

# Diggin' In: On the Nature of Black Power

(An Intro To Anarkata Thought)

Afrofuturist Abolitionists of the Americas

9th February 2019

*The following is a necessary clarification about the grounds for anarchic activity and tendencies within some aspects of the Black liberation movement of the 21st century. There are many ideas, both within and outside of Black non/anti-hierarchic or non/anti-authoritarian visions of communist revolution, about the nature of power, or perhaps even the power of nature. This text seeks to dig up and dig into one of these visions, to share an outlook that a number of revolutionary organizers have enacted or performed, almost like mycorrhizae, sprouting up here and there to be seen on occasion while often remaining in an underground, hidden, symbiotic (and sometimes even pathogenic) relationship to the radicalisms at work in the discursive and political soil around us...*

The fear of climate apocalypse is being used to force us into accepting the lies of (white) power as true, as being the only valid or secure means to the more desired end in which we actually survive as a species or planet. This is why fascism is sweeping across the world, and in its wake the increased reliance on the mortifying imperial/carceral technologies that suppress indigenous, femme, disabled, queer, pathogenic activity, and scapegoat the oppressed masses as the actual cause of Anthropoc (human societal) decline and ecological precarity...

Against this backdrop I wish to warn and remind us that the problem of white power is not just the Man's greedy, violent pursuit thereof (although this is certainly an issue); neither is the problem of white power just Massa's exclusionary, discriminatory occupation of positions thereof (although this, too, is definitely still an issue).

The more base problem with (white) power is how it coopts, and even corrupts, the relation we humans, as earthly beings, have to the source of all power: land, water, air, etc. (that is, our planet, our environment).

Positions of power, and their pursuit, are erected as (often) incomplete answers to what is just a fundamental struggle for the survival of Anthropoc (human) and earthly (nonhuman) reality. Power's origin is thus material seizure; its roots are in the way nature is taken into human hands. And the mechanisms used to maintain positions power are why it remains incomplete (perhaps contradictory) as an answer to the survival question, because they often necessitate exclusion, oppression and exploitation, and all for the gain of a few.

A genuine upheaval, one that would challenge the exclusionary, oppressive, exploitative world order that dominates us, is one that will provide more complete answers and resolution to the

profoundly ecological question of survival for the people and the planet. These would be movements that negate the very need for (a pursuit of) power because they ensure that everyone's hand can account for and be accountable to the ecological imperative to survive.

That is the real reason why our enemies are acting up, working to sway us with their promises, because the Apocalyptic threat to our earth system is becoming a revelation for many of us, who are now (and have been) working on behalf of this fact. Our power actually lies in the planet, and so in our pursuit thereof, to the earth we must return (with) it. This is the nature of Black Power... None of the overseers and pigs and colonizer-capitalists, and their collaborators (including, maybe especially, people who want their position) want this—because it threatens their material interests.

True Black radicalism (meaning 'from the roots') is a threat to the foundation of Massa's house, removing its stake in a dead earth and in our people's death. But we must be careful not to buy into the notion that a reclamation of the tools which build and uphold it is the only way to guarantee that human society and our motherlands or mother world will continue to exist. This means that we must strive, continually, in community, to guarantee for ourselves that in all ways all the people, not just some, both know they can and act like they can—in our scientific production, acquisition, and use of knowledge, in our economic and subsistence practices, in our social formations, in our political structures, in our cultural life-ways, in our artistry, in our faiths, in our ideology and in our philosophy—be intimate partners with the deep dark earth beneath us, in the shared project of survival. Once everyone is ingrafted into this planetary struggle, working autonomously and collectively to ensure it, rulers and bosses lose their power, and we can meet our own and one another's needs.

Many, as a result, think of this as a call for the end of the world. Others, see it as an almost Adamic restoration, a utopian future, a working of Godly activity within a groaning creation. And other, more humanistic minded folk, simply regard it as a new beginning, or the true beginning of human potential.

We can also see it, however, as some Africanists may, as just an attempt to fulfill the noble, perhaps sacred projects our Ancestors never got the chance to enhance or finish because of what the white Man has forced upon us under colonialism and capitalism. We will honor them, and the weight of their history (which lives with us) by locating our revolutionary activity in fulfilling the desired ends (which is survival) of their as-yet incomplete participation in anthropic struggle. We will not prioritize (above all else, even in the face of internal contradictions) the perfection of the means and mechanisms aimed at trying to secure those ends for us (which have been distorted by the powerful). This is a dirtier or messier vision of decolonization. It is also a greener vision, too, which says that only in asserting and affirming our fullest and collective potential to engage in (and enact) answers to the question of how we can really survive together as a species and a planet will we find self determination, solidarity, and autonomy.

