

STUDY/STRUGGLE/REFUGE

A FALSEWORKSHOP BY HIC ROSA COLLECTIVE

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1. THE DIALECTIC OF STUDY & STRUGGLE: AGAINST SETTLEMENTALITY

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Taped inside the top drawer of my desk is a small scrap of paper with three words scrawled across it: “Love, Study, Struggle.” It serves as a daily reminder of what I am supposed to be doing. Black study and resistance must begin with love. James Baldwin understood love-as-agency probably better than anyone. For him it meant to love ourselves as black people; it meant making love the motivation for making revolution; it meant envisioning a society where everyone is embraced, where there is no oppression, where every life is valued—even those who may once have been our oppressors. It did not mean seeking white people’s love and acceptance or seeking belonging in the world created by our oppressor. In *The Fire Next Time* (1963), he is unequivocal: “I do not know many Negroes who are eager to be ‘accepted’ by white people, still less to be loved by them; they, the blacks, simply don’t wish to be beaten over the head by the whites every instant of our brief passage on this planet.” But here is the catch: if we are committed to genuine freedom, we have no choice but to love all. To love all is to fight relentlessly to end exploitation and oppression everywhere, even on behalf of those who think they hate us. This was Baldwin’s point—perhaps his most misunderstood and reviled point.

To love this way requires relentless struggle, deep study, and critique. Limiting our ambit to suffering, resistance, and achievement is not enough. We must go to the root—the historical, political, social, cultural, ideological, material, economic root—of oppression in order to understand its negation, the prospect of our liberation. Going to the root illuminates what is hidden from us, largely because most structures of oppression and all of their various entanglements are simply not visible and not felt. For example, if we argue that state violence is merely a manifestation of anti-blackness because that is what we see and feel, we are left with no theory of the state and have no way of understanding racialized police violence in places such as Atlanta and Detroit, where most cops are black, unless we turn to some metaphysical explanation.

For my generation, the formal classroom was never the space for deep critique precisely because it was not a place of love. The classroom was—and still is—a performative space, where faculty and students compete with each other. Through study groups, we created our own intellectual communities held together by principle and love, though the specters of sectarianism, ego, and just-plain childishness blurred our vision and threatened our camaraderie. Still, the political study group was our lifeblood—both on and off campus. We lived by Karl Marx’s pithy 1844 statement:

An assemblage of texts, sounds, and visuals, and silences composed by Hic Rosa will provide the structure for this radio and studio Falseworkshop on the topic of Whose Struggle? What Study? Whither Refuge? This scene of aesthetic political education, with numerous entry and exit points, lines to accost and ignore at once, will invite audience members into a participatory living space to think through the imperatives of study and struggle and how they relate today, and what this relation suggests about relations we are to have with each other in these times.

But if the designing of the future and the proclamation of ready-made solutions for all time is not our affair, then we realize all the more clearly what we have to accomplish in the present—I am speaking of a ruthless criticism of everything existing, ruthless in two senses: The criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be.

Love and study cannot exist without struggle, and struggle cannot occur solely inside the refuge we call the university. Being grounded in the world we wish to make is fundamental. As I argued in *Freedom Dreams* nearly fifteen years ago, “Social movements generate new knowledge, new theories, new questions. The most radical ideas often grow out of a concrete intellectual engagement with the problems of aggrieved populations confronting systems of oppression.” Ironically I wrote these words with my students in mind, many of whom were involved in campus struggles, feeling a bit rudderless but believing that the only way to make themselves into authentic activists was to leave the books and radical theories at home or in their dorms. The undercommons offers students a valuable model of study that takes for granted the indivisibility of thought and struggle, not unlike its antecedent, the Mississippi Freedom Schools.

The Mississippi Freedom Schools, initially launched by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee as part of the 1964 Freedom Summer, were intended to create “an educational experience for students which will make it possible for them to challenge the myths of our society, to perceive more clearly its realities and to find alternatives, and ultimately, new directions for action.” The curriculum included traditional subjects that publicly funded black schools did not offer, but they were never designed to be simply better versions of the traditional liberal education model. Rather, students examined power along the axes of race and class. Students and teachers worked together to reveal how ruling whites profited

How do imperatives of study and struggle change in relation to each other, and how do their internal relations transform as they relate to not only the necessary departures, separations, and uncertain arrivals embedded in the political and existential provocations of the dialectic, but to the forced departures, separations, and uncertain arrivals intrinsic to the “refugee”? Is there a particular attitude of study demanded of this moment in US and world history, and how does it differ from other moments even if it resembles them? What words can we use to describe and unscribe it in order to narrate the possibility of some new beginning or to contest its seeming inevitability without resort to the language of optimism or pessimism that both affirm a similar relation to History as our appropriate home? Do we study the same way and the same things? Where and how must study reach for something that confronts the academic and activist enterprises of restoring epistemological and ontological order in their own distinct ways even in this moment?

This is what we seek to explore in this document, a compendium and convocation of gestures, friendships, agonisms, disregard, and a sustained commitment to a unfurling project of materialist and decolonial politics with an ethos of an anti-fascist hospitality that never forgets the lesson of the collusion and congeni(t)al relation of liberalisms and fascisms, hence seeks a space of struggle that tries to release contemporary resistances from the pallor of bourgeois accommodation and tolerance in an effort at some more meaningful hospitality or community, refuses to separate the imperative of refuge from the unsettlement of that which extends to secure, settle, define, and colonise, that demands that the rampant certainties of contemporary anti-fascist tremblings in the US, for instance, proceed from the premise of the settler-colonial and not only a racial capitalist state--so that the turn to study and struggle can resist the temptations of nativist or neoliberal forms of anti-racism and white supremacist versions of anti-capitalism. The colonial question, for instance, doesn't end when the migrant worker or the “most vulnerable” one arrives at the shores. That arrival and the gestures to hospitality or paternalism or abandonment that follow can no longer be confused with the point of departure--because it just isn't.

from Jim Crow, and they included in their analysis the precarious position of poor whites. Rural black kids of all ages learned to distinguish between “Material Things and Soul Things,” developing a trenchant critique of materialism. The freedom schools challenged the myth that the civil rights movement was just about claiming a place in mainstream society. They didn’t want equal opportunity in a burning house; they wanted to build a new house.



Perhaps one of the best historical models of radical, collective, grounded intellectual work was launched by black feminists Patricia Robinson, Patricia Haden, and Donna Middleton, working with community residents of Mt. Vernon, New York, many of whom were unemployed, low-wage workers, welfare mothers, and children. Together, they organized and read as a community—from elders to children. They saw education as a vehicle for collective transformation and an incubator of knowledge, not a path to upward mobility and material wealth. Influenced by Frantz Fanon, they interrogated and critiqued racism, sexism, slavery, and capitalism, emphasizing the ways in which racism produced a

kind of psychosis among poor black people. Their study and activism culminated in a collectively written, independently published book called *Lessons from the Damned* (1973). It is a remarkable book, with essays by adults as well as children—some as young as twelve, who developed trenchant criticisms of public school teachers and the education system.

Although they acknowledged the unavoidability of addressing trauma, they understood that one’s activism could not stop there. In a section titled “The Revolt of Poor Black Women,” the authors insisted that a genuine revolution requires the overthrow of capitalism, the elimination of male supremacy, and the transformation of self. Revolution, they argued, is supposed to usher in a brand new beginning; it is driven by the power of freed imagination, not the dead weight of the past. As Robinson, Haden, and Middleton wrote, “All revolutionaries, regardless of sex, are the smashers of myths and the destroyers of illusion. They have always died and lived again to build new myths. They dare to dream of a utopia, a new kind of synthesis and equilibrium.” [...]

They are ruthless in their criticism and fearless in the face of the powers that be. They model what it means to think through crisis, to fight for the eradication of oppression in all its forms, whether it directly affects us or not. They are in the university but not of the university. They work to understand and advance the movements in the streets, seeking to eliminate racism and state violence, preserve black life, defend the rights of the marginalized (from undocumented immigrants to transfolk), and challenge the current order that has brought us so much misery. And they do this work not without criticism and self-criticism, not by pandering to popular trends or powerful people, a cult of celebrity or Twitter, and not by telling lies, claiming easy answers, or avoiding the ideas that challenge us all.

--Robin D.G. Kelley, “Black Study, Black Struggle”

Thus, if I were to begin with the population, this would be a chaotic conception [Vorstellung] of the whole, and I would then, by means of further determination, move analytically towards ever more simple concepts [Begriff], from the imagined concrete towards ever thinner abstractions until I had arrived at the simplest determinations. From there the journey would have to be retraced until I had finally arrived at the population again, but this time not as the chaotic conception of a whole, but as a

rich totality of many determinations and relations. The former is the path historically followed by economics at the time of its origins. The economists of the seventeenth century, e.g., always begin with the living whole, with population, nation, state, several states, etc.; but they always conclude by discovering through analysis a small number of determinant, abstract, general relations such as division of labour, money, value, etc. As soon as these individual moments had been more or less firmly established and abstracted, there began the economic systems, which ascended from the simple relations, such as labour, division of labour, need, exchange value, to the level of the state, exchange between nations and the world market. The latter is obviously the scientifically correct method. **The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse. It**

appears in the process of thinking, therefore, as a process of concentration, as a result, not as a point of departure, even though it is the point of departure in reality and hence also the point of departure for observation [Anschauung] and conception. Along the first path the full conception was evaporated to yield an abstract determination; along the second, the abstract determinations lead towards a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought. In this way Hegel fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and

unfolding itself out of itself, by itself, whereas the method of rising from the abstract to the concrete is only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproduces it as the concrete in the mind. But this is by no means the process by which the concrete itself comes into being. For example, the simplest economic category, say e.g. exchange value, presupposes population, moreover a population producing in specific relations; as well as a certain kind of family, or commune, or state, etc. It can never exist other than as an



abstract, one-sided relation within an already given, concrete, living whole. As a category, by contrast, exchange value leads an antediluvian existence. Therefore, to the kind of consciousness – and this is characteristic of the philosophical consciousness – for which conceptual thinking is the real human being, and for which the conceptual world as such is thus the only reality, the movement of the categories appears as the real act of production – which only, unfortunately, receives a jolt from the outside – whose product is the world; and – but this is again a tautology – this is correct in so far as the concrete totality is a totality of thoughts, concrete in thought, in fact a product of thinking and comprehending;

but not in any way a product of the concept which thinks and generates itself outside or above observation and conception; a product, rather, of the working-up of observation and conception into concepts. The totality as it appears in the head, as a totality of thoughts, is a product of a thinking head, which appropriates the world in the only way it can, a way different from the artistic, religious, practical and mental appropriation of this world. The real subject retains its autonomous existence outside the head just as before; namely as long as the head's conduct is merely speculative, merely theoretical. Hence, in the theoretical method, too, the subject, society, must always be kept in mind as the presupposition.

But do not these simpler categories also have an independent historical or natural existence pre-dating the more concrete ones? That depends. Hegel, for example, correctly begins the Philosophy of Right with possession, this being the subject's simplest juridical relation. But there is no possession preceding the family or master-servant relations, which are far more concrete relations. However, it would be correct to say that there are families or clan groups which still merely possess, but have no property. The simple category therefore appears in relation to property as a relation of simple families or clan groups. In the higher society it appears as the simpler

–Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*

relation of a developed organization. But the concrete substratum of which possession is a relation is always presupposed. One can imagine an individual savage as possessing something. But in that case possession is not a juridical relation. It is incorrect that possession develops historically into the family. Possession, rather, always presupposes this 'more concrete juridical category.' There would still always remain this much, however, namely that the simple categories are the expressions of relations within which the less developed concrete may have already realized itself before having posited the more many-sided connection or relation which is mentally expressed in the more concrete category; while the more developed concrete preserves the same category as a subordinate relation. Money may exist, and did exist historically, before capital existed, before banks existed, before wage labour existed, etc. Thus in this respect it may be said that the simpler category can express the dominant relations of a less developed whole, or else those subordinate relations of a more developed whole which already had a historic existence before this whole developed in the direction expressed by a more concrete category. **To that extent the path of abstract thought, rising from the simple to the combined, would correspond to the real historical process.**



There is no internal or authentic connection between the spiritual existence of a student and, say, his concern for the welfare of workers' children or even for other students. No connection, that is, apart from a concept of duty unrelated to his own inner labor. It is a concept based on a mechanical contrast: on the one hand, he has a stipend from the people; on the other, he is acting out his social duty. The concept of duty here is calculated, derivative, and distorted; it does not flow from the nature of the work itself. This sense of duty is satisfied not by suffering in the cause of truth, not by enduring all the doubts of an earnest seeker, or indeed by any set of beliefs connected with an authentic intellectual life. Instead this sense of duty is worked out in terms of a crude, superficial dualism, such as ideals versus materialism, or theory and practice. In a word, all that socially relevant labor represents not an ethical intensification but only the timid reaction of a spiritual life. Yet the deepest and most crucial objection is not that such socially relevant labor is simply left floating, abstractly opposed to the true activities of a student, and so constitutes an extreme and thoroughly reprehensible form of relativism, one incapable of any true synthesis and hence one that anxiously and timidly strives to ensure that every mental activity is accompanied by a physical one, every intellectual commitment by its opposite. The decisive factor, then, is not that socially relevant labor is nothing but an empty, undirected desire to be "useful." The truly decisive criticism is that despite all this it lays claim to the gesture of love, where only mechanical duty exists. This duty is often nothing more than a deflection of purpose, an evasion of the consequences of the critical, intellectual existence to which students are committed. For in reality a student is only a student because the problems of spiritual life are closer to his heart than the practice of social welfare. And last — and this is an infallible sign — this socially relevant student activity does not succeed in revolutionizing the conception and value of such social work in general. In the public mind, such work still seems to be a peculiar mixture of duty and charity on the part of the individual. Students have not been able to demonstrate its spiritual necessity and for that reason have never been able to establish a truly serious community based on it, as opposed to one bound by duty and self-interest . . . The task of students is to rally round the university, which itself would be in a position to impart the systematic state of knowledge, together with the cautious and precise but daring applications of new methodologies. Students who conceived their role in this way would greatly resemble the amorphous waves of the populace that surround the prince's palace, which serves as the space for an unceasing spiritual revolution — a point from which new questions would be incubated, in a more ambitious, less clear, less precise way, but perhaps with greater profundity than the traditional scientific questions.

