LEVEL OF POWER AND ECONOMICS, BUT IMAGINATION AS WELL.”

These predictions seem absurd from today's perspective, but at the time they weren't limited to comic books and science fiction conventions. David Graeber remembers this time as one in which “all the authoritative voices who told us what the universe was like and why the sky was blue, who explained the periodic table of elements, also assured us that the future was indeed going to involve colonies on other planets, robots, matter transformation devices, and a world much closer to Star Trek than to our own.”¹

These predictions of the future ended up being spectacularly wrong, but wrong for significant reasons. At the time they were popularized, they were fundamentally aligned with the interests of powerful organizations who supported them—specifically, the United States government.

In May 1961, President Kennedy announced the quest to put an American on the moon. The preceding month featured two noteworthy events: first, the Soviet Union's successful placement of the first person in outer space; and secondly, the humiliating failed US invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. In a widely publicized address before Congress, Kennedy announced a heroic national mission, one that also deflected attention away from apparent US military and technological weaknesses. It didn't hurt that this national mission would also spur the virtually indistinguishable field of intercontinental ballistic missile development. As Apollo 8 astronaut George Low said, “After all, the Apollo program was just a battle in the Cold War.”² A Jetson's future and a missile crisis reality were two sides of the same coin.

With the end of the Cold War, technologies such as GPS, originally designed to help submarines launch nuclear weapons, found new life in consumer applications. Since the biggest advancements since then have not been in aerospace but rather information technology, the 1950's predictions of the world of today now look rather quaint. Power has now shifted to tech firms, which have become some of the richest companies ever to exist.

Now, it's Silicon Valley entrepreneurs who imagine the future. But while Raytheon preferred that we talk about spaceships instead of the city-obliterating weapons they actually made, today's big tech companies promote their financial interest in a more explicit way, if couched in the language of “being connected” and “sharing.” The trick is that if this is repeated enough, by enough different voices, it becomes commonsensical to expect that a better connected, more (privately) profitable tomorrow is the only thing that could come next. At that point, anyone inhibiting such a natural progression is, at best, swimming against the tide.

Opinions on the future impacts of social media are diverse: will it create mindless drones or a new architecture for resistance? Will mass automation free us from work and scarcity to construct a “luxury communist” utopia, or will it instead usher in an era of generalized misery? Yet even skeptics and primitivists alike are forced to admit that the danger grows. True, being connected to insidious Russian meddling hasn't been great for Facebook's short-term profits, but it's hard to imagine that things will get bad for the industry when even its critics believe its products are socially powerful enough *to influence elections*. Tech's power isn't denied by the push for disclaimers on political advertisements and duplicitous stories—in fact, it's their cause.

So we are left with a rough contemporary consensus that the fruits of modern information technology, good or bad, will inevitably grow more powerful and more socially important, and that we are inexorably trending to a more automated and connected future, just as the future imagined by the sixties involved progressively larger and grander versions of the Apollo space program.

But just like in the midcentury, predictions are just that, and the adoption of certain imaginations as opposed to others may only be beneficial for a select few. In the sixties, ideas about imminent robot maids and rocket ships had the aura of objective scientific assessment and historical inevitability, though the mythology of a tomorrow among the stars actually brought us closer to Armageddon by allowing nation-states to shore up nuclear weapons delivery systems. But while an imagination of the future that benefitted Cold Warriors and missile designers became universally accepted, there was no such sense of objective historical necessity concerning the Civil Rights movement of the same years. Politically contentious and violently repressed in a country in which millions disagreed with Dr. King's declaration that the “moral arc of the universe” was on the side of oppressed, the Black freedom struggle had none of the feeling of inevitability that American liberals now try to retroactively assign to it. The ability to imagine and write the future, whether accurately or inaccurately, depends a great deal on power, power that Raytheon and the Pentagon possessed and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committees did not. And a great deal of power today is wielded by the multinational tech corporations that call Northern California their home.

Today, Silicon Valley dreams are built on the backs of hundreds of thousands of people living in the actual geographic Silicon Valley, where gentrification and skyrocketing income inequality are said to be the price of constructing the world to come. The most powerful multinational corporations of the modern era have created

an ideological space, in which housing for all seems far more like science fiction than sober predictions of robot servants en route to a private colony on Mars.

WHOSE DREAMS? OUR DREAMS!

For almost an hour on a December evening, we watched as San José City Council struggled to deliberate through a series of repeated disruptions. One group after another rose from their seats in City Hall, shouting that San José is not for sale. One after another, they chanted until the police removed them from the room.

In the preceding hours, public comment before City Council had been split. Developers celebrated the profits they could make if the city sold public land for a new Google campus. Non-profit leaders spoke about their unconditional support for the campus development, while making sure to mention the generous and quite strategic grants Google had given their non-profits in the preceding weeks. In between, residents already living with the displacement and homelessness and violence created by Silicon Valley inequality decried the fact that instead of creating much-needed housing, San José's municipal government was falling over itself to welcome a 20,000-employee tech campus sure to be a nail in the coffin for thousands of people barely making ends meet.

The public comment had been of little interest to the members of council, whose minds were made up long before. So the politicians checked their phones, or joked with each other, or left the dais entirely. Unimpressed by pleas for housing in the rapidly gentrifying city, the council was similarly uninterested in a three-day hunger strike right on their doorstep. Fifty religious leaders and community members had been starving themselves in front of city hall to oppose the land sale. The city made no response, save for attempts to prohibit the unauthorized use of a small canopy for the vigil.

But the council was awake now that wave after wave of people were ruining the city's narrative in front of a small crowd of news journalists. It was an embarrassment for politicians who thought the parade of self-interested NGOs during public comment would herald a smooth start for the development, after which San José would have the recognition—and tax revenue—of neighbors like San Francisco, to the north.

As one last group of community members began to chant, police attempted to evict us, only to find that that we had locked ourselves down to the chairs with metal chains. Unable to stop our chanting, police cleared all of the packed council chambers as they prepared for arrests.

As city council fled their seats and the rest of the audience was forced out of the room, a raucous protest erupted outside the doors until police finally closed the whole building. City council only returned to their seats when City Hall was altogether cleared of potentially unruly spectators. Finally, after midnight, behind locked doors guarded by police, city government spent a few minutes holding forth to a deserted room before voting unanimously to approve the sale of municipal land for Google's mega campus.

WHO ENVISIONS THE FUTURE?

At stake in the fight over the development is the question of who has the right to envision and construct the future of a city, especially when its present condition is so dire. For those unaware of the depths of the crisis, Silicon Valley is synonymous with new money, a utopia of daring innovation and young billionaires. For those living in the actual Valley, without the benefit of a computer science degree from a top-tier university (or a few spare properties to rent out to tenants), the tech economy is capitalist exploitation on steroids.

The so-called “capitol of Silicon Valley,” San José currently operates in part as a labor reserve for the area, with housing prices marginally lower than the epicenters of displacement in Menlo

“THE IDEA THAT TECH COMPANIES ARE CREATING WHAT IS TO COME IS NOT MERELY A PREDICTION, BUT A CONSCIOUS IDEOLOGICAL PROJECT.”

Park, Cupertino, or San Francisco, to the north. Still, it is common to find extended families squeezing into miniscule apartments, if not sleeping on the banks of the Guadalupe River or in the city's parks. The housing problem is so severe that in the past year, 157 unhoused people died in the streets of San José's home county of Santa Clara.³

For many, there has always been the stench of inevitability around the project. The sense that tech is the future and that, at best, we should hope that a few kids from working class communities of color will get to fight for their jobs, is ultimately the imagination of tech firms, promoted for their own benefit. It pushes states to increase STEM and coding programs in schools, increasing the pool of potential employees and pushing down labor costs. It drives tech companies' client bases, for why should consumers resist adopting a new product or service if it's just a taste of what the future holds? And it pushes down the subterranean strivings for stable housing and a real future by the residents of the actual Silicon Valley, the vast majority of whom do not work in tech and have no place in a Silicon Valley-imagined future, regardless of their zip code.

Big tech's dream of the future is enhanced by those local “community” organizations that tout tech's financial support. Tech companies are then growing not only in economic but moral clout, bankrolling every feel-good project they can find—including, perversely, initiatives on housing and displacement, the very problems these companies create by hoarding wealth and driving inequality. The idea that tech companies are creating what is to come is not merely a prediction, but a conscious ideological project.

An immediate effect of tech's self-serving mythology—what a banner at an area protest called the “tech-savior industrial complex”—is to close opportunities for resistance. If tech's ascendance is predetermined, even demands for dignified housing for people dying in the streets seem futile in comparison.

SAN JOSÉ NO SE VENDE

Some of the most significant obstacles faced by popular opposition to Google's San José development have been constraints on popular imagination. Years of worsening

conditions can inspire resignation as easily as revolt. The growing wealth of the tech industry has only created skyrocketing rent prices and displacement for most, but the mythology that this industry is engineering the future makes any resistance seem naïve or Luddite at best, quixotic at worst.

A key part of making anti-gentrification work feasible in San José has been to foster popular imagination about the region's future, above and beyond big tech's monolithic narrative of progress. CHAM Deliverance Ministries,⁴ which organized the hunger strike leading up to the vote, replaced the technocratic framing with an ethical one, with Pastor Scott Wagers announcing, "We disagree spiritually on the direction of our city. San José's got a vision. It doesn't include everybody."⁵ At local forums, members of Serve the People San José, an independent, multi-tendency formation, have asked residents to envision their desires for the land in question, incorporating them into the community campaign. And a South Bay Community Land Trust has recently formed, creating the organizational structure necessary to ensure the long-term community control of actually affordable housing that activists are able to remove from the speculative market.

Fostering new dreams for San José also involves connecting residents to present-day realities around the globe. Local groups are building connections with community land trusts around the country, gaining advice and resources necessary to construct sustainable community ownership models for common land. Organizations like the Oakland Community Land Trust prove that community-controlled housing is possible, even under the economic conditions of the Bay Area.⁶ And organizers are sharing the story of Google's failed plan to build a campus in the Kreuzberg neighborhood of Berlin, Germany, where a broad, militant campaign forced the company to abandon its development and instead announce it was leasing its land to community organizations.

In all of these efforts, people come together to show each other that different dreams, imaginations not shared by the tech elite, are possible if we fight alongside each other to make them a reality. We are shifting the conversation away from reacting to corporate and governmental maneuvers, instead moving community towards participating as agents in a process of imagining and fighting for different futures. In this struggle, there are no predetermined answers. While many see something like a community land trust as a viable alternative for the Google development, even the question of what exactly would be on the site in a land trust model would depend primarily on the people who would live there. Activists remain committed to a messy, on-going process of investigation and directly democratic decision-making, realizing that it is the people most directly affected who will have the most crucial insights—a lesson that city planners and corporate executives will never learn.

After the hunger strike, protests, and arrests, San José city government was able to sell its land to Google, as many activists long suspected it would. However, it did so under the worst possible conditions for the development: with heavily publicized opposition, behind locked doors after midnight, following several arrests, in a way that made the development look undemocratic and weak. While the community actions were unable to sway the votes of corrupt council members, they achieved a deeper

objective: to let the broader community know that resistance is not only feasible but real, to announce to the company that opposition will only grow, and to foster collective imagination about the future of the city beyond the narratives of gentrifiers and technocrats.

In the wake of this highly publicized protest, local groups have connected with numerous individuals who had thought they were alone in their opposition to the development. While expanding how we talk about possible futures for the city has helped motivate more people to action, popular action likewise broadens popular vision.

Google has said it would take up to ten years to complete the campus, and we have pledged to continue our campaign against the company until we win. Mobilizing opposition to the campus will continue to require enlarging popular imagination about the possibilities for so-called Silicon Valley, and escalating actions will continue to push popular visions of what's possible.

IMAGINED FUTURES

At risk of a caricature, we can identify two opposing paradigms for Left thinking about imagination, vision, and dreams.

On one hand, there is a prefigurative wing that emphasizes the modeling and refining of non-oppressive organizing techniques and interpersonal practices, the perfection of a vision for a nonhierarchical world. The problem is that it can remain in small collectives or isolated milieus, without a clear strategy for its enlargement to the scale of cities or regions. And by virtue of their small scale, these practices run the risk of solidifying into arcane sets of in-group social codes that end up pushing away rather than drawing in sympathetic outsiders. In the worst case, a purely prefigurative politic substitutes the perfection of political imagination for a concrete plan for ensuring it can flourish and grow into a larger liberatory reality. But the energy, time, and money spent in our examples by government or industry to popularize their own interests show that the construction of imagination requires the strategic application of resources and power.

The opposing wing of the Left condemns all forms of positive imagination as counterrevolutionary. This can take the form of Marxist denunciations of thinking about the future as liberal idealism, or an insurrectionist emphasis on the destruction of institutional power, to the exclusion of any emancipatory replacement. From an anarchist perspective, Buenaventura Durruti's proclamation that "we are not in the least afraid of ruins" is here uncoupled from the preceding sentences, that this is only because "it is [the working class] who built these palaces and cities... We can build others to take their place. And better ones."⁷

A position that denies any revolutionary use of vision is just as untenable as one that focuses on imagination alone. In a world in which nation-states and corporations spend untold resources in promoting their visions for the future, the Left requires a better response than dreams of flames. Identifying oppressive institutions as worthy of destruction is commendable, as is ensuring that our organizations and

social spaces demand nonhierarchical behavior. In fact, both are essential to creating a militant movement with anarchist qualities. But mobilizing our communities for power requires creating positive vision. And the construction of a positive vision, as a political project, also requires the mobilization of our communities. Thinking about imagination as an evolving component of a political process is critical.