Now, there is a certain very enticing idea which says we don't need such a total reunification of all (our) people and our minds with nature—which argues that the sole or the best or the safest way to fulfill the mission of our social and ecological survival is through rulers and/or bosses, often times men with the supposedly 'proper' biology, supposedly 'correct' body type, 'normal' neurotype, 'default' phenotype, supposedly 'right' sexuality, or the 'truer' religion, 'best' language, the 'purest' customs, etc.—who thereby have (the right) to think for us and to govern how we might answer the survival imperative. Unfortunately, many of our own people believe this nonsense as well. A major example: the masculinist attitudes which are hostile to the presence, ac-

tivity, and leadership of Black women and Black Queer individuals. These portray cishetpatriarchy as the only or best or safest path to the survival of our population, and justify themselves through appeals to 'the natural' (often reductionist views of human genetic or biological nature, particularly regarding sexual health and activity, reproductive capabilities, hormones, and sex organs). Other examples are the desperate clinging to capitalism and to the State, which threaten the lives, land, and limbs of the colonized masses. Similarly, such exploitation and unjust authority are recast as the purest or most effective way to protect our species and homelands/homeworld, and they are also justified through simplistic appeals to 'the natural' (often fundamentalist views of human moral or behavioral nature as inherently greedy or barbaric).

This is the historical problem with positions of power. They answer the Anthropocentric (human) and earthly (more than human) survival question with a contradictory proposition: we all need and want to live, so let us have some live in our stead, and in the meantime they get to trap some of us and trap nature... This is a logical fallacy! But fear allows us to overlook this, because our very real concerns about safety, propagation, access to resources, the need for things like warmth, food, shelter, medicine, information, etc.—these get coopted by people in power. They take material hold of (humans in nature), and lure us in with abstract reductions of (human) nature. We are then convinced that outside these confines, the struggle to survive will only and can only descend into chaos or barbarism. So these become the proper way to guarantee everyone's survival, and the men who erect these projects and spread these narratives become the necessary managers thereof. Ultimately, when the exact opposite of collective survival happens (because positions of power are an incomplete answer), and masters end up having to fess up to and face either their dirt or the wrath of those they treated as such, power will double down even harder on its claims, out of fear, consolidating itself even more, and convincing us there is no other option but to try and improve its machinery. Meanwhile, wherever continued seizure of the earthly source of power by those who wish to consolidate it for themselves occurs, the following also happens and remains unresolved: nonhuman and human populations die out, or are sacrificed, exploited, poisoned, supposedly for the 'greater good' (which threatens especially our disabled kin); the landscape and hydrosphere and atmosphere become toxic and filthy or uninhabitable as a trade off for 'progress' (which threatens both nonhuman species and also the humans of underclass positions who get hit the worst); and ultimately the only people allowed to have 'life and life more abundantly' are the very people claiming to bring it to the world— nobody else! Patriarchy, empire, capitalism, the State have all exemplified this process, never fully affirming the people and the planet. These structures and mechanisms of power simply uphold the material gain (or even just the material aspirations!) of a few, who chauvinistically (and some times with good intentions, haha) pretend to be everyone's proxies, all while violating us, controlling us, thing-ifying us, objectifying us, commodifying us, killing us.

Black people know this contradiction too well! Even those who identify with cishetpatriarchy cannot fully reap its supposedly nature-based material benefits, and often remain victims to its logics. So also it is with this dominant economic system and the Westphalian political paradigm that dovetails with it. All these forms of power remain untenable for us, unable to fulfill their stated aims as guarantors of the survival of our population. Again, it's because they are really just about the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness of those who pursue or claim hold through them. We are very skilled at seeing right through this smokescreen as Black people—and we have to because we are always being chased, brutalized, beaten—hence so many of us have such an anarchic skepticism of power (I see this especially in our kids, who unfortunately we punish into

a submissive posture). When you've been reduced to the earthly realm of exploitable things by power, by those who claim it as their right to inherit the earth, and who pretend to do it for your good (while really its about their economic and libidinal benefit and not yours) of course you're gonna build revolutionary movements that evolve across the spectrum of social, cultural, political locations to abolish these power structures.

The multi-dimensional oppositional front of global Black resistance is what lies behind the call for Black Power. It calls forth a negative power, challenging rulers and bosses wherever they pretend to answer the question of how we can actually make sure we survive, together, as a species and planet—exposing their self-centered, opportunistic falsehood and class interests. It says that nobody can truly get free until all are free from captivity. So Black Power opposes the physical captivity of nature (free the material; the more-than-human reality, biotic and abiotic); Black Power opposes the ideological captivity of our understanding of human nature (free the mind; how we conceive of our biological, neurological, psychological, perhaps spiritual make up and potential); and Black Power opposes the exploitative and dehumanizing captivity of humans positioned differentially in nature (free the muntu, that is full human persons, in our whole bodies however they are shaped or may change, who have been held as prisoners of a war for profit, divided against one another like crabs in a barrel). All our survival is situated in the unification of these three. The end of these kkkages is the key to liberation.