—Walter Benjamin, "Life of Students"

When you find yourself writing about the love that makes a claim on you by mourning with you a scarce and austere world, not as an act of compensation, accommodation, or charity in the name of something out there, but one of freedom, mutuality, hospitality, even a kind of *dil phainkness*—an unreluctant abundance, the unaccursed share, of a heart eager to fall in love—as if all our lives and the meaning of our deaths depended on it. And, as you write, you know this love is an occasion to envision, theorize, and compel politics, and not the other way around, as is usually presumed by those who think they know what

writing about love, and hence love itself, means to everyone. [...]

[T]hat in austere times such as these, when even friends are casualties to interiorized scarcity, love is not a luxury but a staple form of abundance, right next to history and memory. Sometimes, this involves acts of naming and producing love where it is needed most—historical-materialist scavenging in the era of austerity, an admittedly twisted but needful poetics of politics that Jacques Ranciere finds even in the self-naming of the proletariat. [...]

[T]hat only out of a kind of love can we even register the defacements of

politics and the political, in the face of radical and reactionary anti-politics that features loves and attachments that keep us from asking these questions: **How did we suffer to love this way? How did we come to focus on our objects of love without interrogating our ways of loving and what they do to that object? How did we become so attached to ourselves as lovers that we did not pause to confirm if this is what we, or our beloveds, really wanted?** [...]

[T]hat love seeks itself, springs not from a "lack" but from the presence of another. With Eric Santner, this is not

the presence of the Other, a reactive focus of the ethical turn away from politics. This is the “neighbor” revisited, the creature with whom the possibility of relation is not premised on any sort of reified alterity, because it is not an epistemological mediation, but one that is experiential and connected to, fundamentally, the question of being—with James Baldwin, more specifically, our being. The “creature” (in Santner) or “the uncanny” (in Freud), can be joined with the presence of that which will not look back (in --Asma Abbas, “From the Love Studio”

Benjamin) and in relating to whom a great deal of imagination must be invested. The poor, the oppressed, the disposable, the wretched—the unloved—that seem to haunt any political theory that I find worth caring about, seem to me always to thwart any overly earnest attempt at claiming them as the objects of one’s work. Political theorizing, at its best an act of accounting for the possibility of politics and political subjects, is much more fundamentally beholden to the unloved beyond their being mere

objects of analysis—a world, this world, and its impossibilities sewn into our very subjectivities that make this question, this word, this world, possible. To study and write with subjects and objects of love is to attend to what matters most: not the love or the suffering that affix and reproduce the subjects they need, but those who produce this world with their love and suffering and, along with that, the crucial potential to not reproduce it.

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PAUSE A MOMENT AND TURN STAGE LEFT; ACQUAINT YOURSELF WITH STUDY PARTNER(S). SPECULATE ON THE CONDITIONS OF (IM)POSSIBILITY FOR THIS STUDY GROUP. WHAT ABOUT THE ONES FROM THE “GENERATIONS” IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS ON THE PREVIOUS PAGES? WHAT ABOUT THE FELLOW PICKING AT THE TREE-BARK OR THE CHILDREN SUSTAINING THE SAME POSE? WHAT DOES STANDING AT ATTENTION – OR PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE – LOOK LIKE? WHAT COULD ALL THOSE LITTLE HANDS STEEL?”

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2. THE SCENES OF AESTHETIC POLITICAL EDUCATION, IN THE SETTLER COLONY, AFTER SLAVERY

AND AUSCHWITZ

I always try to think in terms of horizontal distributions, combinations between systems of possibilities, not in terms of surface and substratum. Where one searches for the hidden beneath the apparent, a position of mastery is established. I have tried to conceive of a topography that does not presuppose this position of mastery." The aim is to construct "little by little, an egalitarian or anarchist theoretical position that does not presuppose this vertical relationship of top to bottom.—Jacques Rancière, ""The Janus-Face of Politicized Art"

Poetic language that knows itself as such doesn't contradict reason. On the contrary, it reminds each speaking subject not to take the narrative of his mind's adventures for the voice of

truth. Every speaking subject is the poet of himself and of things. Perversion is produced when the poem is given as something other than a poem, when it wants to be imposed as truth, when it wants to force action." The demonstration of his knowledge is just as much the demonstration of his powerlessness: he will never walk by himself, unless it is to illustrate the master's lesson. In this case, Socrates interrogates a slave who is destined to remain one. [...] The Socratic method is thus a perfected form of stultification. Like all learned masters, Socrates interrogates in order to instruct. But whoever wishes to emancipate someone must interrogate him in the manner of men and not in the manner of scholars, in order to be instructed, not to instruct. And that can only be performed by someone who

effectively knows no more than the student, who has never made the voyage before him: the ignorant master. [...]

One must choose to attribute reason to real individuals or to their fictive unity. One must choose between making an unequal society out of equal men and making an equal society out of unequal men... whoever takes this [second] position has only one way of carrying it through to the end, and that is the integral pedagogicization of society—the general infantilization of the individuals that make it up. Later on this will be called continuing education, that is to say, the coextension of the explicatory institution with society."—Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*

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OH, SO "POETIC LANGUAGE THAT KNOWS ITSELF AS SUCH DOESN'T CONTRADICT REASON. ON THE CONTRARY, IT REMINDS EACH SPEAKING SUBJECT NOT TO TAKE THE NARRATIVE OF HIS MIND'S ADVENTURES FOR THE VOICE OF TRUTH. EVERY SPEAKING SUBJECT IS THE POET OF HIMSELF AND OF THINGS. WHISPER YOUR THOUGHTS TO THIS PAGE.

This moment also fundamentally exposes not only the question of epistemological method, but in an Adornian sense, the severing of education from academic enterprises of knowledge production—whether in the claim that the teacher is not involved in the production of knowledge or is accountable in any way to that enterprise, or those straight-faced prophets who are inquiring into the “politics” of academics by summarily rejecting/disregarding that education, or what happens in the classroom, is part of that. The moment of the defense of unreflexive knowledge production typified by but not limited to the social sciences on the one hand, and pedagogy as technology on the other, has to be countered together.

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The premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again.

[...]

Since the possibility of changing the objective—namely societal and political— conditions is extremely limited today, attempts to work against the repetition of Auschwitz are necessarily restricted to the subjective dimension. By this I also mean essentially the psychology of people who do such things. I do not believe it would help much to appeal to eternal values, at which the very people who are prone to commit such atrocities would merely shrug their shoulders. I also do not believe that enlightenment about the positive qualities possessed by persecuted minorities would be of much use. The roots must be sought in the persecutors, not in the victims who are murdered under the paltriest of pretenses. What is necessary is what I once in this respect called the turn to the subject. One must come to know the mechanisms that render people capable of such deeds, must reveal these mechanisms to them, and strive, by awakening a general awareness of those mechanisms, to prevent people from becoming so again. It is not the victims who are guilty, not even in the sophistic and caricatured sense in which still today many like to construe it. Only those who unreflectingly vented their hate and aggression upon them are guilty. One must labor against this lack of reflection, must dissuade people from striking outward without reflecting upon themselves. The only education that has any sense at all is an education toward critical self-reflection.

--Theodor Adorno, "Education After Auschwitz"

This entire sphere is animated by an alleged ideal that also plays a considerable role in the traditional education: the ideal of being hard.[...] I remember how the dreadful Boger during the Auschwitz trial had an outburst that culminated in a panegyric to education instilling discipline through hardness. He thought hardness necessary to produce what he considered to be the correct type of person. This educational ideal of hardness, in which many may believe without reflecting about it, is utterly wrong. The idea that virility consists in the maximum degree of endurance long ago became a screen-image for masochism that, as psychology has demonstrated, aligns itself all too easily with sadism. Being hard, the vaunted quality education should inculcate, means absolute indifference toward pain as such. In this the distinction between one's own pain and that of another is not so stringently maintained. Whoever is hard with himself earns the right to be hard with others as well and avenges himself for the pain whose manifestations he was not allowed to show and had to repress. This mechanism must be made conscious, just as an education must be promoted that no longer sets a premium on pain and the ability to endure pain. In other words: education must take seriously an idea in no wise unfamiliar to philosophy: that anxiety must not be repressed. When anxiety is not repressed, when one permits oneself to have, in fact, all the anxiety that this reality warrants, then precisely by doing that, much of the destructive effect of unconscious and displaced anxiety will probably disappear. [...]

The tune of the hickory stick across the butt of a schoolboy is not the proper *experience* required to inform his intelligence...He is not taught to *understand* what it is he is doing when he obeys -- even saying his obedience is based on 'love and kindness' -- unless the fool who is whipping him thinks that x number of *thumps* across the butt is what the arithmetical number x is composed of. ... He is being *whipped* what history is; what ideals like justice, equality, etc., are; what passion and poetry are. The boy is being punished in order to learn -- a poem! Punished to 'know' what is true, good, beautiful. A truly gifted boy would *turn* on his 'teacher' -- And what?

....I think that perhaps you have scorned knowledge of 'the most difficult of conditions' and are even now trying hard to scorn me and my condition. The most fragile and delicate of all ideas are those that reflect the fact that within human beings, there is an impenetrable area that *no one* can enter and defile: a heart of human tenderness so tenacious, so all-suffering and accepting, calm and *resilient* to human response, to love, that no force on earth can ever defeat it. It is the idea of the soul -- and there are many of them; they are born 'fragile and delicate and have to survive each day and be re-created each day under the most difficult conditions.'

I need beauty like I need to breathe. Do you imagine that those most cherished revelations, those ideas you speak of, do not come to me in that pit as they do to you? I know how transitory beauty is, but I also know from experience how eternal it is in the heart of man. It just now occurred to me that I would like to think I have captured some of that beauty for myself.

--Jack Henry Abbott, "In the Belly of the Beast" (Letters from solitary confinement to Norman Mailer)

[T]here is something exaggerated, irrational, pathogenic in the present-day relationship to technology. This is connected with the "veil of technology." People are inclined to take technology to be the thing itself, as an end in itself, a force of its own, and they forget that it is an extension of human dexterity. The means—and technology is the epitome of the means of self-preservation of the human species—are fetishized, because the ends—a life of human dignity—are concealed and removed from the consciousness of people. As long as one formulates this as generally as I just did, it should provide insight. But such a hypothesis is still much too abstract. It is by no means clear precisely how the fetishization of technology establishes itself within the individual psychology of particular people, or where the threshold lies between a rational relationship to technology and the over-valuation that finally leads to the point where one who

cleverly devises a train system that brings the victims to Auschwitz as quickly and smoothly as possible forgets about what happens to them there. With this type, who tends to fetishize technology, we are concerned—baldly put, with people who cannot love. This is not meant to be sentimental or moralistic but rather describes a deficient libidinal relationship to other persons. Those people are thoroughly cold; deep within themselves they must deny the possibility of love, must withdraw their love from other people initially, before it can even unfold. And whatever of the ability to love somehow survives in them they must expend on devices. [...] Society in its present form—and no doubt as it has been for centuries already—is based not, as was ideologically assumed since Aristotle, on appeal, on attraction, but rather on the pursuit of one's own interests against the interests of everyone else. This has settled into the character of people to their innermost center. What

contradicts my observation, the herd drive of the so-called lonely crowd [die einsame Menge], is a reaction to this process, a banding together of people completely cold who cannot endure their own coldness and yet cannot change it. Every person today, without exception, feels too little loved, because every person cannot love enough. The inability to identify with others was unquestionably the most important psychological condition for the fact that something like Auschwitz could have occurred in the midst of more or less civilized and innocent people. What is called fellow traveling was primarily business interest: one pursues one's own advantage before all else and, simply not to endanger oneself, does not talk too much. That is a general law of the status quo. The silence under the terror was only its consequence. The coldness of the societal monad, the isolated competitor, was the precondition, as indifference to the fate of others, for the

fact that only very few people reacted. The torturers know this, and they put it to the test ever anew. Understand me correctly. **I do not want to preach love. I consider it futile to preach it; no one has the right to preach it since the lack of love, as I have already said, is a lack belonging to all people without exception as they exist today. To preach love already presupposes in those to whom one appeals a character structure different from the one that needs to be changed.** For the people whom one should love are themselves such that they cannot love, and therefore in turn are not at all that lovable. One of the greatest impulses of Christianity, not immediately identical with its dogma, was to eradicate the coldness that permeates everything. But this attempt failed; surely because it did not reach into the societal order that

--Theodor Adorno, "Education After Auschwitz"

produces and reproduces that coldness. Probably that warmth among people, which everyone longs for, has never been present at all, except during short periods and in very small groups, perhaps even among peaceful savages. The much maligned utopians saw this. Thus Charles Fourier defined attraction as something that first must be produced through a humane societal order; he also recognized that this condition would be possible only when the drives of people are no longer repressed, but fulfilled and released. If anything can help against coldness as the condition for disaster, then it is the insight into the conditions that determine it and the attempt to combat those conditions, initially in the domain of the individual. One might think that the less is denied to children, the better they are treated, the greater would be the chance of success. But here too illusions threaten. Children who have no idea of the cruelty and hardness

of life are then truly exposed to barbarism when they must leave their protected environment. Above all, however, it is impossible to awaken warmth in the parents, who are themselves products of this society and who bear its marks. The exhortation to give more warmth to children amounts to pumping out warmth artificially, thereby negating it. Moreover, love cannot be summoned in professionally mediated relations like that of teacher and student, doctor and patient, lawyer and client. Love is something immediate and in essence contradicts mediated relationships. The exhortation to love—even in its imperative form, that one should do it—is itself part of the ideology coldness perpetuates. It bears the compulsive, oppressive quality that counteracts the ability to love. The first thing therefore is to bring coldness to the consciousness of itself, of the reasons why it arose.