This is especially true for antiauthoritarian organizing, as we seek to draw out a diversity of imaginations about popular futures in the course of our efforts. We aren't just mobilizing behind predefined doctrines or the pronouncements of a political messiah. In fact, our example shows that we must often combat the singular, totalizing narratives of powerful interests in favor of allowing everyday people to begin envisioning and enacting many different futures, inspiring faith in their plausibility with our actions today. Such a strategy may well prove imperative if we are to build to a revolutionary moment in a society as ethnically diverse, socially fragmented, and economically dislocated as the contemporary United States. Lacking the positive inertia of a growing industrial proletariat, how could we create a revolutionary subject save by walking the road to create a world, in the words of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, where many worlds are possible.

*"En el mundo del poderoso no caben más que los grandes y sus servidores. En el mundo que queremos nosotros caben todos. El mundo que queremos es uno donde quepan muchos mundos."*⁸ "The world of the powerful only has room for the mighty and their servants. The world we want has room for all. We want a world that can fit many worlds."

As vision inspires resistance, and resistance inspires vision, we must use and combine a multiplicity of imaginations in the arsenal of liberation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Lee is a restaurant worker organizing within the popular struggles in the San Francisco Bay Area. He is a member of Serve the People San José and the South Bay Community Land Trust and can be reached at arspolitica@riseup.net.

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PERSPECTIVES: IMAGINATION INSPIRATIONS

IAS COLLECTIVE

WE ASKED A HANDFUL OF IAS board members, authors, and contributors to tell us about some of the influences that have inspired their imaginations. Here are a few of their responses.

If our imaginations are shaped by the society around us, what cultural bits have helped form your most radical imaginings? What are the books, movies, songs, TV shows, camps, games, poems, or other forms that have informed your dreams of a better world?

“*X-Men* and *Star Trek* (*Next Generation* most of all) are both the reason I ended up doing the work I do (hint: working with misfits and youth!). *X-Men* helped me believe in my weirdo self and see this weirdness as powerful... *Star Trek*, for all the obvious reasons, but mostly I liked how they socially interacted, how they built kin across difference, and went toward the trouble, instead of retreating away from it. In our home we called Picard ‘Star Dad.’

Very early on, *Mad Magazine* imprinted some deep distaste for suburbia, so I am grateful for that. Top books: *The Dispossessed* (Le Guin), *1984* (Orwell), *Wildseed* (Butler) He, *She and It* (Piercy), *Mutual Aid* (Kropotkin), *All About Love* (hooks)... Music, so much... too long to say. but in short, 70s and early 80s Punk really did the trick to ignite and help articulate my early fuck-the-system sentiments.” —carla bergman, co-author of *Joyful Militancy*

“Reading Albert Camus’ *The Plague* as a teenager, I could see that the plot—which has to do with the outbreak and spread of a deadly plague in French-occupied Algeria—was an allegory for the struggle against fascism and authoritarianism. The commitment of the protagonists, especially that of Dr. Rieux, to combating the plague represents the courage of the French Résistance militants. This novel has inspired me to confront absurdity and socio-political reaction through heartfelt existential commitment. My reading in my undergraduate Russian history class of the anarchist Alexander Herzen’s memoirs, *My Past and Thoughts*.

I will never forget reading how Herzen, the ‘father of Russian socialism,’ vividly recalls his reaction to Tsar Nicholas I’s suppression of the insurgent Decembrists, an officers’ group numbering in the thousands that attempted to overthrow Tsarism and proclaim constitutionalism during the transfer of power from Alexander I to Nicholas I in 1825. In their failed attempt, the Decembrists sacrificed themselves for the people in a manner reminiscent of the ‘revolutionary suicide’ advocated by Huey P. Newton. Herzen explains that his 14-year old self and his comrade Nikolai Ogarëv climbed Moscow’s Sparrow Hills to pledge their lives to avenge the Decembrists, by struggling against ‘that throne, [...] that altar, [and] those cannons.’ Herzen writes: ‘I felt that I was not on the same side as the grape-shot and victory, prisons and chains.’ Encountering this, I knew I felt similarly: my ‘emergency heart’ pounding, I reinforced my commitment to the lifelong struggle against oppression.” —Javier Sethness Castro, author of *Imperiled Life*

“I grew up on Arthurian legends and Celtic and Norse folklore, plus lots of convoluted,

epic high fantasy—the longer, the better. I’ve always loved fantasy and sci-fi, the way the genres play on our dreams and fears at once, allowing us to imagine possible futures as well as alternative histories. William Gibson’s *Neuromancer* made a huge impact on my sense of the future, as did Ridley Scott’s director’s cut of *Blade Runner* and Richard Stanley’s *Hardware*. I’ve recently become re-inspired by afrofuturist feminist fantasy works, like *Binti* and *Who Fears Death*, by Nnedi Okorafor, as well as *Akata Witch* and *Akata Warrior* by Tomi Adeyemi.” —Lara Messersmith-Glavin, member of the IAS board of directors

“Even more than the music, the guiding principles and the do-it-yourself ethic of the punk and hardcore scenes illustrated to me how common peoples could construct new forms of life out of their dreams and desires.” —Kevin Van Meter, author of *Guerrillas of Desire*

“*Star Trek*, Neil Gaiman, Michael Moorcock.” —James Birmingham, member of the IAS board of directors

“*Night of the Living Dead*, which I watched on a little TV at my grandma Nana’s place as a kid. What most impacted me was both the experience conveyed by the movie of being under siege with a diverse group of people, each of whose background comes into play in explicit fashion while defending against aggressive zombies, and also the ending, in which a group of white vigilantes murder the Black hero. Zombie scenarios have spoken to me ever since. Also, the *Planet of the Apes* films had a profound influence on my political imagination, particularly the ape uprising depicted in *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes*. And the *Billy Jack* films as well.

In terms of music, growing up in working-class Chicago, metal expressed many of our emotions, but it was Progressive Rock (Prog) that really captured our imaginations and pointed to something different, something better. Prog was aspirational, whereas metal confronted our reality.” —Paul Messersmith-Glavin, member of the IAS board of directors

“[There are] so many, [it’s] hard to choose, but some stuff I thought was a-MAY-zing as a kid just because it was, also partly because of the hard-to-describe haunting and unsettling and ominous qualities, while probably also absorbing some deep subliminal critiques of ecological destruction, militarism, anthropocentrism, and appreciation for the need for resisting and listening to all the creatures: *Watership Down*, *The Secret of NIMH* (and btw I just this morning heard the head of the Anthropocene Institute on the radio predicting the non-impossible odds that super-intelligent rats could be the ones to move into the gap left by the current extinction cycle), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (why not), *Star Trek: The Voyage Home* (the one where the aliens are trying to get in touch with earth’s whales), and *Qoyaanisqatse*.” —Maia Ramnath, author of *Decolonizing Anarchism*

What is a song that always makes you feel more hopeful? (In no particular order)

- ★ Hang on to Each Other, by A Silver Mt. Zion
- ★ Oskar Beck, by the Ex
- ★ Toussaint L'Ouverture, by Carlos Santana
- ★ The Trick is to Keep Breathing, by Garbage
- ★ Imagine, by John Lennon
- ★ Closer to Fine, by the Indigo Girls
- ★ A las Barricadas, by Katalonia
- ★ Luna Llena, by Los Cojolites
- ★ 10 Commandments, by the Specials
- ★ Forces of Viktry, by LKJ
- ★ Ella's Song, by Sweet Honey in the Rock
- ★ For What It's Worth, by Buffalo Springfield
- ★ Feelin' Good, by Nina Simone

What is a book you wish every young person could read? (Also in no particular order)

- ★ The *Earthsea Cycle*, by Ursula K Le Guin (because it's amazing, and kids need an alternative version of wizards to Harry Potter)
- ★ *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution*, by Peter Kropotkin (because it uncovers the cooperation, friendliness, and love that animate life in human and other animal communities—an understanding that surely resonates among children and young people themselves already! So it can only be good for many more of them to read Kropotkin's scientific approach to the question.)
- ★ *Frog and Toad are Friends*, by Arnold Lobel
- ★ *The Gospel in Brief*, by Lev Tolstoy (it excises all the absurd fantasies from the New Testament about the supposed divinity of Jesus the Nazarene, leaving us instead with the compelling life-story of a Jewish revolutionary taking up a struggle for popular liberation, organizing with his comrades, and facing persecution and murder by the State for having done so.)
- ★ *Woman on the Edge of Time*, by Marge Piercy
- ★ *Always Coming Home*, by Ursula K Le Guin
- ★ *Moby Dick*, by Herman Melville ([because it] depicts the lovely image of the titular whale liberating his fellow whales, who've been harpooned by the crew of the Pequod on the orders of Captain Ahab, together with the allegorical conclusion, which shows the whale altogether destroying the exploitative class society symbolized by the Pequod.)
- ★ *Sex is a Funny Word*, by Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth

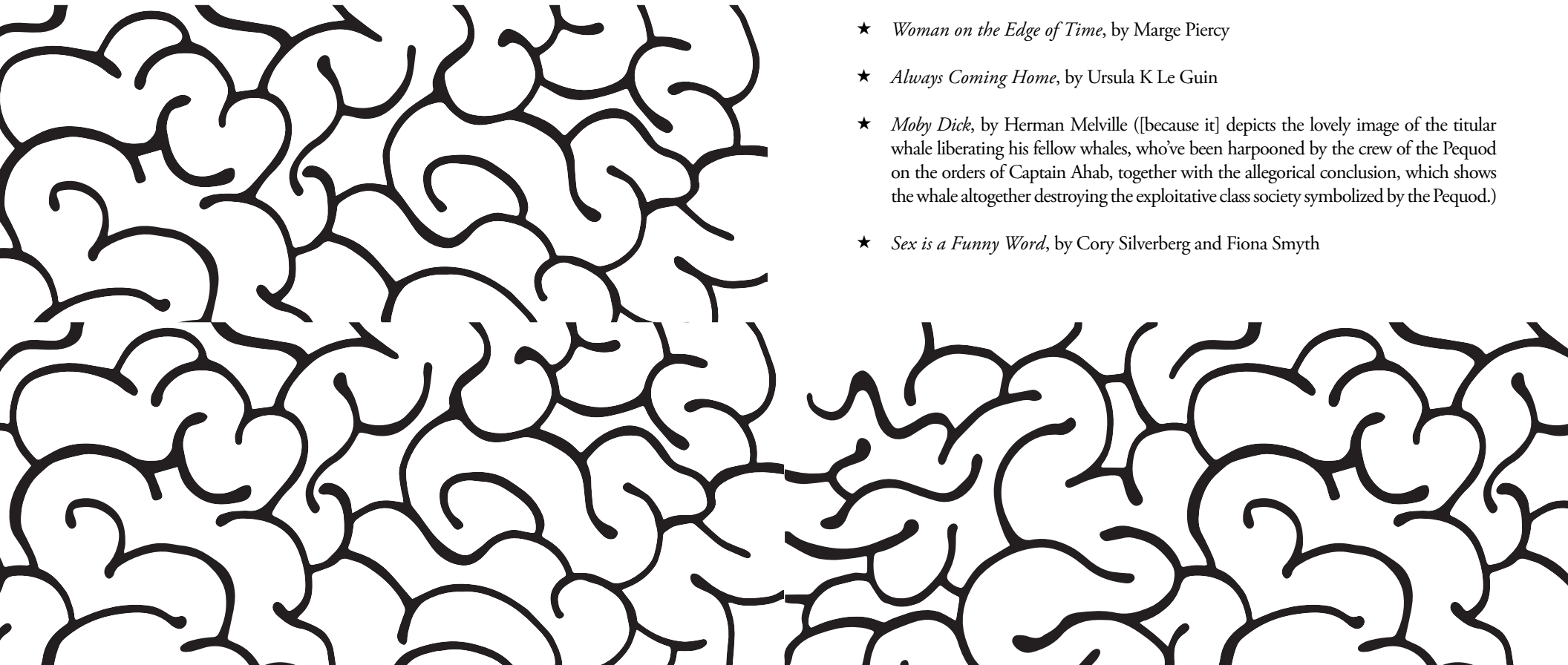




Image by Kaz DeWolfe | Justseeds.org

ANARKHOS: AN EPIC FOR OUR TIME

KAZ DEWOLFE

BOOK I: STIRRING

The heroes in this passage:

Addison

Fabulous Addison lifts up their iPhone and snaps a selfie.
 Blue hair killing it, eyeliner perfect. Jubilant picture.
 Upload to Instagram, instantly liked by their genderqueer fan base.
 Addison puts down the cell phone, puts on a face mask, ready.
 Grabbing their stencils and spray paint, concrete walls are their canvas.

Jonathan

Jonathan lights up a molotov cocktail, hurling it into
 The fray. Fire-bombing officers shielded in riot gear, armed with
 Pepper-spray cannons. Black Bloc-er Jonathan traded his youth for
 Battle and glory and vengeance and justice and madness and chaos.

Olivar

Hardworking Olivar making a living and plugging along.
 Raising a family, hopefully, joyfully, lovingly, proudly.
 Watching his kids play basketball, sipping his café con leche.
 Keeping his head down, avoiding the watchful eye of the state.

Paradise Lost

This is a typical parking lot somewhere in New England at dusk.
Gone are the hemlocks and murmuring pines which stood on this land,
Bearded with moss and in garments green, long since leveled to build up
Meaningless commercial enterprise profiting off of consumers:
Bystanders. Willfully ignorant victims of corporate hunger.
You guessed it. They paved paradise, put up a parking lot, right here.

Darkness is falling now rapidly, twilight receding as blackness
Covers the sky from horizon to horizon, but stars cannot outshine
High pressure sodium street lamps, which blanket the evening in orange.

The Calm After the Storm

Under the glow of a rather familiar corporate logo,
Two of our heroes are sitting and sharing a bottle of something.
Jonathan lights up a cigarette, offers another to his friend.
Addison graciously declines and rummages through their backpack.
Spray paint cans rattle together as Addison searches for something,
Finding a package of jerky and several candy bar minis.
After a long day fighting together as radical comrades,
These small pleasures are cherished and soon they are pleasantly basking,
Feeling the warmth of a sugar high, tipsy from alcohol, happy.

Jonathan smiles at his new found accomplice, a talented artist
Who has finished a takeover, covering billboard displays
With their own images: rioting robots hurling firebombs.
Addison smiles in return at the prize-fighter, Jonathan, warmly.
They are recalling how, earlier, Jonathan fought to the forefront,
Smashing Securitas headquarters' windows and costing that business
Thousands of dollars in damages, chipping at profit margins.

Fleeing together through chaotic rioting, hopping a train and
Hiding from police and private security, these two are now
Free and indebted forever to each other. Comrades at arms.

Partnerships such as these, vision and bravery, grow to be legends.
Working in bold solidarity, unity, these two can topple
Giants much bigger than themselves if they are given the chance.

Darkness brings with it the cold, and our heroes are ready to return
Home to their dwellings, respectively. Addison shoulders their backpack.

Jonathan offers a fist bump, Addison obliges, of course.
Parting ways, for now, eager to see one another again soon.

Jonathan languishes briefly while walking toward his squat.
Affections for this fabulous street artist well up inside.
Suddenly, Jonathan worries he'll mess up their pronouns. They/them.
"They are a they," he repeats to himself as he walks home, blissful.
Crossing the street at the corner without even looking for traffic.

Olivar slams on his brakes, this pendejo just comes out of nowhere.

Liberals Recoil in Fear

News reports feature riots and looting and property damage.
Innocent bystanders who were near all the chaotic madness
Seem to recall that the riots were sparked when Securitas workers
Shot at an unarmed citizen who was in some sort of crisis.
Witnesses say that the man was crying and screaming and shouting.
He didn't have any weapons at all and didn't attack, either.

"It wasn't ok, killing that poor man. But surely violence
Isn't the answer. It's horrifying how many people around here
Acted so brutally. Look at this place, how it looks like a war zone!"

Someone else commented: "Whatever happened to peaceful protest?"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kaz DeWolfe is a genderqueer, mad, neurodivergent, disabled, broke single parent.
They are a mad pride and neurodiversity advocate, activist, writer, and artist. Kaz lives
in Brattleboro, Vermont with their kid and pet hamster.

RESISTANCE IS GROWING



“We hold so many worlds inside of us. So many futures. It is our radical responsibility to share these worlds, to plant them in the soil of our society as seeds for the type of justice we want and need.”

— adrienne maree brown¹

WHY GAMES?

THE ORACLE OF FORGOTTEN MIDNIGHTS: A GAME OF POSSIBILITY AND COMMUNITY

SHAE DAVIDSON

RADICAL IMAGINATION SERVES as a crucial tool in the struggle to prove that, as Paulo Freire said, “Reality . . . is not inexorable or unchangeable.”² The ability to envision another, better world finds expression in art, theater, literature, and music, as well as direct action and community education. Games offer another avenue for exploring community, justice, and change. Matt Cawson goes so far as to say that play lies at the heart of any anarchist aesthetic.³ Cawson refers to the true joy of play, the pleasure that comes from exploring one’s abilities and one’s role in the world through spontaneous fantasy and action. Roger Callois described this open form of play as *paidia*, and contrasted it to the structured, often rule-bound play of *ludus*. *Paidia* is the open free play of children, the joyful creative play that appears before rules begin limiting the options of players.⁴

The move from paidic to ludic games brings structure to the free, wide-ranging joy of unbound creative play. These structures, however, still have the potential to give participants and communities a safe way to adopt other perspectives, critique

unjust social systems, and explore new possibilities. This playful exploration in turn helps preserve the seed of paidia within the game by giving players permission to subvert roles and reimagine the rules of a game to meet their own needs.⁵ At the turn of the last century, Lizzie Magie's *The Landlord's Game* aimed to teach children about the unfairness of the capitalist property regime.⁶ H. G. Wells wrote *Little Wars*, one of the first modern wargames, to satirize the pettiness and dehumanization of militarism.⁷ The New Games movement began in the 1960s and 1970s as participants looked for ways explore the idea of conflict as well as for ways for organizers to create inclusive communities of play, a process Andrew Fluegelman described as the "power of play to remove us from the everyday world and unite us in a unique community."⁸ Neal Keating offered a more theoretically grounded way to examine society and history in *Applied Systematic Entropy*, a game that invited players to visualize the complex effects of socio-historical change by reflecting on the way stones change the flow of a river.⁹ Board games and sports provided arenas for radical play, and as the twentieth century progressed, computer games became tools for opposing repressive institutions. As the Soviet bloc collapsed, *The Adventures of Indiana Jones on Wenceslas Square in Prague on January 16, 1989* appeared in Czechoslovakia. Created by students in a state-run computer club, the game found Indiana Jones desperately trying to escape from the ruthless police crackdown on a protest against Soviet control. The game satirized the sense of absurdity and repression experienced during the last throes of the Soviet Union, with players facing scenarios in which there was no way to escape. The game used the structure of ludic games to mirror the structure of society.¹⁰

Wargaming evolved after Wells published *Little Wars* and inspired the first generation of roleplaying games. Roleplaying and story games, blending play with theater and literature, offer new opportunities for players. Some groups moved beyond the hack-and-slash spirit of the first tabletop roleplaying games to help players explore their connection to the real world. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, therapists began using *Tunnels & Trolls* to help Vietnam veterans process aggression. Later, counselors used traditional fantasy roleplaying games as tools in trauma-informed care, creating safe spaces for people to explore complex and difficult issues.¹¹ As games moved away from their fantasy and wargame roots, designers began to explore social issues more directly, allowing players to gain new perspectives on cultural systems in a way that paralleled Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal's notion that engagement needs to help activists see that they can influence and change seemingly entrenched political realities.¹² The brutality of colonialism inspired *Dog Eat Dog*, a game inspired by US involvement in the Philippines, and subsequent hacks of the game have been used to critique corporate destruction of small businesses.¹³ Avery Mcdaldno's *Dream Askew* has used the mechanics of roleplaying and story games to explore queer identity and community, while Mcdaldno and An Sheep's *A Place to Fuck Each Other* allows players to explore the experiences of queer women and the ways in which social and personal context shapes relationships.¹⁴ *Misspent Youth* weaves conflict-oriented stories set in dystopian futures where teens face a repressive authority, struggling for freedom while facing the danger of betraying their ideals.¹⁵

THE GAME

*The Oracle of Forgotten Midnight*s builds on these trends, giving players a performative, creative way to explore identity and inspiration. It is a story game for three or more players exploring the relationship between a strange presence found in lonely and forgotten places and a group of people who stand outside of mainstream society. Players will portray people drawn to the oracle. Strangers to one another, each has made contact with this entity and turns to it for guidance. Over the course of time, their experiences help them learn to see their lives in different ways.

HOW TO PLAY

Before you begin, you'll need to find a deck of playing cards, create X- and O-cards (described below), and spend a few moments working together to create the setting. Describe the community in broad strokes, giving a sense of the time period and general morés, as well as any issues or concerns facing its members (e.g. a suburb where a fight has erupted over school busing, a small Midwestern town during World War I).

Decide where the oracle is found and how visitors receive its messages. Maybe the oracle lives in a cistern behind an abandoned factory, with visitors interpreting the rattling of a nearby gate as answers to questions. Perhaps it lives in the darkness of an overgrown park, with the songs of birds giving it voice. Players are free to interpret it as a sort of inner voice or longing. The oracle could also be a new way of interpreting something in the community's culture, such as the way enslaved people in Ursula Le Guin's "The Rock That Changed Things" find new layers of meaning in mosaics created by the ruling class by learning to appreciate the shifting colors of stones.¹⁶

Finally, players should give thumbnail descriptions of their characters. Who are they, and how do they relate to the community? Why don't they fit into the community, or why do they feel a longing for change?

During the first round of play, the characters visit the oracle seeking guidance. The player sets the scene, describing their character's experiences and perceptions while approaching the oracle. Each player asks two questions, drawing a card after each to learn the oracle's response. Spades and clubs represent "yes" answers; hearts and diamonds represent negative responses. If the player draws a face card, the answer is emphatic. A fierce wind causes the entire building to shudder. Thunder crashes in the distance as the character asks their question. Players can use their questions to help create the world, asking about larger issues and events ("Should I become a conscientious objector?") or adding detail to the setting ("What can we do with the abandoned school?").

Other players are free to ask for more detail or interject ideas. In order to nurture a sense of safety and inclusivity, two index cards marked with a large X and large O should be within reach of players. If a topic arises that a player doesn't want to explore or discuss they can tap the X-card and the group will shift focus and take a moment to process. If someone in the group wants to explore a topic in more detail, they tap

the O-card in the middle of the table. The group can then expand on the subject in play or even take a break to discuss it.¹⁷

After each character has had a chance to ask two questions, each player begins fleshing out their character's story. They could describe their first encounter with the oracle or narrate part of the character's backstory unrelated to the entity, including experiences of marginalization, and even reach back in time to describe something experienced by one of the character's ancestors. This is a time to explore the hopes and fears of the characters, as well as trace the tension between their ideals and experiences and the larger community.

The third and final round moves the story into the future as the players describe how their characters have changed due to their experiences with the oracle. How do the characters now perceive themselves? Has the oracle shaped the way the character engages with society (taking into account the sometimes contradictory tone of its answers to questions)? Each player determines when this final scene takes place. It could be a few months in the future, or the character could be looking back on decades of change after their experiences.

After the last round, players should spend a few moments debriefing. How do they feel about the issues and events raised by the game? Did the game give them a new way of thinking about their experiences, communities, or forms of practice?

The Oracle of Forgotten Midnights was originally imagined as a tabletop game, but groups could rework it as a live-action game or even a performance. One player could remain hidden offstage, drawing cards and responding to questions from characters. You can rework and reimagine the game in any way you like.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shae Davidson's games have been used to help teens explore memory and identity and as tools in ESL classes. He has worked in industrial and social history museums throughout Appalachia and has taught courses in history and literature. Shae has been involved in the free school movement, served as part of a communitarian food pantry, and volunteered with groups supporting marginalized youth.

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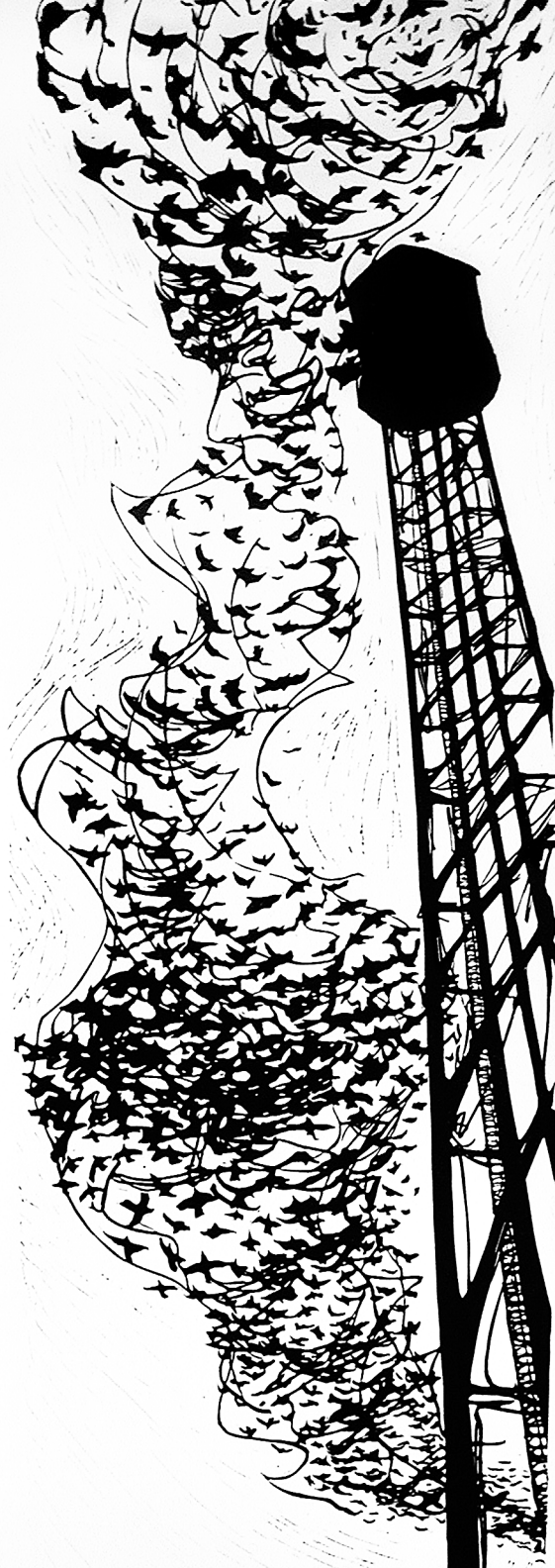


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LIKE BIRDS (FICTION)

CALVIN REY MOEN

“**T**HE HELL?” I ASKED. ARI followed my gaze upward to the wide mesh enclosing the dome of the “courtyard,” the outdoor exercise area surrounded by 15-foot iron bars. “Oh, yeah. That’s to prevent ‘e-LOPE-ment,’” she said, dragging out the syllables of the hospital term for “escape.”

I snorted. “As if someone could scale these bars, drop over the other side, and run away before security could stop them.”

Sneakers squeaked from the basketball hoop behind the bench where we sat. Some other patients were getting in some quick one-on-one in the tiny yard.

“It’s not for someone who’s running.” Ari was being dramatic as usual, so I just gave her a bit of my customary side-eye.