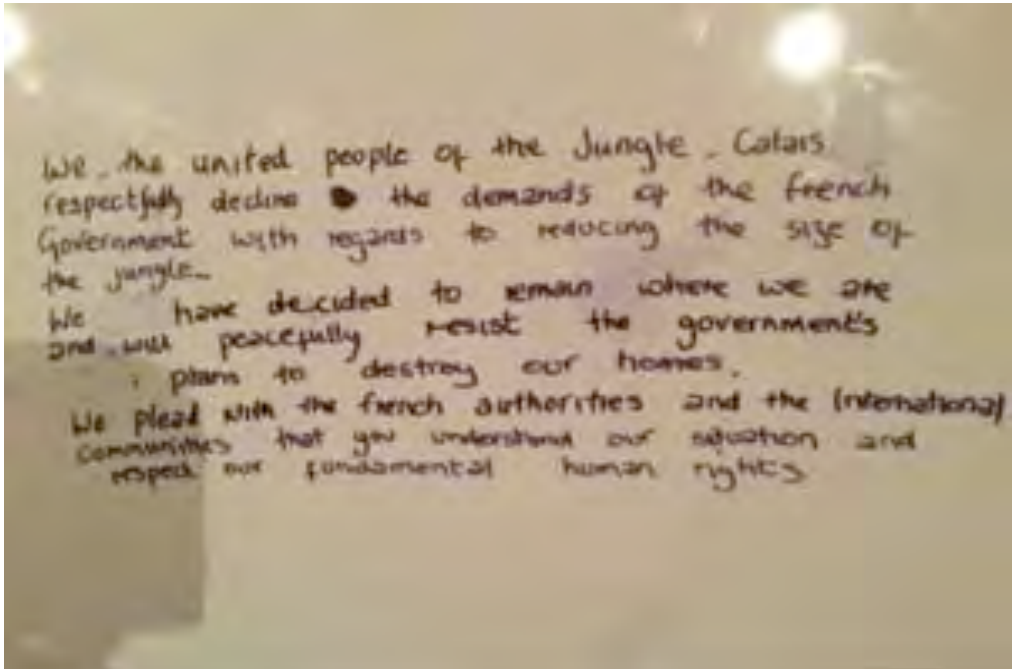
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A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization. A civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilization. A civilization that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilization. The fact is that the so-called European civilization – "Western" civilization - as it has been shaped by two centuries of bourgeois rule, is incapable of solving the two major problems to which its existence has given rise: the problem of the proletariat and the colonial problem; that Europe is unable to justify itself either before the bar of "reason" or before the bar of "conscience"; and that, increasingly, it takes refuge in a hypocrisy which is all the more odious because it is less and less likely to deceive. Europe is indefensible. Apparently that is what the American strategists are whispering to each other. That in itself is not serious. What is serious is that "Europe" is

morally, spiritually indefensible. And today the indictment is brought against it not by the European masses alone, but on a world scale, by tens and tens of millions of men who, from the depths of slavery, set themselves up as judges. The colonialists may kill in Indochina, torture in Madagascar, imprison in Black Africa, crackdown in the West Indies. Henceforth, the colonized know that they have an advantage over them. They know that their temporary, "masters" are lying. Therefore, that their masters are weak. And since I have been asked to speak about colonization and civilization, let us go straight to the principal lie which is the source of all the others. Colonization and civilization? - 1 - In dealing with this subject, the commonest curse is to be the dupe in good faith of a collective hypocrisy that cleverly misrepresents problems, the better to legitimize the hateful solutions provided for them. In other words, the essential thing here is

to see clearly, to think clearly - that is, dangerously - and to answer clearly the innocent first question: what, fundamentally, is colonization? To agree on what it is not: neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease, and tyranny, nor a project undertaken for the greater glory of God, nor an attempt to extend the rule of law. To admit once for all, without flinching at the consequences, that the decisive actors here are the adventurer and the pirate, the wholesale grocer and the ship owner, the gold digger and the merchant, appetite and force, and behind them, the baleful projected shadow of a form of civilization which, at a certain point in its history, finds itself obliged, for internal reasons, to extend to a world scale the competition of its antagonistic economies. Pursuing my analysis, I find that hypocrisy is of recent date; that neither Cortez discovering Mexico from the top of the great teocalli, nor Pizarro before Cuzco (much less Marco Polo before Cambaluc), claims that he is the harbinger of a superior order; that they kill; that they plunder; that they have helmets, lances, cupidities; that the slaving apologists came later; that the chief culprit in this domain is Christian pedantry, which laid down the dishonest equations Christianity=civilization, paganism=savagery, from which there could not but ensue abominable colonialist and racist

consequences, whose victims were to be the Indians, the yellow peoples, and the Negroes. That being settled, I admit that it is a good thing to place different civilizations in contact with each other that it is an excellent thing to blend different worlds; that whatever its own particular genius may be, a civilization that withdraws into itself atrophies; that for civilizations, exchange is oxygen; that the great good fortune of Europe is to have been a crossroads, and that because it was the locus of all ideas, the receptacle of all philosophies, the meeting place of all sentiments, it was the best center for the redistribution of energy. But then I ask the following question: has colonization really placed civilizations in contact? Or, if you prefer, of all the ways of establishing contact, was it the best? I answer no. And I say that between colonization and civilization there is an infinite distance; that out of all the colonial expeditions that have been undertaken, out of all the colonial statutes that have been drawn up, out of all the memoranda that have been dispatched by all the ministries, there could not come a single human value. First we must study how colonization works to decivilize the colonizer, to brutalize him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred, and moral relativism; and we must show that each time a head is cut off or an eye



We, the united people of the Jungle - Colars
respectfully decline the demands of the French
Government with regards to reducing the size of
the jungle.
We have decided to remain where we are
and will peacefully resist the government's
plans to destroy our homes.
We plead with the French authorities and the International
Communities that you understand our situation and
respect our fundamental human rights.

put out in Vietnam and in France they accept the fact, each time a little girl is raped and in France they accept the fact, each time a Madagascan is tortured and in France they accept the fact, civilization acquires another dead weight, a universal regression takes place, a gangrene sets in, a center of infection begins to spread; and that at the end of all these treaties that have been violated, all these lies that have been propagated, all these punitive expeditions that have been tolerated, all these prisoners who have been tied up and "interrogated, all these patriots who have been tortured, at the end of all the racial pride that has been encouraged, all the boastfulness that has been displayed, a poison has been instilled into the veins of Europe and, slowly but surely, the continent proceeds toward savagery. And then one fine day the bourgeoisie is awakened by a terrific reverse shock: the gestapos are busy, the prisons fill up, the torturers around the racks invent, refine, discuss. People are surprised, they become indignant. They say: "How strange! But never mind-it's Nazism, it will pass!" And they wait, and they hope; and they hide the truth from themselves, that it is barbarism, but the supreme barbarism, the crowning barbarism that sums up all the daily barbarisms; that it is Nazism, yes, but that before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples; that they have cultivated that Nazism, that they are responsible for it, and that before engulfing the whole of Western, Christian civilization in its reddened waters, it oozes, seeps, and trickles from every crack. Yes, it would be worthwhile to study clinically, in detail, the steps taken by Hitler and Hitlerism and to reveal to the very distinguished, very humanistic, very Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century that without his being aware of it, he has a Hitler inside him, that Hitler inhabits him, that Hitler is his demon, that if he rails against him, he is being inconsistent and that, at bottom, what he cannot forgive Hitler for is not crime in itself, the crime against man, it is not the humiliation of man as such, it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been

reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa. And that is the great thing I hold against pseudo-humanism: that for too long it has diminished the rights of man, that its concept of those rights has been - and still is - narrow and fragmentary, incomplete and biased and, all things considered, sordidly racist. I have talked a good deal about Hitler. Because he deserves it: he makes it possible to see things on a large scale and to grasp the fact that capitalist society, at its present stage, is incapable of establishing a concept of the rights of all men, just as it has proved incapable of establishing a system of individual ethics. Whether one likes it or not, at the end of the blind alley that is Europe, I mean the Europe of Adenauer, Schuman, Bidault, and a few others, there is Hitler. At the end of capitalism, which is eager to outlive its day, there is Hitler. At the end of formal humanism and philosophic renunciation, there is Hitler. And this being so, I cannot help thinking of one of his statements: "We aspire not to equality but to domination. The country of a foreign race must become once again a country of serfs, of agricultural laborers, or industrial workers. It is not a question of eliminating the inequalities among men but of widening them and making them into a law." That rings clear, haughty, and brutal and plants us squarely in the middle of howling savagery. But let us come down a step. Who is speaking? I am ashamed to say it: it is the Western humanist, the "idealist" philosopher. That his name is Renan is an accident. That the passage is taken from a book entitled *La Refonne intellectuelle et morale*, that it was written in France just after a war which France had represented as a war of right against might, tells us a great deal about bourgeois morals. [...]

What am I driving at? At this idea: that no one colonizes innocently, that no one colonizes with impunity either; that a nation which colonizes, that a civilization which justifies colonization - and therefore force - is already a sick civilization, a civilization that is morally diseased, that irresistibly, progressing from one consequence to another, one repudiation to another, calls for its Hitler, I mean its punishment.

--Aimé Césaire "Discourse on Colonialism"

3. ALL THE KING'S HORSES, ALL OUR LIBERAL FRIENDS--ON LIBERAL HOSPI(CE)TALITY

In June 2012, several refugees in the city of Würzburg stitched up their mouths to protest the lack of response to their political demands. Four demands have been at the core of the reinvigorated refugee movement ever since: Germany should abolish all Lagers (asylum centres in which the large majority of asylum seekers is housed, sometimes for years and decades, and often in isolated areas of the countryside), stop all deportations, abolish mandatory residence law (Residenzpflicht, a legal requirement for many refugees to only live and move within narrow district boundaries defined by the local foreigners' office) and guarantee refugees the rights to work and study. The refugee movements' long-standing critique of German asylum law and the discriminatory regulations governing the lives of many asylum seekers has gained visibility in recent years – yet in the past months, it has been eclipsed in the press and in public debate by the new idea of a German Willkommenskultur (“welcoming culture”). Heeding the history and present of refugee resistance in Germany has never been more crucial.

The recent refugee movements in Germany are part of the larger struggles of immigrants and minorities against racism in post-War Germany (e.g. the Ford strike in 1973, or the movement of Antifa Gençlik, founded in 1988). The history of racist violence, which came to head in the reunified Germany of the early 1990s, provides an important reference point for current debates. Increasing arson attacks on asylum centres, and racist pogroms in the 90s were cited as important justification for claims by politicians and the media that

Germany had “reached capacity”. As a result, the German government severely restricted German asylum law in 1993.

Subsequently, self-organisations such as the Refugee Initiative Brandenburg brought their critique of isolation and human rights violations in German asylum homes to international attention. Other refugee organisations such as The Voice, Karawane and Refugee Emancipation developed strategies to reach out to refugees and invite them to join a political struggle for human rights that included speaking out against the total lack of education and work opportunities and denial of health care.

The revived refugee movement in 2012 was convinced that the master's tools – individualised recourse to the courts and bureaucratic labyrinths – would never dismantle the master's house. Refugees from all over Germany defied mandatory residence law, mobilised across Lagers and set out on a protest march from Southern Germany to the federal capital, insisting that they must be present and visible when decisions about their lives were made. They occupied public spaces, buildings, embassies, churches, trees and roofs in Berlin, Munich, Hamburg and Hannover and took to hunger strikes.

While the refugee movement eventually gained access to the mainstream media and shifted the discourse on migration, asylum and refugees slightly, this was recently swept away in the context of Europe's “refugee crisis”. Starting this past summer, thousands of Germans offered their support to newly arrived migrants, and Germany was lauded in

the international press as the ‘welcoming champion’. Yet, while the current flurry of activity offers conveniently de-politicised gestures of charity, it mostly ignored or sidelined refugees who were already self-organized. These groups have made clear that sincere support must engage in the politics that frame causes and experiences of the flight to Europe as well as the experiences refugees make here.

A colonial mask of silence is being put back on refugees through the charity dimension of the Willkommenskultur hype: It “prevents her/him from revealing those truths, which the white master wants ‘to turn away,’ ‘keep at distance’ at the margins, invisible and ‘quiet’”.

Rather than thanking Germany for its supposed generosity, the refugee movement in Germany has not tired to point out the past and present interconnectedness of prosperity and peace in Germany with poverty and war in other parts of the world: it scandalizes neocolonial resource extraction from the Global South and weapon exports, and generally calls for resistance against nationalist, racist and capitalist border regimes. It is uncomfortable for the majority of German society to be faced with people as (political) subjects who frame their demands from a postcolonial perspective, who speak out against rampant racism across German society, and who refuse to differentiate between socio-economic and political refugees by pointing out that economic questions are also political.