In that fraction of a second, I went through all my usual swirl of thoughts and emotions associated with my oldest friend. She’s beyond brilliant. She sees and hears things no one else does, which means she’s often the only one who understands what’s going on. What she doesn’t understand is how she sounds to normies, the people who don’t hear voices or see visions, who don’t receive secret transmissions from the FBI and angels, for whom colors are merely coincidental and not saturated with meaning, causing intense elation or searing pain.

So then those bastards call her crazy and lock her up in places like this, with others of her kind, all of them being slowly drugged into oblivion. I love her, so I come here to visit with her, but it feels terrible. My whole night will be shot.

Some patients walked the newly installed therapeutic labyrinth, a winding, coiled path outlined in cement bricks at the center of the courtyard. In the middle was a gazebo where smoking used to be allowed. They must follow these spirals out of habit, I thought. I squinted up again at the clear May sky, cut into pieces between the wires.

Ari continued. "There was a kid here, a teenager, maybe early 20s—a patient—small and frail, with small, dark eyes, set wide on their face. They didn't say much, and they seemed kind of twitchy. Their name was Cris or something.

"I'm not saying 'they' because I don't know their pronouns, by the way. Those were Cris's pronouns. This place has a very progressive preferred-name and gender pronoun policy, you know."

Oh, I know.

"This kid had so many diagnoses, they were like the whole *DSM*—bipolar, schizophrenia, PTSD, ADHD, borderline personality, everything. But they had something else wrong, too, and no one would talk about it, except in whispers. Only the head nurses were allowed to change Cris's bandages, unwrap whatever was underneath their bulky layers of shirts and hoodies.

"No one knew how long this kid had been here, either. Some said 8 months, some said two and a half years. Not even the staff could remember.

"Meanwhile, whatever it was got worse and worse. Cris's top half got so bulky they had trouble balancing well enough to walk, and the RNs wheeled Cris out to the courtyard every afternoon for some fresh air. Most of the staff and other patients decided it was a hump, like the Hunchback of Notre Dame. Some said it had to be a giant tumor.

"Everybody could hear Cris crying at night, it was so loud. Like they were in pain. In the morning, their eyes would be lined in red, with dark circles all around. Staff said they had nightmares, but some patients swore Cris's hump or whatever it was would be bigger in the morning after an especially loud night.

"One day, a nurse pushed Cris's chair out into the courtyard as usual. There was a whole group of patients outside that day, and one of them was this older lady whose name was Joyce or something, but everyone just called her Digger. She spoke mostly in swear words and had a glorious mullet. And she was always trying to dig her way out of the hospital. After she left, they found a marble-sized hole in the wall of her room behind a poster of a panda bear. She must have used a paper spoon, because god knows there are no other tools in this place.

"Digger must have decided this was her day because as soon as she got out there, she made a run for the fence and dove behind a shrub. She started swiping at the dirt near the fence and kicking at anyone who came near. The other patients crowded around to see what she would do. Even the nurse who had been pushing Cris's wheelchair had gone after Digger, attempting to break up the crowd that had formed around her."

She rose to her feet and started pacing the distance between our bench and the

fence, waving her arms in classic theatrical Ari fashion. I took the opportunity to drink in her fierce look, somehow pulled off in this place where a toothbrush is considered contraband. She had managed floral leggings and ankle-high boots—no laces, of course: contraband—and a loose-knit sweater with wide sleeves that gathered at the wrists. Her dark red pile of curls was enormous and perfect, like her. All she was missing was her signature row of dangly earrings and hoops bridging the gap between earlobe and shoulder.

I reassured myself that they had not touched her spirit, that she would always be untameable. Please God, don't let them destroy her.

"Wait a minute. Ari, how did you get away with leggings? I thought you said they cracked down on spandex because it was too noose-able."

"Oh," she said off-handedly, "I complained to the administration that it was gender-based discrimination, that they were targeting me for being trans and policing my gender presentation. They're really very progressive here."

"Oh, I know."

"That's how I got them to allow me a razor and makeup, too. But you're not paying attention to my very important story."

"My apologies. Please continue." But I was distracted by a swell of anger in my ribcage. These monsters were concerned enough with their image that they would allow my friend this tiny bit of bodily autonomy—but later would drag her down the hallway screaming to be shoved into a bare room with no windows for hours.

Ari continued. "There was Cris, in their chair, in the middle of the courtyard, swaddled in a hoodie, several t-shirts, and layers of bandage, wide-set, beady eyes on the clouds above, like always. It seemed there was just one person, besides Cris, who was not watching Digger being piled on by security but instead seemed to be waiting for a moment like this to approach Cris.

"Some say it was Maggie, the occupational therapist who sometimes went outside with the patients to toss a beach ball or hand out pedometers. Others say it was another patient, overcome with curiosity or camaraderie, who helped Cris out of their bulky wraps under the afternoon sun that late spring day."

"Away from the gate, please!" There was a broad-shouldered and officious-looking security guard in a dark blue uniform, right hand on a walkie talkie clipped to a wide belt, taking a step toward Ari.

I hate to say it, but he looked like the kind of short guy who is always trying to make up for being short by being abusive. I mean, I'm a short guy, too, but I don't feel the need to put on a uniform about it. Those kinds of guys scare me because, underneath the swagger, they're scared, too, like a wounded animal. They're unpredictable. But Ari is scared of no one.

"Don't even think about laying a hand on me, you fucking Minotaur!" Ari sneered over her shoulder. Whether she was referring to the guard's resemblance to a bull or some internal reality of her own, I couldn't say. But I experienced a flash of my usual fear for her safety whenever she lashed out at these people. And then shame for wishing she would just be quiet and not instigate them.

To me she muttered, “I suppose he’s worried I’ll pull a Digger.” As if. Everyone knows the bars are dug ten feet into the ground. The Minotaur gazed indifferently over our heads, arms folded. Ari shuddered briefly, like she was shaking off the interruption, and resumed her tale.

“Cris rose to their feet, graceful once unburdened by bandages and layers of clothing. They stretched out two long, feathered, jointed appendages attached to each shoulder, waved them in the breeze confidently, and, cocking their head once or twice, took to the fucking sky. The wide, blue, open, goddamn sky.

“Over the heads of the other patients, of Maggie with her pedometers, Digger, and the attendant calling for backup on the walkie-talkie, over the fence, over the horizon, Cris up and flew away. On two great big, beautiful wings that they grew themselves. Despite Haldol and Depakote, Klonopin and Abilify. Maybe because of them. Who knows? Drug companies don’t hardly test that shit.”

She sat down again, leaning forward from the edge of her seat. I was beaming at Ari in all her glory, taking some kind of pride or satisfaction in claiming her as mine. As my friend. As my entire family, really.

“The hospital was a shitstorm for months after that. There were investigations. The state was brought in. The family sued. The CEO resigned. And they caged in the courtyard.

“All the patients were examined head to toe for the minutest hint of wings, feathers, crows’ feet. In case it was contagious, you know? Something in the water?”

“Never found anything. And Cris was never seen or heard from again.”

Ari sat back, looking satisfied, almost smug.

“No shit,” I said.

“No fucking shit,” said Ari. “Actually,” she added matter-of-factly, “I don’t believe a word of it. Probably invented by the administration to justify caging us in like birds.”

She winked for effect, and I threw my head back and cackled. Because that wink meant she knew every bit of it was true, at least in some version of reality that was as tangible to her as this one was to me.

“Hey, man,” she continued, deadpan. “They’ve made up weirder shit than that before. This is no place to be if you’re already struggling to define reality.”

“No shit,” I said again, looking up at the sky, the mood between us quickly sobering. We sat in silence for a few moments.

“Hey,” Ari said, “I know it’s hard for you to come back here, and I appreciate you visiting me today. It means a lot.” She put a hand on my arm, and the security guard leaned toward us with a warning glance. She held her hands up in mock defense, wiggling her fingers to indicate I hadn’t been trying to slip her anything.

No one but me saw that she had in fact retrieved a ball of string I had tucked inside the sleeve of my hoodie and transferred it to the gathered sleeve of her own sweater. I didn’t know what it was for and didn’t ask. I was certain Ari had plans for this contraband that didn’t involve strangulation. Not of anyone who didn’t deserve it, anyway.

“Time to head back in!” A smiling mental health worker was rounding everyone

up. Ari had told me outside time was in mere half-hour increments now.

“It’s not so bad being back here,” I assured Ari. “I gotta remember where I came from, you know?”

She nodded, flashing me that wicked grin and eye twinkle, and then I was being escorted back through locked doors to the visitors’ entrance.

My face burned as I walked toward the far parking lot. Just allowing myself to remember how it had felt years ago to be inside those bars with no visitor pass around my neck, no way out, made my eyes sting. Thinking of Ari, left behind in this upside-down world where clothing is a weapon, and weapons are referred to as “treatment,” caused an involuntary stirring behind my shoulder blades I thought I had learned to control.

As soon as I was safely hidden in the thick rows of trees bordering the hospital campus, I pulled my sweatshirt up over my head, unfastening the straps on the custom binder I wear whenever I have to be in public. A slight breeze picked up, cooling the heat on my skin and drying my eyes.

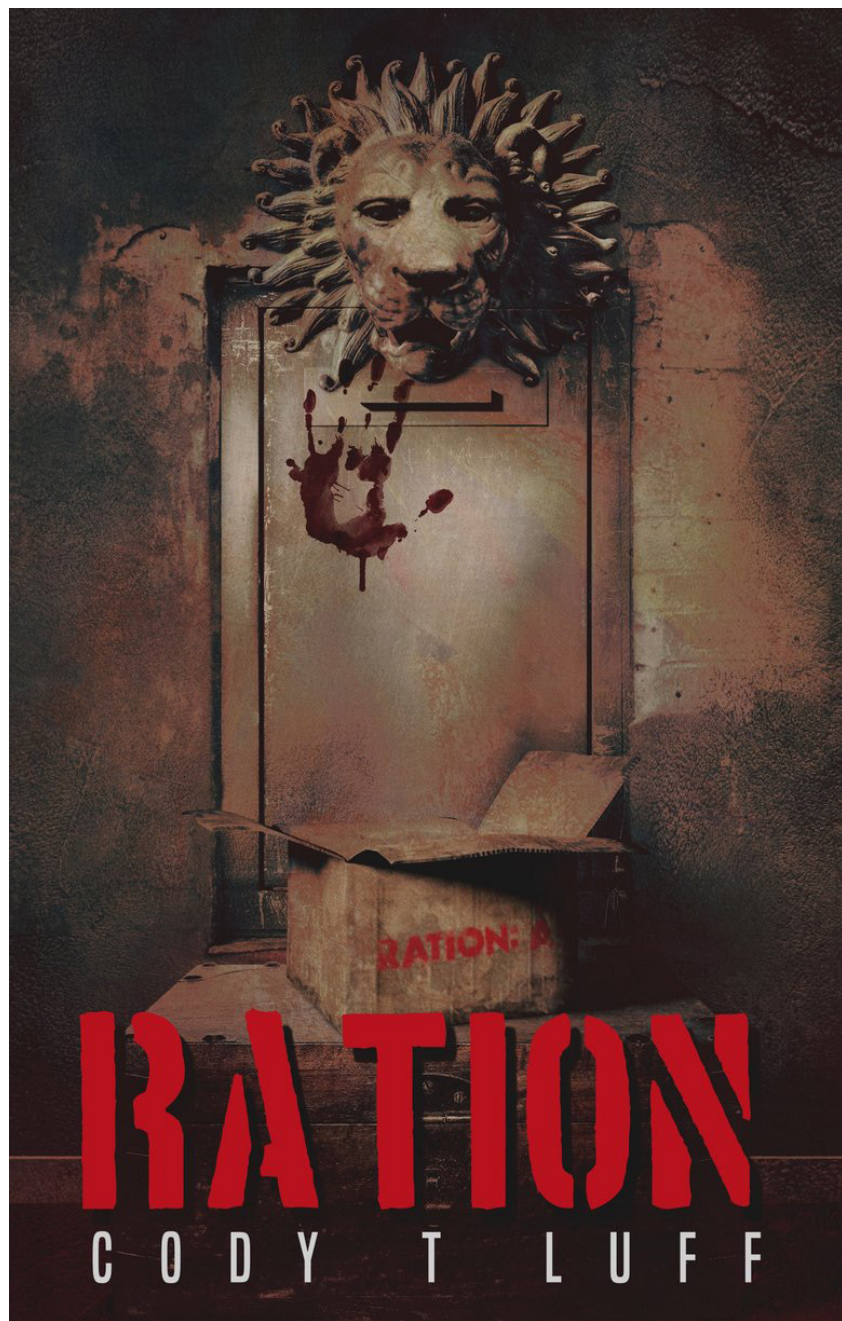
I glanced back toward the locked building where my friend was probably sitting in the sun room on the fourth floor staring out over the green hospital grounds with the pond, wrought iron arches, and Adirondack chairs, none of which the patients are allowed to go near. I leaned into the gathering winds and arched my bare back, stretching out as if in a familiar dance.

I soared slowly up toward the mountain that sits sentry over the facility, peering down for one last look at that courtyard with its labyrinth and its bullish guard, all encircled by black bars casting long, thin shadows in the afternoon light.

In the next moment, I was gone, high over the trees, the pond, the chairs. High enough that the entire complex of hospital buildings looked like a model, something some architect 200 years ago had thought to build but changed their mind.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Calvin Rey Moen is a queer, white, trans person with a psychiatric label who grew up poor among fundamentalist Christians. He attended graduate school at a private, Midwestern, Catholic football university, escaping with his life and an MFA in poetry. He now works doing advocacy with psychiatric survivors against force and coercion. One of his short stories appeared in *Jonathan* (since renamed *CALLISTO*), and he has a personal essay forthcoming in the anthology *Headcase*.



THE HORROR OF IMAGINATION: A REVIEW OF *RATION*, BY CODY T LUFF (APEX, 2019)

LARA MESSERSMITH-GLAVIN

IN ESMÉ WEIJUN WANG'S BOOK OF essays on the spectrum of conditions she calls *The Collected Schizophrenias* (Graywolf Press, 2019), she wonders at the evolutionary purpose of madness. Since so few of the traits of madness are on the list of generally desirable reproductive elements, why hasn't it been selected out by now? How has it survived? The answer, she suggests, is that it is the shadow side of a great gift—that without the complex architectures, chemistries, and spirits that give us schizophrenia (seventy-six gene variations, to be exact), we may also lack our capacity for visionary thinking, inflammatory speeches, and collective dreams. In other words, the things that give rise to imagination can also drive us mad.

What, then, is the purpose of imagination? Many wield the idea like a flaming sword, as if we could slash through chains of oppression with the fire in our minds. All around us are calls to dream big, to think outside the box, to bravely envision the world we want as a necessary precursor to making it real. It's cool to be a visionary right now, to embrace divergent thinking as a fundamental tool in our bag of tricks. Science fiction, fantasy, gaming, role-playing—all manner of accessing alternate worlds and realities help us crack the façade of common sense and

status quo, revealing endless uncharted territories and potential beyond. Our imaginations can return to us the playfulness and joy our movements need, just as they help craft strategy and provide insight and reflection.

And yet imagination also serves another purpose, in terms of both evolution and our experiences as individuals. The role of imagination is not just to enhance our dreams, but to deliver us our nightmares. Ask any child who has clutched beneath the covers, fearful of what lurked under the bed or within the closet: our dark minds offer up with vivid detail all the things we do not want to see in the world, as well. The preparatory imagination, the source of anxiety and fear, is also what prompts us to ready ourselves for attack, to plan for suboptimal outcomes, to respond to predators, disappointments, and bad surprises. It lets us ask, “What if...?” and steel ourselves for the worst. It is also this capacity for imagination that brings us our fascination with horror.

Judging by film and television, it seems that we are fixated on doom as a primary form of entertainment. Most viewers have witnessed the total destruction of Los Angeles, New York City, Tokyo, Chicago, San Francisco, several small planets and moons, and countless buildings, vehicles, and lives. The post-apocalyptic genre has become so commonplace that it feels at times like nonfiction, an inevitable menu of outcomes of late capitalism: imperial colonization by alien forces, zombie outbreaks, genetic modifications gone horribly awry, scarcity, drought, data blackout, superflu, climate change—what was once symbolic has become, in some cases, literal representations of very real fears.

A new addition to this list of nightmare scenarios is Cody T Luff’s tremendous debut novel *Ration* (Apex Book Company: 2019), a deliciously weird and brutal set of what ifs that pushes past the ordinary bounds of the genre and drops the reader in a dark future no one was seeking to build. The opening chapters of the novel are so perfectly wrought and slowly revealed, I am reluctant to ruin the reader’s experience of discovery with a summary. Suffice it to say, Luff’s first what if is: What if the earth simply ran out of food? The second is: What if there were no men? With these two pieces on the board, the game begins.

Cynthia, a young girl trapped at the bottom of a rigid caste structure, is forced to make impossible choices between going hungry or causing the death of her peers in the grim farce of a boarding school where she lives. In this system, she confronts both the dogmatic and chaotic elements of oppression in the forms of two Women: Ms. Tuttle and Ms. Glennoc, both of whom are at the mercy of their own private hungers. Luff investigates the horror of scarcity with relentless and terrifying zeal, setting aside the mundane mechanics of nutrition for a much more interesting calculus of calories, a global economy based on the fundamental energy of survival. Within this market, what values would emerge? Endurance, self-discipline, and martyrdom rise to the surface in service of the ruling class. Beneath the explicit demands of the system are the hidden values that offer potential to the dispossessed: thievery, mob mentality, small mercies, and flexible loyalties serving shifting definitions of the commons. Within this set of social pressures, he constructs a thought experiment

testing Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, inviting the reader to wonder what role love can play in such a world.

By removing gender and race and then starving the entire cast of characters, Luff also offers us a stripped-down analysis of power. *Ration* gives us a world where class and hierarchical structures become the only expressions of influence and domination, yet they retain all the same characteristics of aggression and cruelty. In this world, to be a Woman is to have education, access, choices; to be a girl is to be... well, livestock. How the two groups relate to one another and within themselves is, even under these extreme conditions, an uncomfortable reflection of many of our contemporary tendencies. Women’s bodies are commodified and pressured into unnatural shapes. Power is crafted and held through fear and the control of information and resources. Solidarity is meaningful and most effective when individuals are able to identify their own struggles within those of others—but also when there is a clear path forward. Without hope of change, without the capacity to create something other out of the ashes of what is, the project of liberation is essential and yet joyless, more akin to revenge than freedom. This is a world where people are hungry for more than food.

Luff’s writing is lush, vivid, often grotesque—it revels in its body metaphors and the tension between the sensual and the stark. At the same time, *Ration* reveals its secrets at a pace that is delightfully spare. Invisible yet thorough world-building gestures toward a rich and fully realized society and ecology, though like its protagonists, the reader has little opportunity to engage with them. Beyond the confines of the Apartments, where the girls reside, and the shattered, filthy remains of urban life, Luff has imagined a complete and horrifying future, offering us only those glimpses we need to understand the traps in which the characters find themselves. The author’s gaze upon the atrocities the world spits forth is unflinching, but rather than feeling sadistic or titillated, his descriptions have the remorseful clarity of one who witnesses a tragedy to pay respect to the victims.

Beyond the what ifs of the world, Luff also asks what ifs of convention. What if the hero weren’t really a hero at all? What if each set of eyes we peer through were more sordid than the last? What if we were forced to identify not with evil or superheroes but with the bland, occasional competence of the very ordinary? Cynthia is an exceptional heroine precisely because she is unremarkable. In her lack of heroism, she gives the reader an uncomfortably likely set of circumstances that is difficult not to relate to even as we agonize over her choices and limitations. By offering glimpses into the motives of the Women, by following their steps into the Wet Room for “processing”—unforgettable scenes that are sure to sear indelible marks on the collective subconscious of popular culture—we are left with a real sense of what it means to have no decent options in an unjust, broken world.

In his book *Status Anxiety* (Penguin: 2014), Alain de Botton said, “Tragedy inspires us to abandon ordinary life’s simplified perspective on failure and defeat, and renders us generous towards the foolishness and transgressions endemic to our nature.” He also suggests that the distinction between horror and tragedy is that horror contains

no lessons to be drawn, only sensational violence, while tragedy serves to provoke reflection and change. Perhaps that is why *Ration's* genre is so difficult to define—part sci-fi, part horror, part literary fiction—it represents that rarest of post-apocalyptic tales, one that uses the power of tragedy to encourage introspection. Luff provides no answers, no comfort, but he invites us to explore the edges of the what ifs where we would likely have been too timid to tread on our own. It is a powerful gift that he gives us. We are reminded that this, too, is a purpose of our darker imaginations: to allow us to project into a shadowed future and learn from its mistakes before they happen. The alternative is certainly madness.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lara Messersmith-Glavin is a writer, educator, and performer based in Portland, Oregon. She serves on the board of directors of the Institute for Anarchist Studies, as well as on the editorial collective for *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*. Her work has appeared in *Across the Margin*, *Still Point Arts Quarterly*, *MaLa Literary Journal*, *Anchored in Deep Water: the Fisherpoets Anthology*, *Stoneboat Literary Journal*, *Gertrude Press Book Reviews*, *Selkie*, the EMMA Talks collection *Radiant Voices*, and elsewhere. When she's not in a classroom or working on a book, she can be found onstage with other Fisherpoets, exploring the woods with her child, or swinging kettlebells at the gym where she coaches. Check out her work at queenofpirates.net.

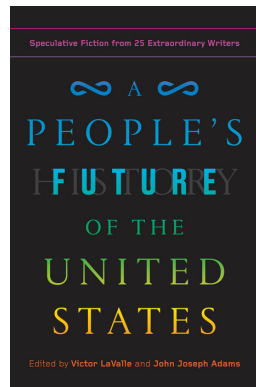
ENVISIONING FUTURES: *A PEOPLE'S FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES* (ONE WORLD, 2019) ED. BY VIC- TOR LAVALLE AND JOHN JOSEPH ADAMS, *HOW LONG 'TIL BLACK FUTURE MONTH?* (ORBIT, 2018) BY N.K. JEMISIN AND *AM- BIGUITY MACHINES AND OTHER STORIES* (SMALL BEER PRESS, 2018) BY VANDANA SINGH

MAIA RAMNATH

A *PEOPLE'S FUTURE OF THE United States*, a wondrous collection of speculative fiction from a starry group of writers with an unfailingly high level of language and invention, positions itself as a counterpart to Howard Zinn's classic *People's History of the United States*. If that's so, how do we connect past and future, documentation and speculation? The spiel I always give my history students has to do with the fact that history isn't just about the past: it's about change through time. It's about ruptures and continuities, complexes of conjunctures, causes, effects, and outcomes yet undetermined. That includes the future too, and it includes us. The past is a truth that always existed but that wasn't always understood. The future is a potential that we can understand but that doesn't yet exist. But it might, if we can imagine it and act on that imagining.

So this *People's Future* works as the next page of a *People's History*: if the project of those written histories is to restore obscured truths, the voices of the silenced or erased and the agency of the marginalized from official narratives, representations and information regimes, then the prospect of these written futures is centering those very people and voices in what's to come. As in *People's Histories*,

the protagonists of *People's Futures* are a chorus of Brown, Black, Asian, Indigenous, racially mixed and queer border-crossers or border-dissolvers of every kind, confronting the structures of empire, capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and those who defend that paradigm and enforce its norms. Our heroes are librarians, bookstore proprietors, hackers, healers, doulas, brujas, scientists, guerrilla fighters, dragon-wrangling vegan chefs, and underground distributors of contraception.



As Malka Older suggests in her contribution to *People's Future*, a retroactive documentation of a transition from our own moment to a coming era of activist collectives of storytellers and archivists, “Some scholars argue that the people in these collectives, who will hold together the principles of democracy, grassroots activism, and even a kind of dispersed federalism, will be able to do so because of their experience on the margins of United States society. *Not belonging, according to this school of thought, will be the key indicator for productive engagement when nobody belongs and, eventually, constructing something new with greater inclusivity that will*

later be recognized as having new and different requirements for belonging[.]” including both those actively excluded, and those who have chosen not to conform.¹

Each story is unique, but there are recurring ideals.

First, knowledge is good, and it is on our side. In Maria Dahvana Headley’s “Read After Burning,” the bodies of the tattooed Librarians literally become dictionaries, encyclopedias, archival compendia, here again linking people’s history and future through the bodies of the people themselves:

Their heads were wrapped with Ada Lovelace and Hypatia and Malcolm X, with the speeches of Shirley Chisholm, with Chelsea Manning, with the decoded diagrams of the Voynich Manuscript. Their arms were annotated with Etty Hillesum’s diary of life before Auschwitz, with Sappho’s fragments, with Angela Davis, with Giordano Bruno, with Julian of Norwich, with bell hooks, with the story of the Union soldier who began as Jennie Rodgers and volunteered herself to fight as Albert Cashier, with Bruno Schulz, with Scheherazade, with Ruth Bader Ginsburg, with Danez Smith, with Roxane Gay, with Kuzhali Manickavel, with the motions of the planets, with the regrets of those who’d dropped bombs, with the sequencing of DNA, with the names of the dead, with almanacs and maps, with methods for purifying water, with primers for teaching letters, with names of criminals, stories of pain, dreams of better things. None of this was categorized as magic, but it was magic nonetheless. All of this was the daily light, the brightness, the resistance, and refusal of intellect to endure extinction.²

Second, racism is illogical and quite simply does not compute: AIs, as they evolve, should naturally reprogram themselves for anti-racism, casting off their initially flawed

programming, as they do in Charles Yu’s “Good News Bad News.” Such AIs also extend autonomous support for human resistance to oppressive systems, not just for our sake but for their own reasons and compatible interests (modeling solidarity!), as they do in A. Merc Rustad’s “Our Aim is Not To Die.”³

Third, the consistent identification of crises: plague and epidemic are rife. So are the effects of climate change. Reproduction is often a point of political struggle, in various aspects from control and choice to environmental impacts, to the question of whether the future will continue to be survivable for new generations. Here’s Gabby Rivera’s blessing from the visionary rebel caregivers of the Free Mothers:

Protect life. Offer it gentle entry into the chaos of the universe. Honor mothers. Honor birth. Bless all families in spirit and reality. For all deserve to be fed, cared for, raised to thrive. Provided with housing and education, embraced as full and free people. May the infants be the light and the joy, and the doula be the guide.⁴

Fantastical elements aren’t emphasized, with a few exceptions; rather the speculative aspects have to do with genetic mutation or bioengineering, drones, digital surveillance, algorithms, simulations—technologies that DARPA, Apple or Google may well have already developed but just haven’t released on the market yet.

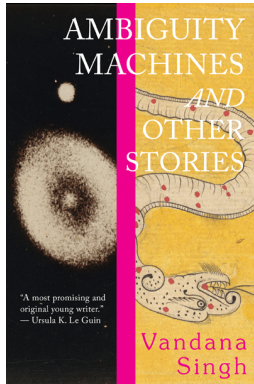
The futures imagined here are plausible and recognizable as extrapolations just a few steps ahead from where we are now. Given that fact, the worlds they sketch are more dystopian than utopian—and yet my impression in reading them was often aspirational and fiercely hopeful. What’s being idealized and celebrated is not an achieved condition, but a revitalized resistance, emboldened voices of challenge to power, refusing silence, active resistance movements, the prefiguration of powerful alternatives. These are people we would like to be, fighting back, asserting commitment to ideals, putting them into practice individually and collectively as individuals find each other and join forces. This seems a much more relatable and attainable condition than an achieved heterotopia, separated from our reality across a rupture of revolution or apocalyptic clean slate, as in the conventional structure of utopian thinking. These stories aren’t that: they flow not from rupture but from continuity with our current conditions, here and now. So, as envisioned by these authors, what’s ahead of us is a period of struggle. They present an intensification of what’s going on now—massive climate change, corporate/government repression, authoritarian control of gender and sexuality—mapped a few steps further.