How about those on the left who confessed/availed themselves as liberals right after Brexit or Trump? These moments unveiled and forced the acknowledgement of a latent desire for a kind of liberal multicultural structure. Others seemed to vocalize their more or less long-standing faith in the liberal project (loosely conceived) – “I just thought the state was stronger” or “I had thought that progressive legislative gains would have been more protected”. How are we to understand these betrayals? Perhaps initially, on a larger national and rhetorical level that spans the past number of years and multiple elections cycles. But we might also understand this betrayal on a deeply personal level amongst our friends, family, classmates, study-partners, and mentors. I can’t stop thinking about people that run in our circles and work under the banner of “radical” causes. There has been calls (nationally and locally) to organize and fight hate, fascism, and nationalisms, but it seems the questions of how organizing is happening and who to organize are rather touchy subjects.

But the racist violence of the 1990s euphemised as “concerns of the citizenry” had paid off – and continues to do so. A sharp rise in arson attacks on asylum centres as well as rising rightwing agitation and violence once again occasion sombre warnings by politicians and pundits/journalists about the need to ensure that the “mood” of the population is kept in check. These public figures suggest that high numbers of refugees will “provoke” racist violence. To prevent violence, they advocate reducing the attractiveness of Germany for refugees by curtailing their rights. Political parties across the spectrum, media, and a significant percentage of citizens now demand deportations and the worsening of living conditions for all migrants – especially those not considered ‘proper’ refugees – in the name of Germany’s “welcome culture” for ‘real’ asylum seekers.

In both the smouldering remains of burned asylum homes and the political manoeuvres that follow, recent history looms large: a first batch of legislation

to tighten German asylum law was passed in July, followed by another set of restrictive changes in October. A recent cabinet agreement was hailed by its advocates as the “harsh measures ever to limit the intake of refugees in Germany”. The measures particularly lash out against Roma people from the Balkans fleeing persistent racial discrimination and people escaping poverty. Several

countries are newly reclassified as safe countries of origin, meaning people fleeing persecution there have very little chances of getting asylum in Germany. Lager control is tightening: incarceration and deportations increasingly facilitated.

Which path Germany will now follow might depend on which experiences become a reference point in current debates: The shadow of the 90s where violent racists succeeded in having asylum laws restricted or the history of self-organised refugee resistance. Those who decide to “help” need to start by listening to what refugees actually want. As The Voice activist Rex Osa has reiterated in a recent interview: What refugees demand is that the notion of “help” needs to include support for self-organisations of refugees and requires a double perspective: It is important to look at both reasons for people to flee and the racism they experience in Germany. It is only then that the status quo of self-congratulatory, paternalistic help can be transcended into political solidarity.

–Joshua Kwesi Aikins and Daniel Bendix, “The refugee welcome culture”



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A holy-saint-faced international of hypocrites deprecates the material progress foisted on the Blacks; protests, courteously, against the importation not only of alcohol, syphilis and field artillery but also of railways and printing. This comes well after the former rejoicings of its evangelical spirit at the idea that the "spiritual values" current in capitalist societies, and notably respect for human life and property, would devolve naturally from enforced familiarity with fermented drinks, firearms and disease. It is scarcely necessary to add that the colonist demands this respect for property without reciprocity. Those Blacks who have merely been compelled to distort in terms of fashionable jazz the natural expression of their joy at finding themselves partners of a universe from which Western peoples have

Hospitality without relation doesn't strike me as an impossibility or a contradiction; it seems exactly that this sort of hospitality is practiced by the liberal opposition, which welcomes refugees only as persons without history, even persons incapable of history. At the same time, overcoming the methodologies of relation cultivated in the exercise of American imperialism doesn't seem merely a matter of just reading or of 'actual communication' in any simple sense; to that effect goes not only the work of Edward Said but also the spectacle of leftist writers who read Muslim thinkers only to discover, over and over, that the same aspirations are shared everywhere and only differentiated by 'types of discourse.' I would argue that there obtains, moreover, a tacit alliance between this latter kind of perverse cosmopolitanism, its own colonial odyssey, and the reduction of questions of hospitality to the merely ethical, by which I mean the ethical as that kind of moral conduct which may be argued and achieved in a vacuum. So, as to achieving the goal of a hospitality which refuses liberalism's and fascism's common impulse towards the evacuation of relationships and the preservation of anonymity, as well as an education which counters rather than reproduces the perverse role of education in liberalism--I think it is worth it for a moment to insist on history. Even in a very direct sense, as the premise that the question of what it means to relate to others in fascism versus against fascism cannot be separated from the question of the intimacies of the war on terror. Or, more directly still, the immediate imperative of comprehending the relationship of 'local' sufferings to international ones, which is not something which happens after or before what is 'on the ground' but is actually achieved there. This is also 'a learning that one can only be swept up in.'

Anti-"fascist hospitality" and "anti-fascist" hospitality is minimally hospitality that insists on relation/s and politics, and not on the evisceration and evacuation of relations and politics even if only to make living room for some or stage the largest march in all of history. The phrase came up in the context of the refugee resettlement moment, and thinking about what kind of work could happen locally (and beyond) that would somehow address both those immediate local issues but also not somehow succumb to the logics of reactionary liberals that have been unleashed in the name of the current emergency. So, the fascist question wouldn't be separated from the imperialist/race/settler colonialist question. We thought of a potential local organising framework of the Anti-Fascist Hospitality Committee, that could think of taking in the refugees but also compel a necessary honesty about the fascist and colonial questions.

willfully withdrawn may consider themselves lucky to have suffered nothing worse than degradation. The eighteenth century derived nothing from China except a repertoire of frivolities to grace the alcove. In the same way the whole object of our romantic exoticism and modern travel lust is of use only in entertaining that class of blasé clients sly enough to see an interest in deflecting to his own advantage the torrent of those energies which soon, sooner than he thinks, will close over his head.

--Murderous Humanitarianism

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We get a glimpse at the archival tactics of power in Kwame Nkrumah's description of the rise of neocolonial formations. In *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, he writes "Faced with the militant peoples of the ex-colonial territories in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, imperialism simply witches tactics." As Nkrumah argues, the colonial apparatus would dispense with its paraphernalia and its representatives ostensibly "giving" independence to its former subjects, to be followed by 'aid' for their development" (ibid.). But with the flags and officials gone, the colonial apparatus would begin to "[devise] innumerable ways to accomplish objectives formerly achieved by naked colonialism" (ibid.) Hence, neocolonialism, or as he puts it, the very "modern [attempt] to perpetuate colonialism while at the same time talking about "freedom"--was born (ibid.)

As former colonial modes of power transitioned into neocolonial ones, they achieved archival heights, admitting recently held colonies into the domain of independence. The former colonies were thus like documents gathered together into the library of modern nations. As such, these newly admitted nations were consigned to the location of sovereignty and coordinated according to the ideal of freedom. Yet archiving those former colonies was also a kind of house arrest in which freedom signified genres of subjugation and domiciliation.

One of the ways in which this archontic power began to domesticate demands for independence was through invitation rather than wholesale rejection. In the context of neocolonialism, such invitations and acts of inclusion represented the mutation rather than the annihilation of prior forms of power. As Nkrumah argues, "The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside" (ix.) Neocolonialism would persuade by presumably conceding to the efforts of self-determination by minoritized nations and peoples, by placing them within a presumably horizontal and modern terrain. Hence, neocolonialism was the moment in which manifold strategies of conquest, management, and regulation would take

If a commitment to materialist, decolonial, and anti-fascist hospitality comes after betrayal--or is what even allows us to acknowledge a betrayal--that is because there has been and continues to be so much fascist hospitality on our floor. The knowledge captains that intimately smirk at the intimacies obliterated in socially mapped truths, paused for just a moment, to wait for the echo and to see if the snow packed mountain they had settled below with such arrogance would respond. The tremble in the shadow passed--the mountain and them are spectators again...there is talk about "knowing" why in a year.

The technocrats of alliance seize their pedagogic moment in the preparation of the venue, in the expertise of the professional action actors, and by snatching the opportunity to provide an instrumental platform and pattern for both visitor and host. The technology they weaponize against their enemy-- crowd--is sometimes called 'logistics.' Those who don't need friends, who just surveil the town to anticipate it, don't even show up.

I'm trying to resist all the primed-for-action going on in the hospi(ce)tality circles. When the provisions against dissensus, the rubric for action, and the anti-thinking is done we are left with a self satisfied title of "allied," but with no friends. So many antiseptics are used...things will grow from there...it takes time and action will produce results. There is fascist hospitality going on and they want action now. In nyc we've met twice in an LGBT center and a church with hundreds of people, but i'm resisting a lot of these cohorts of professionals who want to give form and meaning to the meetings solely through the disciplining of the meet-ors and the perpetual conditioning of our presence ~trumping~ the conditions that make us present. So we're here in study of the things always reaching us and reaching towards where others are reached and to be reached by those out of it.

place within and through the outward appearance of anticolonial independence and freedom. This was a form of power that had cultivated a solicitous rather than a primarily dismissive manner. As the legendary nation that would admit new people under the banner of independence while subjecting them to a new law whose borders would increase with every admittance, the United States would become--in Nkrumah's words--"foremost among the neo-colonialists." The history and theorization of neocolonialism is important inasmuch as it is one segment in a larger transformation of power--that is, power's ability to incorporate formerly marginalized and excluded subjects and societies, an ability signified through the extension of recognition and sovereignty for people who spent much of their histories under colonial yokes. The specific circumstances of neocolonialism are thus only a piece of a more general mode of power that was developing in the days of independence. This mode would derive its international character from its ability to select from insurgent practices what it needed to carry out its own hegemonic authority. A mode of power was forming that would ingest various revolutionary formations, and in fact, build its strategies around their dissection."

--Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*

Non est potestas Super Terram quam Comparetur ei. Job. 41. 24.



4. (ANT)AGON(Y)

You claim that the war is long over
In which none has yet stepped over,
None strode into the field –
Neither the enemy moved nor did we stir!
No ranks were formed nor any flag's flutter
Roused our disordered compatriots out of slumber!
No inkling of the unfamiliar enemies' march did it deliver!
You insist that no remedies exist now,
Body decrepit, trembling hands bereft of strength now!
The rock of oppression- no longer can we lift it now,
The rock of oppression – our sinews too weak for it now,
The mountain of oppression insurmountable –
Its monstrosity weighs us down now!
All tried their luck at dislodging it once –
All have stepped aside in exasperation now!
Consoling themselves by priding in their brilliance-
Of their hollow bravado –in their conversations they avow!
Comrades! In the beloved's sweltering unforgiving lane,
Shall the bloom of our blood not dazzle in its dust again?
Shall this bloom from her lane abstain? Will it be the bane
of the crimson gardens that kiss the dust of her feet twain?
Shall this doleful silence not ever witness again:
The clamour of the voices that for truth campaign!
The revels near the gallows, where lovers get happily slain?
The tribulations of love that we faced,
The costs that we paid-
the bodies and lives that went waste
Echelons of loss still await us before any gain,
Friends more losses to be mourned –
Before the cessation of this pain!
Yet more tribulations to be passed-
More bitter trials, more acrid tears to restrain!!
--"Tum Yeh Kehto Ho," Faiz Ahmed Faiz (translation)

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I had been worrying for some time about the long-delayed arrival of your letter, as you can imagine, when I came across a passage in Regius just before hearing from you. Under the title 'Waiting' it reads as follows: 'Most people wait for a letter every morning. That no letter arrives - or, if one does arrive, it contains only a rejection of some kind - generally holds true for those who are sad already'. When I came across this passage, I already felt sad enough to take it as a foretaste or presentiment of your own letter. If, ultimately, there was something encouraging for me in the letter (I say nothing about the unchanged perspective it expresses) then it is in the fact that your objections, however staunchly they may be shared by other friends, should not be interpreted as a rejection.

--Walter Benjamin to Theodor Adorno

... [S]he had avoided touching their things -- the books, the clothes, the cricket equipment -- she had avoided thinking about their little ways, their hobbies, their obsession with the natural world, their shared love of birds in particular. It was too hard to think about these things, and her grief was too raw. But then she found her way into it, and there's a lift when those pages arrive. They are difficult to read, but behind them is the generosity of the writer: to her family, to herself, and to her readers. Very few of us will ever experience loss on this scale, but somehow, her having written about herself is a kind of preemptive consolation for us too -- 'writing is a much better quality of agony than trying to forget'.....

-- Teju Cole "A Better Quality of Agony"

[Arendt] gives action a place to call home and she tells it to stay there, where it belongs. But, of course, it refuses... Here is the real risk of action: in this refusal. The self-surprising quality of action is not limited to the fact that action does not always turn out as we would have intended it to; nor even to the fact that we, as actors, are never quite sure 'who' it is that we have turned out to be. Action is self-surprising in another sense as well, in the sense that it happens to us. [...] What if we took Arendt's own irresistibly lodged public/private distinction to be a line drawn in the sand, itself an illicit constative, a constituting mark or text, calling out agonistically to be contested, augmented, and amended? And what if we began by dispensing with the geographic and proprietary metaphors of public and private? What if we treated Arendt's notion of the public realm not as a specific topos, like the ancient Greek agon, but as a metaphor for a variety of (agonistic) spaces, both topographical and conceptual, that might occasion action? We might be left with a notion of action as an event, an agonistic

disruption of the ordinary sequence of things that makes way for novelty and distinction, a site of resistance of the irresistible, a challenge to the normalizing rules that seek to constitute, govern, and control various behaviors.