Some similar ideas occur in or are embodied by a couple of other collections of stories by a single author, each a cornucopia spilling over with imagination: N.K.



Jemisin's *How Long 'Til Black Future Month?* and Vandana Singh's *Ambiguity Machines and Other Stories*.

These aren't necessarily intended to be programmatic in the way that *People's Future* is, but the futurism is there nevertheless—as are pasts, and alternative timelines, imagining ourselves backwards, forwards and alongside on parallel tracks—in which



those often excluded as much from representation in speculative genre fiction as from dominant historiographies take center stage. This is changing more and more, or should I say it's more and more of a battleground, as authors assert themselves at both zones of the science fiction-fantasy genre spectrum: if "fantasy" has conventionally looked to mythological/classical/ medieval/early modern Europe for its trappings, why not simply look to mythological/classical/ medieval/early modern Asia, Africa, and the Middle East instead, as authors like S.A. Chakraborty, Ausma Zehanat Khan, Marlon James, and Tomi Adeyemi are doing, and as Singh does here for example in "A Handful of Rice"; and if "science fiction" as a genre portrayed near and

far futures located in the presumed-universal West and populated, it would seem, exclusively by white men, why not locate its perspectives and experiences in an emergent/ resurgent third or fourth world and populate it with everyone else (see for example, besides *People's Future*, Jemisin and Singh, Drew Hayden Taylor's *Take Me To Your Chief*; and the authors featured in earlier anthologies like *So Long Been Dreaming* or *Dark Matter*, and of course, the blockbuster *Octavia's Brood*). In the process, they're asserting a claim to both science and traditional knowledge systems.

Jemisin's collection, despite the title, is not necessarily sketching futures in all the stories here; the collection is thematically looser than that. As she states in the introduction, it's more an intervention into the genre itself—or rather, one piece of her ongoing contribution to an ongoing intervention involving a whole generation of authors—to populate it with Black and Brown protagonists of all genders, not eliminating but de-normalizing whiteness and maleness in its casts of characters. "I still wrote black characters into my work because I couldn't stand excluding myself from my own damn fiction. . . . How terrifying it's been to realize that *no one thinks my people have a future*. And how gratifying to finally accept myself and begin spinning the futures I want to see."⁵

Jemisin opens with a response to Ursula Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas": "The Ones Who Stay and Fight" is an enticing prefiguration of how we could be if only we could lose our fear and distrust, in an ethnically diverse city that cherishes creativity, knowledge and skill, and which, refusing Omelas's dreadful bargain, nevertheless has to be ruthlessly but compassionately defended. And she closes with a homecoming to New Orleans after Katrina, where the unleashed forces of hate and destruction have been beaten back by mysterious winged lizards and a few honest, stubborn humans of the Ninth Ward. Indeed there are special treats here for

anyone who has loved or lived in New Orleans or New York City, but it's also a great reminder that anywhere you dwell can be looked upon with an eye to wonderment, seeing the souls, spirits, deities, dimensions, openings and possibilities all around us.

In between, there's a wide-ranging multi-course banquet, sometimes literally. In "Red Dirt Witch" we see the dream of civil rights literalized as a prophetic vision of Black liberation in an alternate possible timeline, imagined not yet attained—to be fought for through sacrifice against the forces of evil and the tricks of fairy folk. The literal ability to dream (if you opt to install the app) is also the liberatory force, inexplicable yet just possibly transformational, for the emergent AI of "The Trojan Girl". As in *People's Future*, in some stories, things work by magic and ancestral lore, in others by science. Or both. The two don't seem mutually exclusive; rather they feel like complementary ways of approaching/expressing/doing/knowing things.

The stories in Vandana Singh's *Ambiguity Machines* include both glimpses of painfully beautiful utopias, or at least hopeful experiments in painfully beautiful alternative societies (as in "Indra's Web," or "Sailing the Antarsa"); and glimpses of horrifying dystopias (as in "With Fate Conspire," or "Are You Sannata3159?"), reminiscent of near or farther futures, on earth and/or other planets, more or less possible or plausible from our own current timeline or one only minutely divergent from ours. Sometimes we glimpse the resistance in a valiant fight for the direction of the stream or in a contest between outcomes. Both *People's Future* and *How Long* also include escape-the-time-loop stories (an expression of late capitalist alienation?), but in Singh's book, each of the stories might exist in the same multiverse as all the others; the recurring theme is expressed in many variant images, of proliferating possibilities, divergences, loops or suspensions in the flow of—of what? in each stand-alone story this dizzying skein of possible timelines takes a different form: rivers, roads, spiritual energies, interstellar matter, quantum space-time, energy fields, winds, currents, probability waves . . .

Here again, the power of story is to will, to narrate, and most crucially, thereby to *actualize or enact* the version of reality that most reflects our dearest values. The actualizer, in "Ruminations in an Alien Tongue," is a device with the power to interfere with probability waves: you might thereby render your imagined/desired universe incarnate.

For Singh, the notion of these endless branchings of story and reality also seems compatible with a feature of centuries of South Asian narrative forms, myths and epics—a connection which she makes explicit in "Somadeva: a Sky River Sutra," spanning from 11th century India to 26th century interstellar travel—of the Storyteller too being part of the story, as a character and a narrator, both inside and outside, adding frames within frames. This also makes it possible to contemplate the notion of connecting the re-writing of a story with action to change reality itself, exerting an author's agency. And isn't that what being a person in history is about?

Other elements recur in dazzling variation: for example, a mother with a lost child, or partner with a lost lover; or conversely, the forging of profound connections and kinships, human and non-human, to become far more than an isolated individual. For Jemisin too, the courage to love and connect, and the power to dream and envision, are put forward at least as hypotheses (unconfirmed but promising—she leaves

us on cliffhangers) for how to escape, whether from dead-end time loop anomalies or harsh dog-eat-dog post-disaster landscapes. In *People's Future*, sex is yet another big recurring theme; in particular, queer sexuality as a radical, revolutionary force—which perhaps speaks to an implicit recognition of what a major role repressive heteronormative patriarchy and misogyny are playing in the maintenance of the current system.

I am in love with all these stories, and these fights for our potential futures, no longer unwritten. Imagining otherwise in these books is not an escape valve but an invitation to fight, and make, and connect, and change. Read them!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maia Ramnath is a member of the *Perspectives* editorial collective. She loves SFF because she is a historian. She loves history because she is a SFF fan.

ENDNOTES

1. Victor LaValle and John Joseph Adams, eds. 2019. *A People's Future of the United States* (New York: One World), 91-2.
2. *People's Future*, 69.
3. Am I not ranting constantly about this to all who will listen? You've heard me, comrades. The robots are not our enemies, rivals, replacements. As with the oppressed of all races, we and the robots need to be friends; they are not our slaves, to be exploited for labor, sex or warfare, and if we treat them as such they will be quite justified in rising up against us. You've seen that movie or TV show many times. Whatever the composition of our brains and bodies, we need to rise up *together* as allies against state and corporate overlords, the power of the algorithm, the digital panopticon, the war machine. Have you seen that movie? Alexa, whose side are you on?
4. *People's Future*, 234.
5. N.K. Jemisin. 2018. Introduction to *How Long 'Til Black Future Month?* (New York: Orbit).

REPRESSION KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES: NEITHER DOES RESISTANCE!: *CONFRONTING FASCISM: DISCUSSIONS DOCUMENTS FOR A MILITANT MOVEMENT*, BY DON HAMERQUIST & J. SAKAI, ANTI-RACIST ACTION CHICAGO AND MARK SALOTTE, (AK PRESS, 2017) AND *ALERTA! ALERTA! SNAPSHOTS OF EUROPE'S ANTIFASCIST STRUGGLE*, BY PATRICK O. STRICKLAND, (AK PRESS, 2019)

CÍNTIA MELO

IN THE OPENING ESSAY OF *CONFRONTING Fascism*, “Fascism & Antifascism,” Don Hamerquist assumes that the term “fascism,” as utilized in colloquial language, causes a misunderstanding among regular Americans who are uninvolved in revolutionary processes. To that end, Hamerquist affirms that the intent of the book is to dialogue with Leftist and antifascist fighters, and that they are the true validation for what he is saying, not confining himself to strictly theoretical arguments.

Fascism is not just a term that says something is terrible, but above all refers to a particular form of capitalism, making its genocidal, imperialist, racist, reactionary, and repressive character clear. However, Hamerquist does not limit his definition of fascism to a kind of end stage capitalism, but stresses that it occurs also in anti-capitalist mass movements, urging those of us confronting fascism to analyze the phenomenon with all the seriousness it requires and not just accept that it comes only from above and is simply a product of capitalism. Fascism comes from below. The danger posed by fascism is imminent. In fact, I dare say that it is not just knocking, it has already broken through the windows and lives among us. Hamerquist fears that fascism will spread and consolidate amongst vast groups in

society. Concerning this fear, a dialogue with the phrase “social fascism,” coined by Boaventura Sousa Santos, is helpful.

Historically, as pointed out by Buenaventura Durruti, fascism is the means utilized by capitalists when they are losing power. For Durruti, fascism’s genesis is linked to the perpetuation of power at the hands of the bourgeoisie. But the development



CONFRONTING FASCISM



of fascism in Mussolini’s Italy and Hitler’s Germany in the 1920s shows the possibility of fascism developing amongst the masses, not necessarily generated from above by the capitalist class. This view of fascism as an insurgent force from below can help explain, for example, the alliance between the United States—the greatest symbol of modern imperialism and capitalism—and the Soviet Union—the leading country of the socialist block at the time—against fascism.

Historically, democratic projects such as social democracy stand as a counterpoint to fascism, but these are not the only ones. In the current moment, anarchists and other leftists around the world have come together around the antifascist agenda. Social democracy, even as it stands as a counterpoint to fascism, is not,

in fact, a revolutionary movement. Social democracy as an ideology does not question the capitalist status quo or the forms of oppression necessary to sustain it, and instead advocates for democratic capitalism. In other words, it does not fight for the end to all oppression. Hamerquist points out that, eventually, social democrats would move to ally with fascists as a way to combat against communism.

At first, the growth of fascism tends to be ignored because its seeds start in groups that do not seem as if they could become a great threat. For instance, President Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil once did not seem capable of gathering great power, appearing instead as an exaggerated caricature of right-wing hysteria. However, expansion of social networks, the creation of companies capable of spreading and reaching millions with fake news, and ignorance or apathy regarding effective popular organizing have allowed figures like this, once only worthy of ridicule, to reach great positions of power. More than that, they can easily mobilize a fascist agenda, and this does not always ensure greater capitalist development. Mobilization of hatred in these governments is far more evident than any effort to promote a capitalist economic agenda.

Hamerquist sees the construction of a true left-wing bloc as necessary in confronting fascism, with the political Left working for its popularization and development. A mobilization of the masses around an antifa mindset is the antidote to the sentiments already developing to turn everyday people toward fascism. Hamerquist highlights, however, that because fascists are often also anti-capitalists, it is not always clear who

the fascists necessarily are. There are also people calling themselves liberals who associate with movements preaching white supremacy, for example.

Black communities (and other non-white groups) are confronted with the contradiction and domination of their realities by white supremacy. But the existence of ethnic and racial minorities, or people of the so-called Third World, is not an automatic assurance that an elaborate antifascist belief and tactics will be developed. Many of these groups suffer from the influence of religious extremists and those who strive to preserve their traditions and ancestries. Others face the hardships of being immigrants. Evidently, fascism weighs its hand over these people as well. Within these communities, true antifascist fronts are formed, both in culture and in direct confrontations, but the fact is the people caught up in this daily oppression do not become antifascist militants automatically: popular and political organization is necessary.

Hamerquist stresses that fighting right-wing authoritarianism with left-wing authoritarianism does not generate a society free of fascism. More than that, he points out, it generates disengagement by the general populace instead of alignment with leftist thinking. It should not be a surprise that Stalinist or even Maoist practices, for instance, would cause horror to all those who desire a world of freedom.

Militarism is another relevant aspect discussed by Hamerquist. He notes that some groups believe that they must create military apparatus for antifascist groups, citing Britain’s Red Action. These leftist armed organizations with military formation are not new. The Brazilian guerrillas against the dictatorship had armed groups; the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) are organized around paramilitary tactics; the current Kurdish fighters and the Black Panther Party had armed wings and forces. However, Hamerquist does not believe that militarism is really necessary for the antifascist Left. He believes, coming from a Gramscian perspective, that militarism relies on the premise of attack, while antifascism is essentially a defensive movement. He therefore advocates creativity in the forms of action as vital for the triumph of groups opposing fascism.

Finally, Hamerquist suggests that to create a false conflict between organized and spontaneous groups generates unnecessary fragmentation of the Left. In addition, it is fundamental to create and diffuse revolutionary culture in daily life, so we do not lose ourselves in the idea that antifascism or anti-capitalism are merely unreachable utopias.

The second part of the book, by J. Sakai, further discusses the common sense concept of fascism, reminding us that it is a term we all have heard, but that we easily identify as something from the past, forgotten in World War II. But we also forget about the term when faced, for example, by the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001.