--Bonnie Honig "Toward an Agonistic Feminism"

The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy...The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation. **Only the actual participants can correctly recognize, understand, and judge the concrete situation and settle the extreme case of conflict. Each participant is in a position to judge whether the adversary intends to negate his opponent's way of life and therefore must be repulsed or fought in order to preserve one's own form of existence.** Emotionally the enemy is easily treated as being evil and ugly, because every distinction, most of all the political, as the strongest and most intense of the distinctions and categorizations, draws upon other distinctions for support. ... **The political is the most intense and extreme antagonism, and every concrete antagonism becomes that much more political the closer it approaches the extreme point, that of the friend-enemy grouping. [...]**

Humanity as such cannot wage war because it has no enemy, at least not on this planet. The concept of humanity excludes the concept of the enemy, because the enemy does not cease to be a human being -- and hence there is no specific differentiation in that concept. That wars are waged in the name of humanity is not a contradiction of this simple truth; quite the contrary, it has an especially intensive political meaning...The concept of humanity is an especially useful ideological instrument of imperialist expansion, and in its ethical-humanitarian form it is a specific vehicle of economic imperialism...To confiscate the word humanity, to invoke and monopolize such a term probably has certain incalculable effects, such as denying the enemy the quality of being human and declaring him to be an outlaw of humanity; and a war can thereby be driven to the most extreme inhumanity.

--Carl Schmitt "On the Concept of the Political"

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Maybe "the problem" is I don't know how to fight in defense of something, because most things about oneself, beyond a kind of honour, feel not worth defending. This is not the same thing as having no stakes, but I have to learn to fight without already being appropriated in one. I don't think I have ever decided on any fight in which I am enemy or ally. So perhaps hospitality allows me to reserve some room for something? It has been one of the least self-determined things. I also don't think I grew up ever thinking one fights for oneself or if we always know what we are fighting for. And I don't say that in some religious, altruistic way--it felt, well, way too weird and self-involved and not "honorable" enough to even regard a fight you were in as a fight about oneself without some thought as to how you were a vehicle for something else. Maybe there is a tradition in which identity as interest, identity or interest, interest or identity, wasn't the premise. Perhaps I encountered communist action as a kind of religious action, which is why I don't yet know how to act with the fundamentally irreligious, the fundamentally unhonourable, inhospitable, spatialist, nativist fighters of any kind. I can put my body in front of theirs, but still not think we are in the same fight.

I recently read a book by Susan Buck-Morss that opened with the observation that, writing in response to a 'historical event,' history is the first thing to recede; similarly, my overarching concern is for where the prevailing currents of surprise, condemnation, outrage, and dismay at improper governance themselves pave the road to collaboration--hence for where anti-fascist hospitality, anti-fascist education, can interrupt those currents. By the same token, I think we all have little patience for calls of desperation that demand an evacuation of theory in favor of practice, or which oppose a rarified realm of knowledge or distended thinking to the simpler truths of pure action. The dichotomy of thinker and practitioner being less useful, in part, because it tends to intimate the existence of a specific austerity of thought, and so condemn thinking to the hell of idealism and implementation. The point, therefore, being to insist upon thinking in the very heat of the (anti-)fascist day, rather than assuming, over and over, the necessity of its contemplative remove.

Anyway, at the level of an epistemological commitment, maybe a useful point of departure is to ask what is being recapitulated, especially between the advent of Trump's initial victory and, now, the first days of his presidency. The diplomats who signed the dissent memo denounced Michael Flynn for tweeting that fear of Muslims is rational, but given those same diplomats' comparative quiescence under the Obama administration, it would seem apparent that they, too, honor or encourage a version of his statement. I have thought for awhile about the difference between an America that kills in the name of American interests or national prerogative, the kind of impersonal, statistical, managerial America made by the diplomats, and the altogether more personally violent America that for Trump will prove its democratic sincerity by killing in the name of the people. (Trump's affection for Andrew Jackson seems telling in that respect; his complaint about the diplomats, interestingly, is that they assume their role in defiance of the administration and therefore of the electoral will of the people.)

Confrontations between these two specific forces seem to recapitulate, in a way, the same terms of opposition that obtained between Clinton and Trump even during the campaign, a kind of rehearsal of the intimacies of liberalism and fascism *in nuce*. Notably, the liberal opposition (which interestingly the Democratic Party has not yet managed to capture as its own, or return completely to the game of electoral opposition) seems to pride itself on the 'egalitarianism' of the premise that anyone can be made into a good citizen of the empire given time, or to continuously advance a premise that people are born equal but ruined by history, victims of circumstance such as may be rescued--whether by humanitarian intervention or 'continuous vetting' or the construction of charter schools. For the same reason, I think, this stratum of the anti-Trump opposition can only address the immigrant as a figure with no history and no substantive commitments, as well as a figure for which state violence 'abroad' and 'domestically' are duly held separate. Compare that, for instance, to Trump's claim to act on behalf of an America that feels threatened by Muslim immigration and the continuous threat of 'radical Islamic terrorism,' and accordingly his ability to disregard the statistics about nationality and 'home-grown' terrorism that the liberals continuously throw in his face. Consequently, I would argue that Trump doesn't see himself as an anti-democratic force per se, which is perhaps precisely where the cadre of professional politicians will find its grand opportunity to collaborate with him, as made plain in so many of the redactory speeches of the once-upon-a-time anti-Trump Republicans.

Given that the impulse to relate an anti-fascist politics to a push for democracy or inclusion can so easily be coopted in the service of renewal of faith in statehood, given that democracy cannot be a noble or perpetually-betrayed category only, I think it is important to preface the discussion of hospitality and education with a certain kind of historical attention—one perhaps necessarily at odds with the concept of history deployed most infamously by social science but also more widely. (Compare, for instance, the concepts of the immigrant deployed either by Trump or the liberal opposition with the concept of the immigrant that arrives in the Ghadar movement, or really in internationalist political thought generally.) Forgive me for the somewhat fragmentary nature of these remarks, but in these days I almost think of David Adams' *Colonial Odysseys*, of where the fantasy of the Puritan settlers building cities on the *terra nullius* at 'home' gets recapitulated 'abroad,' and conversely also where the peculiar modes of disengagement and the quotidian fascisms of denied relation, themselves learnt in American imperial expeditions, will now get repackaged and repeated in the field of the ostensibly 'merely' domestic.

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5. WHAT SHALL I CALL

THEE?

Everywhere we went, I went
in pigtails
no one could see—

ribbon curled
by a scissor's sharp edge,
the bumping our cars

undertook when
hitting
those strips
along the interstate

meant to
shake us
awake.
Everywhere
we went
horses
bucking

their riders off,
holstered pistols
or two Frenchies

dancing in black and
white
in a torn apart
living room

on the big screen
our polite cow faces
lit softly

by New Wave Cinema
I will never
get into. The soft whirr

Karl Polanyi, in "History in the Gear of Social Change" from *The Great Transformation*, spends a significant portion of time basically guarding against a definition of fascism, emphasizing that all cultural, political, and religious institutions proved that they weren't immune to it. I think the closest he got to a definition was something like 'the escape from an institutional deadlock with the production of a disease which brought sickness unto death.' But he gives a non-definition for the purposes of indicting those who would court and collude with fascism. This is not a moralizing move, he is trying to emphasize fascism's 'ephemeral tendencies'—a kind of 'fascist hospitality' -- to show how it is exactly what the coalition-builders on the left sit in their beds dreaming about.

Perhaps we should embrace this opportunity to stake out our interest in articulation as considerations through and across difference that are resistant and exorbitant to desires for terminological and ideological obsession with origins. Not as a means of sidelining or shortcutting questions of meaning or purpose, but quite the opposite to raise them in more intimate ways. Perhaps it is precisely where the term escapes translation--where they snag--that we find openings for conversation and discussions in articulation through the invariant gap across space and time. Our interest in method and materialist responsibilities far exceeds he any desire to finally nominate or nominalize fascism or antifascism. Such is the falsehood we are attempting. These expressions are ways for us to come to terms with experiences with a violence that cannot be located determinately but through transnational, informal and formal communication, connection, and collaboration.

The question of hospitality comes up precisely in the need to find another relation beyond ally and friend, and to escape the forced austerity, even pathology, of the friend/enemy distinction. My experience of the women's march left me thinking of how brutally and brutally unaware of any kind of hospitality the march seemed--largely because I assumed, or no one tried to controvert, the 'fact' that white liberal women were the host regardless of who was actually "hosting" it. I think, for me, the question of hospitality isn't a literal one--not the same as generosity, but certainly one of abundance. The hospitality that the settler colonialist exploits is certainly one of those, but I also cannot think of a way that the response to that exploitation is giving up or disavowing as disadvantage the abundance we know in our hearts is ours. The trick is that hospitality and hosting may need to be differentiated, even in the way Schmitt talks about the hostis/the enemy, and perhaps the question of hospitality begins somewhere else.

Maybe my attachment to the word hospitality has always been a form of synonym for or an improvement on intimacy, modes of relating that feel uninvited. And far from prescription, it seems to describe a fundamental fact of those who are always the ones hosting even if it is not their home and never will be. I had expected at the march some degree of room in the heart, that I didn't find--some sort of correction of that kind of brutishness that I see in bourgeois feminists of a particular age, a kind of cruelty that feels harder than the cruelty of others. I realised in some creepy way that some degree of historic envy of the body that can host has always been in the sinews of liberals and liberal feminists, so that when they turned to the state to court and be courted by, then somehow their troubles were over, their other lacks or abundances didn't matter, they didn't have to compare to Harriet Jacobs anymore. I am wondering if a particular envy/hatred to death always seeps through the mode of liberal hosts and that the countering of abundances by just fundamentally ignoring or being cruelly inattentive to that economy. In that sense, it's not prescriptive but usefully diagnostic of those layers of labours. In James Baldwin's terms, it diagnoses, presupposes, and counters the denial of relations that comes with liberalism's claim to inclusion/hospitality/open borders (except with a border guard)/no illegals, only those we can pity...etc..) So, that hospitality that is built on the evisceration and evacuation of relations IN ORDER to make space for people at the "largest march in history" is not one that takes us anywhere, it is no microcosm or macrocosm of anything, but something on the side, that one can use as one wills, to produce oases of relations within, or to set up antagonisms where needed, but which will not be recognised, because, you know, no relations exist....

of continuous strip imagery.

What is fascism?

A student asked me

and can you believe
I couldn't remember
the definition?

The sonnet,

I said.

I could've said this:

our sanctioned twoness.

My covert pigtails.

Driving to the cinema

you were yelling

This is not

yelling you corrected

in the car, a tiny

amphitheater. I will

resolve this I thought

and through that

resolution, I will be

a stronger compatriot.

This is fascism.

Dinner party

by dinner party,

waltz by waltz,

weddings ringed

by admirers, by old

couples who will rise
to touch each other
publicly.

In intertheater traffic

you were yelling

and beside us, briefly

a sheriff's retrofitted bus.

Full or empty

was impossible to see.

--"Force Visibilities," Solmaz Sharif

Where was Hatewatch during 170 million crimes committed against White Americans over the last 30 years? Hatewatch. What an absurd organisation. But aren't they part of the huge parasitic Infestation which is always trying to destroy anyone who loves liberty and disagrees with the Monsters' plan for the degradation and control, of the White Americans of this nation? They steal what they can and target us for governmental gansterism and drooling meatpuppet consumption... Lovewatch. The Wake Up or Die Love Watch is a listing of those who love this nation and our White Racial Family and the alternative to the lists of parasitic propagandists. (Storm Front Website)

How has politics become a struggle over who has the right to name themselves as acting out of love and in the name of love? What does it mean to stand for love by standing alongside some others and against other others? It has become common for hate groups to rename themselves as organisations of love. Such organisations claim they act out of love for their own kind, and for the nation as an inheritance of kind (Our White Racial Family), rather than out of hatred for strangers or others. Indeed, a crucial part of the re-naming is the identification of hate as coming from elsewhere and as being directed towards the 'hate group'; hate becomes --Sara Ahmed, "Fascism as Love"

an emotion that belongs to those who have identified hate groups as hate groups in this first place. [...] Love is narrated as the emotion that energises the work of such groups; it is out of love that the group seeks to defend the nation against others, whose presence them becomes defined as the origin of hate. As another site puts it: 'Ask yourself, what have they done to eliminate anything at all? They feed you with "Don't worry, we are watching the hate groups" and things like this. You know what they do? They create the very hate they purport to erase!' Here it is the very critique of racism as a form of hate, which becomes seen as the conditions of production for hate; the 'true' hated group is the white groups who are, out of love, seeking to defend the nation against others, who threaten to steal the nation away.

The renaming of hate groups as love groups, and hate watch as Love Watch, exercises a narrative of love as protection by identifying white subjects as already at risk from the very presence of others. [...]

Let's take another example:

The depths of Love are rooted and very deep in a real White Nationalist's soul and spirit, no form of 'hate' could even begin to compare. At least not a hate motivated by ungrounded reasoning. It is not hate that makes the average White man look upon a mixed race

couple with a scowl on his face and loathing in his heart. It is not hate that makes the White housewife throw down the daily newspaper in repulsion and anger after reading of yet another child-molester or rapist sentenced by corrupt courts to a couple of short years in prison or parole. It is not hate that makes the White workingclass man curse about the latest boatload of aliens dumped on our shores to be given job preferences over the White citizen who built this land. It is not hate that brings rage into the heart of a White Christian farmer when he reads of billions loaned or given away as 'aid' to foreigners when he can't get the smallest break from an unmerciful government to save his failing farm. No, it's not hate, It is Love. (Aryan Nations Website)

In this narrative it is the imagined subject of both party and nation (the White nationalist, the average White man, the White housewife, the White working man, the White Citizen and the White Christian farmer) who is hated, and who is threatened and victimised by the Law and polity. The narrative works precisely as a narrative of hate not as the emotion that explains the story (it is not a question of hate being at its root), but as that which is affected by the story, and as that which enables the story to be affective.