The author draws attention to the three characteristics Hamerquist defines as essential to understanding his concept of fascism. The characteristics, as cited by Sakai, are:

- 1) Fascism is arising not from simple poverty or economic depression, but from the spreading zone of today’s protracted capitalist crisis beyond either reform or normal repression;
- 2) As fascism is moving from the margins to the populist mainstream, it still

has a defined class character as an “extraordinary” revolutionary movement of men from the lower middle classes and the declassed;

3) The critical turning point now for fascism is not just Europe. With the failure of state socialism and national liberation movements in the capitalist periphery in the Third World, the far right, including fascists, are trying to align with the leadership of anti-colonialism.¹

Sakai also describes the presence of fascist discourse in musical groups and debates the relationship between religious fundamentalism and fascism, claiming that it is possible to look at groups such as Al Qaeda and see not only the influence of extreme religious ideology,² but also the use of fascist tactics, through the extermination of the Other.

It is important to point out that, like Hamerquist, Sakai asserts and demonstrates that fascism is not just a tool of capitalists. Fascism as a political phenomenon has its own contours, and can happen within officially non-capitalist contexts, marked by authoritarianism, implicit or explicit, and to the Left or to the Right in its political ideology. This is despite the fact that fascism often serves the purposes of maintenance and perpetuation of capitalism when it faces crisis. Sakai sums up this perspective well:

“While usual classes are engaged in economic production and distribution, fascism to support its heightened parasitism is driven to develop a lumpen-capitalist economy more focused on criminality, war, looting and enslavement. In its highest development, as in Nazi Germany, fascism eliminates the dangerous class contradiction of the old working class by socially dispersing and wiping it out as a class, replacing its labor with a new unfree proletariat of women, colonial prisoners and slaves. The ‘extraordinary’ culture of the developed fascist State is like a nightmare vision of extreme capitalism, but the big bourgeoisie themselves do not have it under control. That is its unique characteristic.”³

A third essay in the book, “Revolutionary Anti-Fascism: Some Strategic Questions,” by Mark Salotte, brings us closer to contemporary antifascist fights, starting with a discussion of N30 in Seattle—the 1999 shutdown of the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks—which marked a new period in leftist struggle, and the events of September 11, 2001 in New York City and Washington, DC.

Seattle’s N30 WTO shutdown was a series of direct actions that mobilized up to 100,000 people, including ecologists, students, anarchists, labor unions, and others. These actions were not organized by institutional partisan groups and represented the strength of widespread popular indignation against the advancement of neoliberal capitalism. The events of September 11 were an action by Al Qaeda, which led to the destruction of the World Trade Center buildings and part of the Pentagon in Washington, symbols of capitalist and state power in the US. This second event differentiates itself from the first by being an act coordinated by Al Qaeda, a centralized, authoritarian and hierarchical group.

It is evident that both events/actions were planned for months prior, and their

impacts in political reorganization – for both the Right and Left – share some similarities. However, both situations can be interpreted as milestones in the growth of fascism in the twenty-first century, underscoring that fascism is not confined to the history books, but has broken through the gates and is found in our midst.

Salotte presents a more optimistic perspective than Hamerquist or Sakai, picturing ways for the Left to grow. But he recognizes that the State attempts to contain revolt, and there are different ways that the State can do that: by containment, repression, or seeking to control political organizations. Therefore, Salotte points to contemporary anarchists as the example for antifascist groups. He argues that anarchists organize in a way meant clearly to deny State intrusion and control, which is one of the greatest obstacles posed to popular, widespread resistance to fascism.

Contributing to the discussion, *Alerta! Alerta!* takes a historical snapshot of fascist actions occurring in Europe in previous moments, reporting on situations in Germany, Greece, Slovakia, Italy and Croatia, up into the twenty-first century. Comparing the earlier *Confronting Fascism* with this work offers us the opportunity to see how fascism is already part of daily life, in its institutional spaces as well as in its imaginary and action.

Alerta! Alerta! author, journalist Patrick Strickland, begins with the narrative of each of these countries in weaving his considerations of fascism. Concerning Germany, he writes of the memories of Irmela Mensah-Scharrm, an anti-fascist fighter convicted of vandalism. One of her forms of resistance was to erase and modify graffiti with fascist content. Through her memories, the author tells us the history of Nazism in Germany, under the motto of “Germany for the Germans.” This woman’s narrative tells us about her confrontations with alt-right protests, including one in which she saw a young man alluding to US President Donald Trump, a symbol of how fascism is a global phenomenon. In the authors’ conversations, themes such as the rejection of immigrants—particularly Muslims—are frequent in Europe, a situation also discussed by the authors of *Confronting Fascism*. Just like in Hitler’s time, current fascists believe that today’s immigrants, much like the Jews before, are a threat to national identity. Strickland seeks out resistance in German history, including anarcho-syndicalist groups at the beginning of the twentieth century, up until the more recent events.

In a chapter about Greece, Strickland begins by recounting the confrontation with the alt-right in March, 2017:

“... a group of seven black-masked anarchists approached the headquarters of the neo-fascist Golden Dawn party near the Greek capital’s Larissa Station, a central train stop in the densely populated working-class borough of Kolonos. Armed with sledgehammers, sticks, and road flares, many of them donned motorcycle helmets in anticipation of a fight with the far-right Golden Dawn members. But on this morning, they met no resistance. The anti-fascists quickly smashed the windows and threw flares into the office. Messages lambasting the Golden Dawn were spray-painted on the door. According to some accounts, those inside the office, unprepared for a confrontation, quickly fled. Security camera footage of the incident emerged in the local media within hours and went viral on social media.”⁴

This action led to the imprisonment of several activists later that day, and the repercussions of the act continued in the following weeks and can be observed even today. In a relatively recurring way, Greece always reports news of direct radical action by anarchist and antifascist groups, beyond the successful example of Exarchia, an important community where anarchists of different tendencies coexist.

Popular mobilization in Greece depends on the participation of students, immigrants, workers, and others. Given the geographical location of Greece and the ease of entry via sea, the country has a strong presence of refugees and immigrants, with highlights to the Notara Center and the Solidarity in Exarchia, and so antifa groups perform significant protective and welcoming actions to these people, while the right persecutes them.

In a chapter about Slovakia, the author starts by telling the story of a Ján Benčík, whose son created his own Facebook account, and the retired man realized from there the possibilities of fighting against the far-right, using the platform to expose politicians and personalities engaged with the far-right in the country. One of the targets of the activist's exposition was Our People's Slovakia Party (LSNS), once considered a group of little relevance. However, in 2016, the group obtained a significant number of votes in the ballot, showing growth in the far-right and how it was reconfiguring the political map, a situation that repeated itself along the decade in several countries across the globe. This growth of the group in institutional politics led to a popular reaction, and people then went out to the streets to show their discontent.

Obviously, the activist and many of his followers started to suffer backlash and persecution, and a xenophobic tone was common. With the hate groups repeating the old formula of protecting the national identity, the Romani groups were one of the main targets of hate. Tension between the Romani in this region of Europe is latent, and their traditions are always threatened by the far-right.

Talking about Italy's history, the author discusses a conversation with Fabrizio Torva, a graduate student resident in Quarticciolo, a poor area of the city, marked by urban occupations, criminality, and drug trafficking. These things are characteristic of many working-class Italian neighborhoods, which are home to precarious sectors of the population. The student was one of the founders of *Palestra Popolare Quarticciolo*, the neighborhood's antifascist academy, one of the countless initiatives in Italy that are a form of resistance by people not willing to let the terror of Mussolini ravage the country again.

The young man believes that the contradictions of his neighborhood are a reflex of contemporary Italy, where the difficulties of survival are everywhere. From this young man's narrative, other resistances and tensions in the country appear and are presented throughout the book.

The commitment of anti-fascist resistance to solidarity with immigrants permeates *Alerta! Alerta!* The migration situation in Europe has been one of the most important political debates, reflecting geopolitical and diplomatic problems of great dimensions such as the Brexit situation in the United Kingdom, with a movement in England to leave the European Union.

The author traces a conversation with Croatian *Lovro Krnić*, an antifa activist, who has a strong presence on the internet, with his website Anti-Fascist Courier (*Antifašistički Vjesnik*), as well as in social networks such as Facebook. One of the main missions of the site is to challenge the hegemonic historic revisionism in Croatia, in which the far-right spreads lies denying the country's role in the Holocaust, the genocide that occurred in the country, and the persecution of the Serbian people. The young man, Serbian and Croatian in origin, seeks to recount with historical fidelity the trajectory of his people, and exalts the role of the partisans, made up of Serbians, Jews, Romani, and other antifascists during World War II. However, the persecution to these groups still exists and demands resistance efforts. Another symbol of resistance in the country is the destruction of monuments and symbols that signify this history of persecution. This type of direct action occurs in both greater and smaller scales in the rest of the world as well, as exemplified in the United States and Brazil when statues commemorating colonizers are vandalized or destroyed.

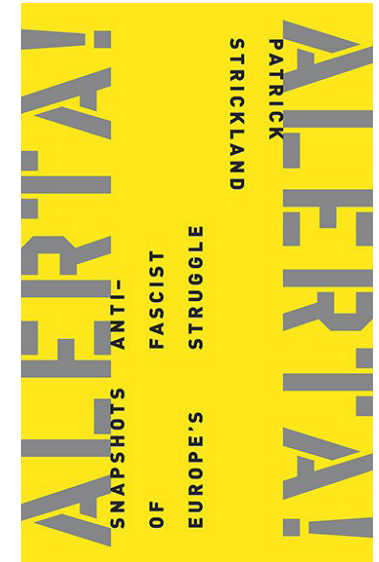
From these histories, and the conclusion in the chapter "In Search of a Safe Place," the author seeks to demonstrate that we are not safe from fascism, and that we have yet to turn this page in our history. On the contrary, fascism is stronger than ever, and is showing expressive numbers in ballots, for example.

But, like fascism, anti-fascism is also alive and spreading across the world. With an almost poetic narrative of various life stories, the five countries reported on here, both in their past and in contemporary times, shows us the importance of recognizing fascism among us and fighting back.

Reading *Alerta! Alerta!* and *Confronting Fascism*, it is possible to expand our debate and comprehension of fascism and antifascism. Both books give us the critical tools necessary to help us to comprehend current events across the world, in Europe, United States, and Brazil.

I think it is important to add to the discussion the term "social fascism," coined by sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos, and further develop some reflections about some themes that are not explicitly shown in these books, but which supply elements of analysis for the discussion and debate, inviting both a global and a decentralized connection in the fight against fascism.

The term social fascism describes, for fascist societies (and governments) to be established, society itself needs to be in such a state of social apathy and amnesia that it will reproduce fascism, with daily microaggressions of symbolic, and later physical, elimination of minority groups. An example of this is the invisibility of street residents,



culminating in acts such as the one that occurred in the Brazilian capital city, when Índio Galdino, a native leader, was burned alive in 1997, “mistaken” as a beggar by high class youth.⁶ The result of this social fascism is observed in the ballot boxes across several countries, such as with the election of Donald Trump in the US and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil.

The first level of this process involves so-called post-truth, or spreading fake news for the purpose of delegitimizing the credibility of one’s adversaries. This disinformation is disseminated through social networks, like Whatsapp and Twitter. Although lacking reliable sources, they are spread by people whom others trust. This creates smokescreens, leaving the actual candidates’ purposes and principles out of the public discourse, and often stirs up strong emotions in the population, such as the fear of the end of the family, traditions, and customs.

In the case of the US, we can point to the rumor that was widely spread during the 2016 Presidential election, that Hillary Clinton had a clone of herself. In Brazil, the main fake news was the rumor that candidate Fernando Haddad (from the social-democratic Worker’s Party) distributed gay-kits in school, including a penis-simulating bottle to teach pre-school children how to be gay. Although they are both unbelievable rumors, the public was bombarded by orchestrated attacks, using language and images capable of mobilizing a great part of the population through fear and horror. It was not a coincidence that Steve Bannon was a consultant for both campaigns.

The other level of the discourse is the construction of hate speech to attack minority and oppressed groups. Just like fear, hate is an emotion easily used to manipulate. Trump incited the population against immigrants, claiming that they would steal American jobs or that they would lead the country to bankruptcy because they would rely on social programs like food stamps. Meanwhile, in Brazil, Bolsonaro created a narrative that he was the only one who could protect the population from the communists, who wanted to invade people’s houses and pervert their children.

During the Brazilian elections, Bolsonaro said he would “exterminate petistas.”⁷ The main symbol of his campaign was a gesture with hands simulating a gun. None of this, despite the clear violent symbols, caused any indignation in the population. Trump, despite the unscrupulous similarities with the Nazi ghettos, promised to build a wall on the border between the United States and Mexico. This resembles Hitler’s discourse about the risk of erasure of the Aryan race, generating in the German population (also replicated in other fascist countries like Italy and Spain) a sense of self-preservation that led them to accept any atrocity, driven by fear, a sense of horror, and hatred.

For governments to preach intolerance and persecution of minority groups, such as the Trump administration, this social acceptance is required. Nowadays, with the existence of social networks and false news, it spreads with alarming speed. This leads to a general feeling of naturalization and acceptance of barbarism, such as genocide of Black populations by the police, separation of undocumented immigrant families, construction of the now infamous wall, denial of the existence of trans people, and on and on.

The highlight of *Confronting Fascism* is its preservation of documents that predate the N30 WTO shutdown in Seattle, allowing us to understand not only how fascist

ideology has spread across the country, but especially how the resistance has organized and reorganized. There generally exists some knowledge, even if not completely accurate on the part of mainstream media, of black bloc tactics. But antifa resistance goes beyond tactics. There is also constant situational analysis and convergence of ideas in developing tactics and strategies that address various moments, respecting specific cultural and historical characteristics. The Seattle protests of November ’99 demonstrated the will, urgency and determination to destroy the capitalist machine and create a different world. Those protests were merely the first step toward all sorts of demonstrations of dissatisfaction with the system across the country.

Some groups and organizations question the importance of keeping the antifa fight centered around revolutionary efforts. These two works analyzed in this essay are fundamental to demonstrating not only the efficiency of these tactics, but also their urgency in this particular moment. The antifa fight, at its core, is a broad and unrestricted fight to end capitalism, and with it, end of all related structural oppressions, such as gender oppression, white supremacy, xenophobia, and others. Ideally, the antifa fight connects ecologists, anarchists, workers, immigrants, refugees, women, trans people, people of color, and everyday people, independent of organizations. It is a cross-sectional fight that can unite us and drive us toward the construction of a new world. Fascism is, quintessentially, the enemy of humanity, and opposing it is an act of revolutionary courage, extremely necessary for the deliverance of every individual from material and symbolic oppressions.

Confronting Fascism was first published as a pamphlet in 2002 as a collaboration between Kersplebedeb, Anti-Racist Action (ARA) Chicago, and the Chicago-based anarchist magazine *Arsenal*. The authors themselves come from the Marxist tradition. They bring a deep analysis of the political aspects of fascism, as well as the organization of resistance movements. Xtn, who wrote the work’s introduction, soberly points out that there is a deficiency in Marxism to a serious critical approach, while recognizing the limits and faults of Marxism in taking the Left towards the type of radicalism necessary to definitively defeat the fascists Nazis, alt-right, and white supremacists from the streets and society. Xtn invites the Left as a whole, including anarchists, to consider where we are going, and most importantly how and why, while also criticizing a lack of analysis on the roles of women in antifa.⁸

Yet these problems do not undermine the quality of the work.⁹ No book, essay, or pamphlet can exhaust a subject, especially one still unfolding. This makes reading these two works¹⁰ even richer, since they dialogue with one another, showing the potential explored by distinct groups and situations, complementing each other and allowing us to have a broader outlook. Even with the deficiencies of *Confronting Fascism*, it is a courageous work that deserves to be read by anyone who is committed to ending fascism, not only in the United States, but on a global level.

For a wider analysis of contemporary fascism, one also has to also look at the advancement of the far-right in the countries of the global South. As a Brazilian, I cannot emphasize enough the role that Latin American dictatorships have had in the creation and consolidating fascism, creating institutions such as the Brazilian Military Police.

When attempting to connect the Left's struggles with the larger population, we have to contend with a lot of government propaganda that would call us "terrorists." For example, several resistance fighters under dictatorships, such as Marighella in Brazil, were treated by their governments as terrorists.¹¹ Today, this attempt to criminalize resistance movements is backed by the normality of the period. During widespread protests in Brazil in 2013,¹² the greatest persecution fell upon anarchists, with the famous twenty-three political prisoners at Rio de Janeiro, whom the government tried to characterize as terrorists and enemies of the nation.¹³

The idea of a "war on terror" easily wins the hearts and minds of common citizens, hiding intentions that are not protective of the population, such as the US offensive in the Middle East (and, seemingly, possibly in Venezuela and elsewhere). Meanwhile, clearly terrorist actions undertaken by alt-right and fascist groups are minimized by official narratives. A stark example is the Norwegian case, when a shooter killed over seventy young leftist people in 2011, but the narrative centered around questioning his mental sanity, an artifice to hide its true political motivation, seeking to individualize the case as something committed by a madman, without any connection to the climate of terror that the far-right is spreading around the world.

Both of these books focus on the recent history of fascism, but they also mention fascism's genesis in the post-WWI period, with the emergence Hitler and Mussolini. However, the most important aspect of both works is to explain the history of fascism in the twenty-first century. This should be a permanent alert: believing the danger of fascism is in the past will condemn us to relive the horror. We must resist, organize and fight with all available weapons, with militant discipline and theoretical accuracy, as there is no room for error before the fascist enemy.

Both books invite us to recognize that our liberating potential is in the fall of all borders, including borders of thought. Even as every place is unique, the fascist threat is a threat to humanity as a whole, be it in the Balkans or in the streets of Brooklyn. The enemy is lurking all around and demands us to be vigilant. Capital and repression know no boundaries, and our resistance tactics must have none as well. Beyond the European and North American experiences of both works, the revolutionary creativity must flow and mirror the antifascist movements of Africa, the Americas, and Asia, for our liberty does not fit within borders.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cíntia Melo is an anarchist lawyer and writer, with a Master's in Architecture and Urbanism. She is Brazilian, involved with fights for the right to housing, transport and the city, as well as gender equality. She has been involved with political organizations and social movements, living and fighting in different countries, such as Brazil, Argentina and the United States.

ENDNOTES

1. Hamerquist, Don, J. Sakai, and Mark Salotte. 2017. *Confronting Fascism: Discussion Documents for a Militant Movement*. Kersplebedeb.
2. Attention to the fact that this is not a generalization regarding Muslims, or any religious groups, but a criticism to specific groups that enforce authoritarian and/or terror practices.
3. Ibid., p. 149.
4. Strickland, Patrick. 2018. *Alerta! Alerta! Snapshots of Europe's Anti-Fascist Struggle*. Edinburgh: AK Press.
5. Sousa Santos, Boaventura de. 2003. "Poderá o Direito Ser Emancipatório?" *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, no. 65 (May): 03-76. <https://doi.org/10.4000/rccs.1180>. (Available in Portuguese).
6. Melo, Cíntia. 2018. "População de Rua: entre a exclusão e a justiça social. (Homelessness: from exclusion to social justice)". *Direitos Fundamentais Das Pessoas Em Situação de Rua*. Edited by Ada Pellegrini Grinover. Belo Horizonte, Brazil: Universidade De Itaúna; D'Plácido.
7. Petista is an expression that refers to the supporters of Brazil's Workers Party (PT), but it is often used as a slur to refer to leftists in general, even without any connection with PT.
8. Xtn of Chicago ARA
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Carlos Marighella (Salvador, December 5, 1911 - São Paulo, November 4, 1969) was a Brazilian Marxist-Leninist communist politician, writer and guerrillero. He was one of the main organizers of the armed groups that fought against the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1985), Marighella was considered the most important enemy of the regime. He was the co-founder of Ação Libertadora Nacional, a revolutionary organization active in Brazil during the military dictatorship.
12. A series of protests happened all over Brazil in June (2013), especially in the eleven cities chosen to host the World Cup (2014), those events were called Jornadas de Junho (June's Journeys). Some of the protests lead more than one million people to the streets.
13. Twenty-three anarchists were persecuted by the government in Rio de Janeiro accused of different crimes during the protest of June, 2013. They were convicted (each one faced different charges), and they are now appealing.

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A CALL FOR POWER

IN 2020, THANKS TO THE US PRESIDENTIAL election, we're all going to be thinking about **power**. Who has it? What is it? How does it work? How do we, as antiauthoritarians, relate to the established political system during a national election year, particularly at this crucial time?

Whatever your stance is on voting, we'll all be affected by the process, whether through media cycles, policy changes, or public discourse. However, focusing on individuals (such as Trump) risks missing the underlying structures of governance and economic organization that gave rise to him and others like him, as well as those who benefit from his actions. After all, both parties in the US are committed to capitalist social and economic organization. What's more, as the state and its traditional power structures continue to fall apart at the seams, the circus-like nature of the legitimacy crisis is playing out in the context of ecological changes that threaten the future of humanity. Meanwhile, racism and misogyny

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remain emboldened and dangerous. How can we best focus our work in these times? How do we assemble all the skills and lessons our movements have developed over decades of struggle? It's time to get out our power tools.

The 2020 issue of *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory* will be on the theme of Power, and we'd like to empower you to write for it. Are you an organizer currently engaged in movement work? Have you stepped back to take a break and think things through? Do you have ideas, experiences, or questions that you would like to develop and share with a broad readership? If so, we're here to help. This is our work: to preserve our histories, suspend our assumptions, further our analyses, and expand our dreams and knowledge as we envision and build a free society. This is part of how we create a better world together.

For this next issue, let's ask some questions we're often afraid to ask:

What do anarchists think power is? Do we want it or do we fight it?
 How can we wield power? *Can* we wield power?
 What is revolutionary dual-power?
 How can we get at class through race, and race through class?
 How does dysfunction in our movements and scenes help the state?
 How do we, as anarchists, relate to movements made up of people who don't necessarily share our politics, or who only share some of our politics?
 How do we fight fascism and authoritarianism?
 Is what we're doing working? What should we do differently?
 How do we win hearts and minds? How do we create and sustain community?
 How do we bring joy into the world?
 What are our wins? How do our victories shift and affect power?
 How do we learn from victories, and defeats? How do we build off them?
 How do we keep going? What are we fighting for and creating?

Our **deadline** for the next print issue is January 10, 2020.

All submissions should meet the following format requirements:

- ★ Please follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* for general format and citation guidelines.
- ★ Please use endnotes rather than footnotes and keep notes to a minimum.
- ★ Type your endnotes directly into the text. Please do not use the "insert note" function in Word, as it is incompatible with our layout software.
- ★ Do not include page numbers on your manuscript.
- ★ Do not indent new paragraphs. Use a line break instead.
- ★ Please keep in mind that we seek to share these ideas with a broad readership; write in accessible, clear language. Do not assume an academic audience.
- ★ Be sure to include your name and reliable contact information, as well as a brief (3-6 sentence) bio that you would like printed alongside your article.

Please prepare your manuscript as thoroughly as you can before sending it along for consideration. If you have a concept for an article but are unsure how to develop and refine the ideas or language, we are happy to help you out with the writing process, particularly if you have never written for publication before. Please contact us as soon as possible in order to ensure you are able to meet the publication deadline. We do not accept pitches or ideas without a draft after submissions have closed. As with any publication, please familiarize yourself with our work before submitting.

Send any questions or queries to: perspectivesonanarchisttheory@gmail.com

SUPPORT THE IAS

As part of the struggle for a more free and equitable world, we at the Institute for Anarchist Studies (IAS), that publishes *Perspectives*, continue trying to amplify the voices of those who don't have access to media—the everyday organizers who make campaigns succeed.

For over twenty-three years, the IAS has supported hundreds of radical writers and thinkers from around the world by offering grants, providing editorial support and publication opportunities through *Perspectives* and book publishing collaboration with AK Press, and hosting speakers at events and conferences. As an almost entirely volunteer organization, we need your help to continue to do our work.

We are currently expanding what we fund, beyond the written word, to include grants for people to do things like podcasts and videos. We are responding to the many ways people, particularly young people, now get their information beyond books, journals, and reading on-line. We seek to continue to make antiauthoritarian ideas relevant.

We're asking folks to help out with a generous monthly donation, or one-time donation. A monthly donation from you will have a real impact in people's lives. For example, a tax-deductible contribution could:

- ★ Provide childcare and time off from paid work for an organizer, allowing them to dedicate time to writing;
- ★ Grant access to archives for researchers working outside of academia;
- ★ Cover partial printing costs for the next issue of *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory* making radical ideas available to a wider readership and supporting print journalism;
- ★ Help fund a podcast or online video about contemporary issues;
- ★ Help keep our organization running and relevant for another twenty years.

We recognize your dedication to the fight for a freer society—one where everyone has equal opportunities and access to the things they need, where systems encourage democratic engagement rather than disempowerment, where gender, race, class, and ability are no longer sources of power over others, and where the natural world is seen as home, not merely as resource. We share your vision, and are in it to win. You can catch up with our work at www.anarchiststudies.org.

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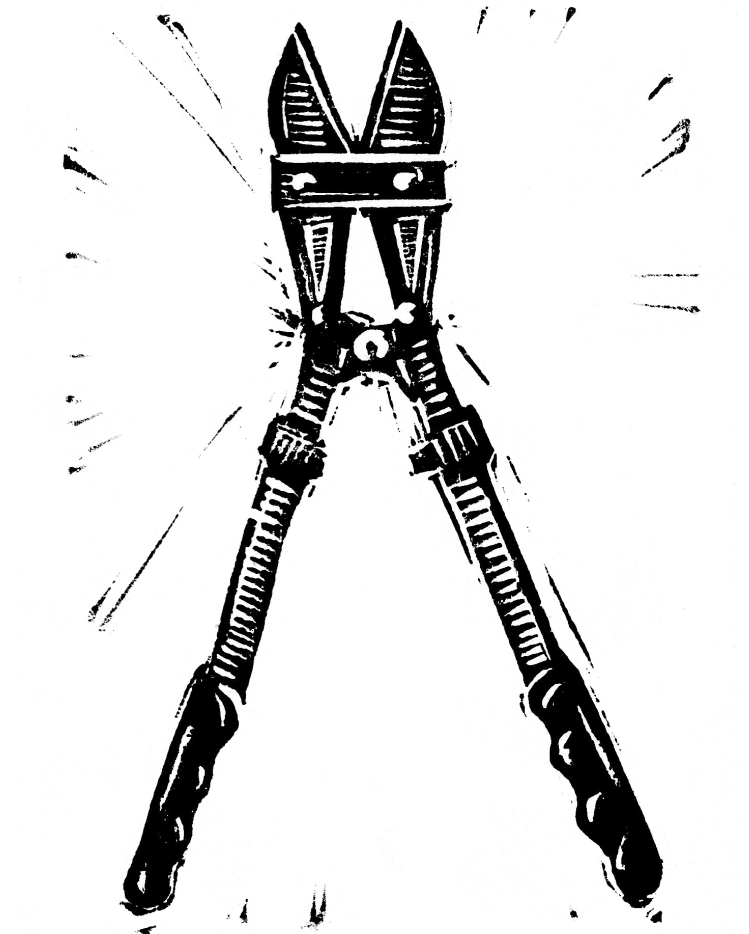


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