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Italian fascism was the first rightwing dictatorship that took over a European country, and all similar movements later found a sort of archetype in Mussolini's regime. Italian fascism was the first to establish a military liturgy, a folklore, even a way of dressing—far more influential, with its black shirts, than Armani, Benetton, or Versace would ever be. It was only in the Thirties that fascist movements appeared, with Mosley, in Great Britain, and in Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia, Spain, Portugal, Norway, and even in South America. It was Italian fascism that convinced many European liberal leaders that the new regime was carrying out interesting social reform, and that it was providing a mildly revolutionary alternative to the Communist threat.

Nevertheless, historical priority does not seem to me a sufficient reason to explain why the word fascism became a synecdoche, that is, a word that could be used for different totalitarian movements. This is not because fascism contained in itself, so to speak in their quintessential state, all the elements of any later form of totalitarianism. On the contrary, fascism had no quintessence. Fascism was a fuzzy totalitarianism, a collage of different philosophical and political ideas, a beehive of contradictions. Can one conceive of a truly totalitarian movement that was able to combine monarchy with revolution, the Royal Army with Mussolini's personal militia, the grant of privileges to the Church with state education extolling violence, absolute state control with a free market? The Fascist Party was born boasting that it brought a revolutionary new order; but it was financed by the most conservative among the landowners who expected from it a counterrevolution. At its beginning fascism was republican. Yet it survived for twenty years proclaiming its loyalty to the royal family, while the Duce (the unchallenged Maximal Leader) was arminarm with the King, to whom he also offered the title of Emperor. But when the King fired Mussolini in 1943, the party reappeared two months later, with German support, under the standard of a "social" republic, recycling its old revolutionary script, now enriched with almost Jacobin overtones. [...]

The contradictory picture I describe was not the result of tolerance but of political and ideological discombobulation. But it was a rigid discombobulation, a structured confusion. Fascism was philosophically out of joint, but emotionally it was firmly fastened to some archetypal foundations.

So we come to my second point. There was only one Nazism. We cannot label Franco's hyperCatholic Falangism as Nazism, since Nazism is fundamentally pagan, polytheistic, and anti-Christian. But the fascist game can be played in many forms, and the name of the game does not change. The notion of fascism is not unlike Wittgenstein's notion of a game. A game can be either competitive or not, it can require some special skill or none, it can or cannot involve money. Games are different activities that display only some "family resemblance," as Wittgenstein put it. Consider the following sequence:

1 2 3 4

abc bcd cde def

Suppose there is a series of political groups in which group one is characterized by the features abc, group two by the features bcd, and so on. Group two is similar to group one since they have two features in common; for the same reasons three is similar to two and four is similar to three. Notice that three is also similar to one (they have in common the feature c). The most curious case is presented by four, obviously similar to three and two, but with no feature in common with one. However, owing to the uninterrupted series of decreasing similarities between one and four, there remains, by a sort of illusory transitivity, a family resemblance between four and one.

Fascism became an allpurpose term because one can eliminate from a fascist regime one or more features, and it will still be recognizable as fascist. Take away imperialism from fascism and you still have Franco and Salazar. Take away colonialism and you still have the Balkan fascism of the Ustashes. Add to the Italian fascism a radical anticapitalism (which never much fascinated Mussolini) and you have Ezra Pound. Add a cult of Celtic mythology and the Grail mysticism (completely alien to official fascism) and you have one of the most respected fascist gurus, Julius Evola.

But in spite of this fuzziness, I think it is possible to outline a list of features that are typical of what I would like to call Ur-Fascism, or Eternal Fascism. These features cannot be organized into a system; many of them contradict each other, and are also typical of other kinds of despotism or fanaticism. But it is enough that one of them be present to allow fascism to coagulate around it.

—Umberto Eco, "Ur-Fascism"

5. STRUGGLE AND/WITH HOSPITALITY

"You're probably surprised to find us so inhospitable," said the man, "but hospitality isn't a custom here, and we don't need any visitors."

If this quotation from Kafka's *Castle* seems strange to us, it is because we cannot believe that there is a culture, a society or "a form of social connection without a principle of hospitality. ..." "But what is left of this principle of hospitality today, or ethics in general, when fences are erected at the borders, or even "hospitality" itself is considered a crime? In "Derelictions of the Right to Justice (But what are the 'sans-papier' Lacking?)," concerning the clumsy and violent imposition of the Debreit laws on immigrants and those without rights of residence, the so-called "sans-papier," which provoked mass demonstrations of protest in Paris, Derrida writes:

I remember a bad day last year: It just about took my breath away, it sickened me when I heard the expression for the first time, barely understanding it, the expression crime of hospitality [delite' hospitalité]. In fact, I am not sure that I heard it, because I wonder how anyone could ever have pronounced it [...] no, I did not hear it, and I can barely repeat it; I read it voicelessly in an official text. It concerned a law permitting the prosecution, and even the imprisonment, of those who take in and help foreigners whose status is held to be illegal. This "crime of hospitality" (I still wonder who dared to put these words together) is punishable by imprisonment. What becomes of a country, one must wonder, what becomes of a culture, what becomes of a language when it admits of a "crime of hospitality," when hospitality can become, in the eyes of the law and its representatives, a Criminal offense?

This perplexity provoked Derrida's thoughts on the Ethics of Hospitality. For Derrida, the logic of the concept of hospitality is governed by an absolute antinomy or aporia. On the one hand, there is the law of unlimited hospitality that ordains the unconditional reception of the stranger. On the other hand, there are the conditional laws of hospitality, which relate to the unconditional law through the imposition of terms and conditions (political, juridical, moral) upon it. For Derrida, the responsible action and decision consists of the need to continuously negotiate between these two heterogeneous requirements.

–Gerasimo Kakoliris, "Jacques Derrida on the Ethics of Hospitality"

Bachmann to Celan: "I do not know if you can sense that I have no one but you to strengthen my faith in the 'other', that my thoughts always search for you—not simply as the dearest person I have, but also as the one who, no less lost than I, holds the fort in which we have holed ourselves up."

I've been thinking about how those who I know that hold up the fort, with a tireless work of hospitality tending to a place without space, that accompanies us despite our spaces and times, and how long we can go without a message, how the outpourings that do come can often be left unanswered, but how your voices are still always in my head, the feeling of having people by my side like ghosts that comfort. This for me is the 'not-now complex,' the calling out to friends on our various devices and the failures to articulate that happen there. That sometimes there is more knowing in the silence, knowing that you too are out there feeling desperately at odds and out of place in whatever institution you're working within and the exhaustion that lets the days go by without writing back.

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The reparative project of European non-identity, we can see, is typified in the figure of the non-identical subject; the protagonist also of redemptive Derridean narratives of aporetic cosmopolitanism, a democracy to come and, most of all, hospitality. Host-Guest in a household, the identifying culture of which is paradigmatically a culture of the other, the subject of hospitality is open to the visitation even of those guests who might jeopardize the founding principles the very hospitality of the culture that admits of them so impartially. [...]
--Leela Gandhi, "Spirits of Non-Violence"

The involvement of postcolonial thought in the critique of the Enlightenment makes for interesting intellectual history, doesn't it? The critique is arguably as old as the Enlightenment, with Hegel among the first to accuse his predecessors of lifeless abstraction in their philosophy. It's amusing to recall Hegel's bristling allegation that the Kantian categorical imperative (testing the ethical heft of an action in advance of the action itself) is like "not wanting to go into the water before we have learnt to swim." This negative appraisal undergoes mutations in its travels over the next two centuries. But it's always posited as strictly internal to Western philosophy. What else is the post-Enlightenment dialectic but a formula in which, Marx once said, everything is already "pregnant with its contrary"? By the time Karl Löwith (one of Heidegger's less famous disciples) joins the conversation, the attitude has become xenophobic. Western thought can heal itself by itself, Löwith says. It has its own antibodies. There's certainly no need to turn to the alien example of the East. In this context, the (belated) postcolonial critique of the Enlightenment has the

quality of breaking into a house or gate-crashing a party. There's something historically daring and delightful in the stance of uninvited interpolation, and the radical forms of hospitality it calls forth. But yes, like many others in the field, I'm not attached to showing what a miserable failure the Enlightenment was—out of deference to a hidden strand of anticolonial thought. In the first half of the twentieth century there was tremendous anger, of course, over the vicious totalitarianisms of the era, fascism and new imperialism included. But even the angriest of anticolonial thinkers (Gandhi and Fanon, for example) had real regard for the immaterial goods of the West. So they crafted a reverse civilizing mission to save Europe from its worst self. The spirit and soul of democracy was considered the most precious legacy of the Enlightenment. I wanted to examine this moment when, in the most antagonistic historical

There are the promises we break to the state and the promises to we break to each other. Fred Moten talks about blackness as the payment of a debt by the ones "who not only never promised it, but who are also the ones who are owed, the ones who bear the trace of being owned." I'm wondering what's the relationship is between struggle (agon) and antagonism. I'm wondering if a broken (social) contract is the same as a broken treaty, and then what's the relationship of the promise to the ones, with whom there can be no contract, promise, or treaty. If we entertain for a moment the idea of a 'radical outside', an outside that goes by the name of black for some thinkers, but which has other names, what does that do to our host? What's anti-fascist hospitality's orientation toward the fascist. Can we host them and are we gracious hosts? Does becoming "useless to fascism" take the form of being inhospitable? Does fascism take root in the inhospitable?. Maybe my general question is whether or not, or at what point, it is important for the host to also make a friend/enemy distinction. Is hospitality internal to a community and/or to a political project? The rhetoric of nationalism is often that the country has graciously played host and its hospitality has been abused by the guests who are ingrates, it can't take it anymore so the host body has to go 'on a cleanse' to get well again.

milieu, adversaries combined to salvage the inner life of democracy. What would such democratic interiority even look like? So I placed the eighteenth-century revolutions and bills of rights and the decolonization revolutions and postcolonial constitutions of the twentieth century in a single analytic frame, as shared history. For the first time I saw secreted in the work of the most iconic Enlightenment thinkers—Kant, Rousseau, Bentham, and Hume—the beautiful idea that true democracy is not just an institution.

It is also a spiritual exercise or askesis of forfeiture. Well before we consider the political structures for democracy we must learn to level out our discrepant natural advantages for the common cause. It turns out that self-limitation is the ethical groundwork of the Enlightenment. [...]

The real surprise is how much the liberal-Romantics and anti-Enlightenment thinkers of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to whom we habitually turn for current conceptions of the political, hated this ethical-democratic project. John Stuart Mill decried it as a “law of

descent [that] constantly levels men to a common point.” The reactionary desire for an enclave of excellence, rank, and exceptionality within democracy resulted in a shared ethos of perfectionism across the new imperialisms, fascisms, and new liberalism of the era. In this setting, an unexpected ballast for the spirit of democracy—and an objection to the epochal perfectionist style of twentieth-century totalitarianism—grew out of the anticolonial mission civilisatrice that I mentioned earlier, with its desire to salvage the very best of Europe. Its signatory ethical style was moral imperfectionism or self-ruination: becoming less rather than more. So, to return to your wonderful opening provocation: moral imperfectionism, or the ethical and political project of botching one’s own perfection for the sake of democracy, is the unexpected way in which anti- or postcolonial thought enters into creative solidarity with the Enlightenment. The scare quotes can come off, and maybe we can still leave our thinking hats on.

[...] Apropos Nietzsche, and the accent on what you term the “bipolarity” of rising-falling ascent-descent, perfection-imperfection, I have one further grammatical addendum. Within orthodox metaphysics (the theology of ascent) we are often told to distill the discrete law of our nature—swadharma, in one tradition—by defying the normative, leveling constraints of everyday life: job, anxieties, desires, peers, fashions, and so on. Once we’ve gotten there though—all crystalline, fully formed and already preterit—the heterodox imperfectionist metaphysics (of descent) ask us to walk away. This sort of secondary imperfection is not strictly antonymic, not the polar opposite of perfection, perfectability, greatness, and height. In the additional sense of the imperfect verb form it now means leaving something unfinished, so as to keep our actions ongoing, uncompleted, hospitable, and aspirational.

—Leela Gandhi and Bhriqupati Singh—“Botched Enlightenment: A Conversation”

Contemporary militant anti-fascisms in the US carry a kind of pragmatism about the fair-weather friends they find in liberal anti-fascist movements. Cohesion between these groups only exists in so far as they share the same streets to protest on. A politics of hospitality that is anti-colonial and anti-fascist signals the possibility of an otherwise that refuses to already cede the questions of the how and the who of organizing and resistance to these same people time and again. To think the work of such hospitality means to depart from a point different than agonism. The temporal/spatial point of departure is different. Anti-colonial and anti-fascist hospitality leaves open space for collaborators across the political spectrum, but doesn't completely expend itself in the posture of this gesture—because it centralises the labours of hospitality by the colonised, the enslaved, and the pariah that have made all these spaces possible, always, and doesn't want to take that off the table, not this time. Following up on the betrayals before, during, and after the election, this hospitality continues study and struggle by taking stock of our capacities and the abilities around us for feeling and thought, taking up different political/ affective/ experiential/temporal registers.

have been going through letters Bachmann and Celan exchange from 1948-61, what the book calls "a moving testimony of the discourse of a love in the age after auschwitz." There's this heartbreaking moment after long stretches of silent months have gone by, where Bachmann is sick with nervous breakdowns, and unable to write. When she does write to punctuate the silences, she repeats this abundant gesture that recalls the long past time where they fell in love, as if it were still always immanent. After multiple letters she sends that go unanswered, he finally responds:

'It is difficult to show you, you of all people, what has long been part of your most personal attributes--but, tell me, would you prefer to make the world even more impenetrable than it is through a word whispered carelessly into the distance?

I would be glad if I could tell myself that you view what happened as the thing it really was: as something that cannot be retracted, but certainly recalled through faithful remembering. For that--and not only for that--you need peace, Ingeborg, peace and certainty, and I believe you will find this best if you seek it within yourself, not in others.'

She responds:

'I do not want to hold it against myself that I make demands, perhaps excessive ones--of all the things you accuse me of, you are right about that, and also that I am impatient and dissatisfied; but I am quite sure that my restlessness does not push me towards paths on which one loses oneself. I was close to deciding against myself on a few occasions, and it is possible that I will still have to choose time and again between myself and something very clear that has always been part of me, between a person who wants to take the easy way, who seeks convenience, approval and much more, and the other, the one I truly live off and live through, and whom, ultimately, I will not--I can say it only in this banal fashion--let go of for anything in the world''

This sense of the word whispered into the distance strikes me as a consistent characteristic in the kind of love that offers and withers without the hospitality we've been speaking of, and it is one that is constantly betrayed and unrequited. This kind of calling out echoes with the unheard and unseen that we know to be abundant, those for whom the promises were never kept, and who have never forgiven, who have not been interpolated by power's guilt-ridden reparatory allowances, who cannot but resist the spatialisms and nativisms of naming and representation, of making historical claims as affirmations or corrections of misnamings.

There's a point though in which this silence too becomes reified, and I wonder what we will do, how we will be ready, if fascism makes its way again to come pounding at the door. How does antifascist hospitality, this making of a refuge, organize when it has to protect the people it houses. I'm anxious that there's also a certain amnesia in 'not here, not now' that has to be overcome, a sense in which at the points of departure we must also ask who we're leaving behind, whether we're truly confronting the trajectory of where we're headed, and how to respond to the urgency to be doing serious planning.

I keep having these two recurring images in my head. The first is all of these people from my cohort. We were sitting in a seminar room before class and everyone was staring at the table the day after the election. One person said that they hadn't been able to read, let alone think, after the election. The others nodded and murmured a similar paralysis. After a longer silence, one student warned others not to talk anymore because it would probably make her irritated and she would most definitely lash out. The other image is of a larger group of people learning to protest together two days after the election. We're in the middle of an intersection. Everyone, even veteran agitators from last year's uprising, are nervous. At first people are moving way too fast, the group is thinning itself out too quickly. But we learn how to slow down by pausing at random intervals and dancing it out and cheer each other on. At one point everyone stops the march and sits down. We tell stories to each other and admire the lights on buildings, listening to the honks of a large truck working in tandem with some of the chants. We don't need more "activist" and less "academic" "stuff"-- these things can't and won't mean the same thing for us as they have. These images, the way they stick with me, just shows that for me an anti-fascist hospitality is a kind of learning that one can only get swept up in. It is a kind of learning that makes reading still possible.

And the activist-academics were appalling.

Someone asked a kind of basic question and the response was that they as panelists should feel free to not answer the questions posed to them and instead pose other questions. If someone asks in the context of prison abolition "what about violent criminals" say "the real criminals are the bankers" ... For people who spoke in public for three days there was no desire to engage a public, it seemed like. Meanwhile there were neo-Nazis on the streets of Glasgow all weekend, actually organizing and 'educating' and growing their numbers. Lots of the activist-academics were obsessed with images of the underground. The George-Jackson Brigade and other 70s revolutionary terror groups were referenced. Even beyond the romantic guerilla image-- I keep thinking of Ellison's depiction of the Party in *Invisible Man*. It felt so stupid to make 'life on the run' your operative model when you're a professional and living under a kind of mass surveillance that obviously outstrips what was going on 40 years ago. If it's impossible to make sure your secrets are kept you have to organize in a way that can handle informants which probably means being more intensely public-facing and more hospitable than was ever necessary before.

6. WE REFUGEES AND THE NECRPOLITY

Our mad dream is only half realized. Alone, you have created the man. Now, together, we will create—his mate. Yes, a woman. That should be really interesting.” —Bride of Frankenstein

“She has been manipulated, brainwashed into being a terrorist. This is not the woman she is supposed to be.” —Heard at a conference on female recruits to ISIS

*

Italy

“What of my Mary? She is an Angel.” (Bride of Frankenstein)

On the edges of the Mediterranean Sea sits a monastery: the Silesians of Don Bosco. Perched atop the ivory tower is a woman, the Virgin Mary. Her arms are open, welcoming—in a country poised permanently in the shape of a boot.

Like her American ally, she, too, is meant to take the poor, the tired, the masses, yearning for their freedom.

This peaceful, pristine Mary is the image scholars look to as they gather within the walls beneath her to understand a different woman, a Monster who refuses the Virgin’s embrace. I am among the experts invited to a conference titled “Understanding Women Joining the Islamic State.”

It happens very quickly. The sparse surroundings of a monastery morph into a dark social lab filled with pseudo-scientists. Doctors of philosophy prepare to dissect and diagnose the unknown. The findings presented come from pop-up research shops. Erected with the same hastiness as refugee camps, held together by even flimsier material.

*

A Little Girl in London

She is a child. The language she hears at home is laced with traces of the Homeland. She is on the periphery of conversations about lives left behind.

When I meet her I am the professor and she another student in my college classroom. As the semester progresses she sits closer to me, her memories mimicking my own.

In the suburbs of London, her youth is a passport between the rooms reserved for men and the ones reserved for women, separate but unequal. Her aunt remembers leaving the country of her birth, crossing into a new nation with only her most important kitchen utensils.

Like I did, my student overhears partial personal histories. In Pakistan, someone was fighting, someone else was killed, and several someones have disappeared. Unmanned aerial vehicles quietly slip past border controls into the villages that fill her veins. She grows up online; the media shapes her nascent social consciousness. The legacies of political violence within her have a longer life expectancy than the tribal child struck down (but not targeted).

She remembers her little brother hovering around their mother’s ankles, demanding a toy drone.

--Nimmi Gowrinathan, “Of Monsters and Women”

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Two WORLD WARS in one generation, separated by an uninterrupted chain of local wars and revolutions, followed by no peace treaty for the vanquished and no respite for the victor, have ended in

the anticipation of a third World War between the two remaining world powers. This moment of anticipation is like the calm that settles after all hopes have died. We no longer hope for an eventual restoration of the old world order with all its traditions, or

for the reintegration of the masses of five continents who have been thrown into a chaos produced by the violence of wars and revolutions and the growing decay of all that has still been spared. Under the most diverse conditions and disparate

circumstances, we watch the development of the same phenomena--homelessness on an unprecedented scale, rootlessness to an unprecedented depth.

Never has our future been more unpredictable, never have we depended so much on political forces that cannot be trusted to follow the rules of common sense and self-interest forces that look like sheer insanity, if judged by the standards of other centuries. It is as though mankind had divided itself between those who believe in human omnipotence (who think that everything is possible if one knows how to organize masses for it) and those for whom powerlessness has become the major experience of their lives.

[...]

The first minorities arose when the Protestant principle of freedom of conscience minority as a permanent institution, the recognition that millions of people lived outside normal legal protection and needed an additional guarantee of their elementary rights from an outside body, and the assumption that this state of affairs was not temporary but that the Treaties were needed in order to establish a lasting *modus vivendi*--all this was something new, certainly on such a scale, in European history. The Minority Treaties said in plain language what until then had been only implied in the working system of nation-states, namely, that only nationals could be citizens, only people of the same national origin

could enjoy the full protection of legal institutions, that persons of different nationality needed some law of exception until or unless they were completely assimilated and divorced from their origin. The interpretative speeches on the League treaties by statesmen of countries without minority obligations spoke an even plainer language: they took it for granted that the law of a country could not be responsible for persons insisting on a different nationality.

They thereby admitted--and were quickly given the opportunity to prove it practically with the rise of stateless people--that the transformation of the state from an instrument of the law into an instrument of the nation had been completed; the nation had conquered the state, national interest had priority over law long before Hitler could pronounce "right is what is good for the German people." Here again the language of the mob was only the language of public opinion cleansed of hypocrisy and restraint.

Certainly the danger of this development had been inherent in the structure of the nation-state since the beginning. But insofar as the establishment of nation-states coincided with the establishment of constitutional government, they always had represented and been based upon the rule of law as against the rule of arbitrary administration and despotism. So that when the precarious balance between nation and state, between national interest and legal institutions broke down, the disintegration of this form of

government and of organization of peoples came about with terrifying swiftness. Its disintegration, curiously enough, started at precisely the moment when the right to national self-determination was recognized for all of Europe and when its essential conviction, the supremacy of the will of the nation over all legal and "abstract" institutions, was universally accepted.

The minorities were only half stateless; *de jure* they belonged to some political body even though they needed additional protection in the form of special treaties and guarantees; some secondary rights, such as speaking one's own language and staying in one's own cultural and social milieu, were in jeopardy and were halfheartedly protected by an outside body; but other more elementary rights, such as the right to residence and to work, were never touched. The framers of the Minority Treaties did not foresee the possibility of wholesale population transfers or the problem of people who had become "undeportable" because there was no country on earth in which they enjoyed the right to residence. The minorities could still be regarded as an exceptional phenomenon, peculiar to certain territories that deviated from the norm. This argument was always tempting because it left the system itself untouched; it has in a way survived the second World War whose peacemakers, convinced of the impracticability of minority treaties, began to "repatriate" nationalities as much as possible in an effort to

unscramble "the belt of mixed populations." And this attempted large-scale repatriation was not the direct result of the catastrophic experiences following in the wake of the Minority Treaties; rather, it was hoped that such a step would finally solve a problem which, in the preceding decades, had assumed ever larger proportions and for which an internationally recognized and accepted procedure simply did not exist—the problem of the stateless people.

Much more stubborn in fact and much more far-reaching in consequence has been statelessness, the newest mass phenomenon in contemporary history, and the existence of an ever-growing new people comprised of stateless persons, the most symptomatic group in contemporary politics. Their existence can hardly be blamed on one factor alone, but if we consider the different groups among the stateless it appears that every political event since the end of the first World War inevitably added a new category to those who lived outside the pale of the law, while none of the categories, no matter how the original constellation changed, could ever be renormalized.

"The problem of statelessness became prominent after the Great War. Before the war, provisions existed in some countries, notably in the United States, under which naturalization could be revoked in those cases in which the naturalized person ceased to maintain a genuine attachment to his adopted country. A person so denaturalized

became stateless. During the war, the principal European States found it necessary to amend their laws of nationality so as to take power to cancel naturalization" (John Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, Institute of International Affairs, Oxford, 1939, p. 231).

The class of stateless persons created through revocation of naturalization was very small; they established, however, an easy precedent so that, in the interwar period, naturalized citizens were as a rule the first section of a population that became stateless. Mass cancellation of naturalizations, such as the one introduced by Nazi Germany in 1933 against all naturalized Germans of Jewish origin, usually preceded denaturalization of citizens by birth in similar categories, and the introduction of laws that made denaturalization possible through simple decree, like the ones in Belgium and other Western democracies in the thirties, usually preceded actual mass denaturalization; a good instance is the practice of the Greek government with respect to the Armenian refugees: of 45,000 Armenian refugees 1,000 were naturalized between 1923 and 1928. After 1928, a law which would have naturalized all refugees under twenty-two years of age was suspended, and in 1936, all naturalizations were canceled by the government. (See Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 41.)

It is true that the United States has placed stateless immigrants on a footing of complete equality with

other foreigners, but this has been possible only because this, the country par excellence of immigration, has always considered newcomers as prospective citizens of its own, regardless of their former national allegiances.

[...]

No paradox of contemporary politics is filled with a more poignant irony than the discrepancy between the efforts of well-meaning idealists who stubbornly insist on regarding as "inalienable" those human rights, which are enjoyed only by citizens of the most prosperous and civilized countries, and the situation of the rightless themselves. Their situation has deteriorated just as stubbornly, until the internment camp—prior to the second World War the exception rather than the rule for the stateless—has become the routine solution for the problem of domicile of the "displaced persons."

Even the terminology applied to the stateless has deteriorated. The term "stateless" at least acknowledged the fact that these persons had lost the protection of their government and required international agreements for safeguarding their legal status. The postwar term "displaced persons" was invented during the war for the express purpose of liquidating statelessness once and for all by ignoring its existence. Non-recognition of statelessness always means repatriation, i.e., deportation to a country of origin, which either refuses to recognize the prospective repatriate as a citizen, or, on the

contrary, urgently wants him back for punishment. Since non-totalitarian countries, in spite of their bad intentions inspired by the climate of war, generally have shied away from mass repatriations, the number of stateless people--twelve years after the end of the war--is larger than ever. The decision of the statesmen to solve

--Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

the problem of statelessness by ignoring it is further revealed by the lack of any reliable statistics on the subject. This much is known, however: while there are one million "recognized" stateless, there are more than ten million so-called "de facto" stateless; and whereas the relatively innocuous problem of the "de jure"

stateless occasionally comes up at international conferences, the core of statelessness, which is identical with the refugee question, is simply not mentioned. Worse still, the number of potentially stateless people is continually on the increase.

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[S]tatelessness is a consequence of the modern nation-state. The political and legal structure of the nation-state based on the rights of man and citizen excludes those who are not citizens. The exclusion of the stateless, as we witness today, results in the administration of the excluded by national agencies, smugglers, strangers, charities, international organizations and, most tellingly, the police.

Arendt was famous for the scorn she heaped on happy pieties that realities hollowed out. Among her choice targets of platitudes: we are all born equal, destined for liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We are not. It is only thanks to our institutions that we become equal. Our organizations enable us to live in freedom. Humans, she noted, enjoyed rights only as long as they were members of political communities; the minute they left, or were banished, their rights were gone, and only their frail and perishable humanity remained. It would take a stateless woman to remind the public that these rights are not natural. It took an alien to say it: these rights can be taken away. Worse even: people can find themselves in a world where no one wants them anymore, and these rights cannot be regained.

Camps and pariahs are still with us. They have never been more numerous. They are products of our world of interconnected nation states. We have a role in creating rights to have rights. It includes our ability to offer sanctuary for those that have none. That, Arendt would argue, is a starting point for saying no to the nativists at home and taking a stand against the tyrants abroad.

--Jeremy Adelman, "Pariah: Can Hannah Arendt Help Us Rethink Our Refugee Crisis"

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What concerns us is that we understand that racialism and its permutations persisted, rooted not in a particular era but in the civilization itself. And though our era might seem a particularly fitting one for depositing the origins of racism, that judgment merely reflects how resistant the idea is to examination and how powerful and natural its specifications have become. Our confusions, however, are not unique. As an enduring principle of European social order, the effects of racialism were bound to appear in the social expression of every strata of every European society no matter the structures upon which they were formed. None was immune. And as we shall observe in the next two chapters, this proved to be true for the rebellious proletariat as well as the radical intelligentsias. It was again, a quite natural occurrence in both instances. ... Nevertheless, it insinuated itself into their thought and their theories. And thus, in the quest for a radical social force, an active historical subject, it compelled certain blindnesses, bemusements that in turn systematically subverted their analytical constructions and their revolutionary project.

--Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism*

The immensity of the systemic racism as Robinson was able to perceive it is a relief to me, in a way, because it argues strongly against the (racist) groupfeel that experiences Trump as an attack on pantsuit nation. It is shocking and horrifying to hear (white) immigrant experiences used as the basis for indignation, and the more so to hear the assertion that we are "all" immigrants.

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What cannot be destroyed can, nonetheless, be diverted, frozen, transformed, and gradually deprived of its substance—which in the case of states, is ultimately their capacity to inspire terror. What would this mean under contemporary conditions? It's not entirely clear. Perhaps existing state apparati will gradually be reduced to window-dressing as the substance is pulled out of them from above and below: i.e., both from the growth of international institutions, and from devolution to local and regional forms of self-governance. Perhaps government by media spectacle

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Hundreds of black and brown people pack onto flimsy boats, dozens charging to board trains on the border of Italy and Austria, walking along barbed wire fences along the Croatian-Hungarian border, or stuck in the Calais Jungle. In these images, I see movement without change; the plays and the scene repeat against different backgrounds. Focus on Syrian refugees fleeing the latest war of global capital, in which Bashar al-Assad, Russia, the US, the UK, and many smaller military groups fight to be the country's law enforcer. Arriving in Europe, having crossed the war zone that is Libya and the Mediterranean Sea, they and others fleeing wars and dispossession in Africa end up in the hands of undercover law enforcement agents from Austria and, more recently, Germany, who walk through trains stopped at the border stations asking black and brown travelers for passports and other forms of identification. Another video of an unarmed black person being killed by a police officer and another black

will devolve into spectacle pure and simple (somewhat along the lines of what Paul Lafargue, Marx's West Indian son-in-law and author of *The Right to Be Lazy*, implied when he suggested that after the revolution, politicians would still be able to fulfill a useful social function in the entertainment industry). More likely it will happen in ways we cannot even anticipate. But no doubt there are ways in which it is happening already.

—David Graeber, *Fragments of An Anarchist Anthropology*

neighborhood in revolt after the acquittal or non-indictment of another murderer occupy screens and Facebook newsfeeds.

The racial is the single most important ethico-judicial concept in the global present. National and regional wars in the Middle East and Africa and the urban and rural warfare in the economically dispossessed spaces of Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, the US, and Canada are neither effects of nor in excess of, but are rather integral to, the ethico-judicial assemblage that facilitates global capital's access to the productive resources—bodies and lands—it needs in order to thrive and reproduce. My reading of Alain Badiou's statements on Islamophobia and Slavoj Žižek's comments on Europe's "refugee crisis" makes a case for a kind of thinking that is capable of tracing how coloniality figures in all shapes of capital, without reducing it to a linear temporality or to an accumulative or developmentally separate (parallel or subordinate) process, but instead

refiguring the basic juridico-economic mechanisms of capitalist expropriation. Only complex, non-linear thinking can trace how (a) the colonial (juridico-economic) matrix that sustained merchant capital (b) operates through the racial (political-symbolic) arsenal which still supports industrial capital as well as (c) financial capital through racial violence. This tracing produces an ethico-judicial assemblage that includes the wars of global capital forcing millions out of their homes to cross the dangerous waters of the Mediterranean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Anticolonial (postcolonial or decolonial) and critical racial theory condition a reading of these images as captions of racial events. [...]

Leftist thinkers, in commenting on these events, rehearse a version of Marx's argument that the colonial plays no role in capital accumulation. When making this point in the past, I have been asked, "Who cares?" My reply is always: I care, because the historical materialist perspective

provides the best basis for the critique of capital, but only if it stops misunderstanding colonial and racial violence as an opportunistic ideological leftover of global capital. [...]

Linear thinking and a flawed conceptualization of cultural difference allow Badiou to negate the juridico-economic factors playing out in Islamophobia, by articulating these factors while disavowing them at the same time, denying them a determining role. Badiou's linear thinking is evident in his distinction between the colonial past (Algeria) and a contemporary French context contaminated by an unbecoming ideological leftover from that past. He identifies two causes of the growth of Islamophobia in France today: the first is "of an ideological nature. It is racism that can be traced back to colonialism, this feeling of superiority of the Western World." The second cause is of a different order:

After the war we had a great number of workers coming into the factories in France, and those workers were in their majority Arabs and Muslims. The great majority of Arab and Muslim Workers are poor people who live in very difficult conditions in the suburbs. They are segregated because most white workers don't—and often refuse to—live in the same neighborhoods. So we have a mix between something of a racist, ideological nature, and something of a social nature: a mix of ideological tradition in the reactionary sense, and something which takes the form of

class struggle. And it is this mixture that creates a very difficult situation of Arabs and Muslims.

For Badiou, this is a situation that does not require further analysis because, he claims, it can be solved by a return to the "true Republican tradition" of equality in education.

What is at work here? On the one hand, Badiou's analysis of Islamophobia rehashes the depoliticizing reasoning characteristic of early twentieth-century approaches to the sociology of race relations arising from the prejudice, discrimination, and segregation of and against Southern and Eastern European, East Asian, and black migrants to the northern and eastern cities of the US. Badiou replays this early sociological account, which locates the causes of racial subjugation in individual prejudice and discrimination on the basis of particular physical and mental traits that were thought to be racial and mental, respectively. But what early sociologists such as Robert E. Park attributed to skin color, odor, and food, Badiou blames on poverty. While Badiou's argument has all the hallmarks of a statement on juridico-economic processes, with phrases such as "something of a social nature," it loses explanatory relevance because he does not relate the poverty afflicting Arabs and Muslims either to colonial expropriation (back then and over there in Algeria) or to capitalist exploitation (right here and now in France). For Badiou, once Algerians arrived in France to be exploited as workers by capital, the colonial relation

with France vanished. Crossing the Mediterranean transforms the Algerian from "native," to use Fanon's term, into "poor worker," allowing the French Republic to deny responsibility for the plight of Arabs and Muslims.

The most difficult and important task is a radical economic change that should abolish social conditions that create refugees [emphasis the author's]. The ultimate cause of refugees is today's global capitalism itself and its geopolitical games, and if we do not transform it radically, immigrants from Greece and other European countries will soon join African refugees. When I was young, such an organized attempt to regulate commons was called Communism. Maybe we should reinvent it. Maybe, this is, in the long term, our only solution. [...]

Reading Žižek's final recommendation, I wonder how linear thinking and the logic of cultural difference figure in the communism Žižek posits as the solution to Europe's "refugee crisis." Would the communist world establish the "rules and regulations" he demands European countries put in place in order to curb refugees' cultural "shortcomings" relative to the proper—European—values of universality and equality? And if so, how would this be different from colonialism?

From what I call a "raw materialist perspective," because of the ontic presupposition of the (particle-level) plenum, what happens is also a composition (or de-composition or re-composition), always already a reassembling of what has happened

before and of what has yet to happen.¹¹ Once one apprehends all that exists as a plenum, both what happens and what exists no longer have the fixed boundaries of Newton's bodies and Kant's categories (forms), and this makes it possible to think the world differently.

Three moves become possible. Firstly, when attending to the moment of occurrence (what happens), instead of grasping location as a point, where (in space) and when (in time), one can attend simultaneously to all four dimensions: space (depth, width, and length) and time (Einstein's fourth dimension). Secondly, when attending to four dimensions without privileging time, which imposes directionality on thinking, the mind becomes capable of comprehending what happens as an instantaneous composition. Finally, when approaching what happens as a composition, it is possible to attend to its constitutive elements, which may also be part of other compositions (what has happened and has yet to happen) comprising similar

elements.¹² Attention to elements exposes similarities and enables a kind of material thinking capable of reading symmetries, or correspondences. Images of poethical thought are not linear (transparent, abstract, glassy, and determinate) but fractal (immanent, scalar, plenteous, and undetermined), like most of what exists in the world.

When poethical thinking contemplates the present situation in Europe, it does not image "unprecedented crisis," but rather business as usual for global capital. A poethical mapping of the present reveals the language of assimilation and the impulse to protect the White/European "way of life" to be a repetition of the terms and logic deployed a century ago, when Anglo-American workers in the East and the Midwest of the US protested against the influx of Southern, Eastern European, and Asian immigrants, as well as black migrants fleeing the total violence of Jim Crow, on the basis that they would not assimilate and that they would lower the existing standard of living. Poethical thinking, deployed

as a creative (fractal) imaging to address colonial and racial subjugation, aims to interrupt the repetition characteristic of fractal patterns. Attention to symmetries instantaneously locates a particular event in a global context shaped by the previous and future repetitions of the founding violence of capital. Because it attends to four dimensions, fractal thinking (poethical or compositional thinking) images the global as a part of the cosmos, and, as such, does not see it as constituting the ultimate ontic and ontological horizon for thinking. For since what happens occurs in the plenum, it is both an expression of, and expressed by, whatever exists under, above, and alongside; what has already passed, and what is yet to come. When a mode of thought graphs global capital among so many repetitive instants and instances of the deployment of colonial-racial machinery, it cannot be indifferent to racial violence in all of its iterations and expressions.

--Denise Ferreira DaSilva, "Fractal Thinking"

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We cry our cry of poetry. Our boats are open, and we sail them for everyone.

—Édouard Glissant

I want to think about two specific images of poethical thought that have been immanent to the lexicon of the slave, the migrant, the immigrant, and the refugee. The first, the sea—the Mediterranean Sea in this instance—as scalar, plenteous, and undetermined, is the image of poethical thought that constitutes what Da Silva refers to as the plenum. For centuries the sea's history has shaped and defined the perilous journey of slaves, migrants, and refugees

from Africa and the Middle East across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Importantly, we must note that a conversion of sorts takes place via the sea crossing. Following Da Silva,

once Algerians arrived in France to be exploited as workers by capital, the colonial relation with France vanished. Crossing the Mediterranean transforms the Algerian from 'native,' to use Fanon's term, into 'poor worker,' allowing the French Republic to deny responsibility for the plight of Arabs and Muslims.

The crossing, or more precisely the arrival on European shores, forges something else, a different relation to capital, so that the racial is subsumed under this strategic labor

relation. The native, when converted to poor worker, is abstracted from her racial history. This subsumption—we could say of race by class, though my sense is that it is an operation far more nuanced than this—is the ruse that structures a neoliberal political order that demands the civilizing of its citizenry through mechanisms of assimilation, regulation, and repression. It is important to understand that the severed relationship between racial history, coloniality, and capital, comes to define the Western European creed of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, and the neoliberal political order as such.

Could the refugee boat be the figure of the open boat Glissant traced — the open boat that sets out in the name of a different humanity, for all humanity? Could the boat, in all its

detritorializing horror, contain the beauty of a new communism? Could the open boat think the world anew? Locke's boats of various sizes and shapes compel us to consider the overlapping histories that constitute the sea as plenum. Where the ship often has a direction and a clear course, the makeshift boat has no recourse to home. These provisional boats brave the crossing without a sure sense of the shoreline. The crossings, the deaths, the suicides that happened at sea are expressed through the boat, which is itself a poethical figure that condenses, in Da Silva's words, "whatever exists under, above, and alongside; what has already passed, and what is yet to come."

—Rizvana Bradley, "Poethics of the Open Boat"

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History has forced the status of outlaws upon both, upon pariahs and parvenus alike. The latter have not yet accepted the great wisdom of Balzac's "On ne parvient pas deux fois"; thus they don't understand the wild dreams of the former and feel humiliated in sharing their fate. Those few refugees who insist upon telling the truth, even to the point of "indecenty," get in exchange for their unpopularity one priceless advantage: history is no longer a closed book to them and politics is no longer the privilege of Gentiles. They know that the outlawing of the Jewish people in Europe has been followed closely by the outlawing of most European nations. Refugees driven from country to country represent the vanguard of their peoples—if they keep their identity. For the first time Jewish history is not separate but tied up with that of all other nations. The comity of European peoples went to pieces when, and because, it allowed its weakest member to be excluded and persecuted.

—Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees"





Office of Rep. Henry Cuellar