Black Power is the ideological synthesis of all revolutionary activity there is, of any battle against chains being imposed on matter (our planet), mind (our psyche), and muntu (our people). Black Power recognizes that we have never been fully able to dig into the source of power, to truthfully and logically answer the survival question through an earthly connection, so long as oppressions have existed. Black Power says this history of enkklosures means varying degrees of death and despotism, some more large scale and horrendous than others, have corrupted the Anthropic (human) to earthly (natural) relation. And, Black Power acknowledges that unfortunately opposition to these binds has been low in the instances that it was less clear that their origin was the actions, neglect or ignorance of people (and not just the universe, nature, or even the Divine), and that therefore a resolution was/is possible by the hands of people. But, in our current epoch, the so-called Anthropocene, with the West and capitalism at its fore, we are forced to see the amalgamation or consolidation of these cages on nature, human nature, humans who come from nature—and their resultant deathliness. Therefore the mechanisms and machinery that obstruct and disrupt our attempt to complete the Ancestral journey toward a genuine human-nonhuman relation rear their vile faces more and more visibly than ever; and now none of us can deny that the white Man, and his disablist, anthropocentric, patriarchal formations are reproducing and exploiting the problems that leave us vulnerable to social and ecological death.

And so, uprisings are occurring, and the world's plantations and pigocracies are either being burnt down or are at risk of being burnt down with each passing day. I want us to remember, however, that human society making and the earth system (as we have known it) are reaching a point of collapse because white power is just ineffective, contradictory material seizures that dont truly answer the survival question—that sustain socio-ecological deathliness, and only benefit the few—on steroids. So, the solution to the overrepresentation of Man is not a matter of negrifying positions of power or their pursuits. We cannot break every chain by simply putting Black people in power, or by making Black people represented as the (real) Man.

Instead, we must dig ourselves into the source of all power—that’s earth, and ourselves as born of the earth, all of whom are currently being seized and pillaged and killed. We must strive to free our Mother and bring ourselves, her children into the empowered embrace therein.

We must uproot every master’s house, then, including our own, tearing our way past its roots until we all can actually make ourselves alive with and in the soil beneath it ourselves, as a collective. This is the only honest, logical, and ethical/moral solution to the problem of survival for our human-nonhuman relations. If we wanna get free, we work to bring all the people, and not their proxies, to the source of their power—the earth. And, in this way, we advance a relation that has no (need of) kkkapital, hierarkky, kkkolony, or a kkkage.

Let us Abolish it all! For the planet and the people! This is the Anarkata’s<sup>1</sup> demand, in its plainest form.

TO FREEDOM!!!

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<sup>1</sup> “Anarkata” is a term we coined at the NY-based Afrofuturists Abolitionists of the Americas for use by Black/Afrikan people only. It is a portmanteau that takes ‘anarch-’ (meaning without rulers, referring to an absence of unjust hierarchy) and merges it with ‘akata’ (a Yoruba word said to refer to both Black Panther organizers and to New Afrikans in the occupied United States broadly).

Anarkatas describes a politics that is situated in the radical liberation aims of those descended from the African Continent and the African Diaspora. Our starting place, therefore, is always the self determination and autonomous community formation of the Afrikan masses.

Our tendency is eclectic in that it synthesizes aspects of a range of perspectives on Black/Afrikan anti-colonial, anti-imperial, and anti-capitalist struggle; it is unique in that it articulates an approach that centers first flexibility and shared (fully democratic) as well as informed responsibility in the dialectical response to our people’s individual and collective needs.

Anarkatas are not (traditional) anarchists who have a baseless, uncritical hatred of any and all leadership, structures or boundaries; Anarkatas instead seek to make these accountable to an empowered population who can then arbitrate when they are or aren’t necessary to advance or secure our affirmation.

Anarkatas believe the people can only have that power of flexible arbitration and shared, informed responsibility if we strive to make our activity subject to the source of power, the earth, in participation and responsive engagement with the planetary struggle to survive—and not subject to inflexible, human-centered positions of power (and/or their ontopolitical guises) erected over/for us in the form of bosses or rulers.

Centering the earthly here allows Anarkatas to ground ourselves in the 21st century problem of climate death and the Anthropocene, as well as to account for the ecopolitics and ideologies implicit to colonial, cishetpatriarchal and capitalist exploitation of Black people and the environments we dwell in.

The Anarkata perspective is from the roots up; it is a vision of ‘power from below’ that is staunchly Black/Afrikan-centered and ecopolitical. We demand freedom for Matter (the abolition of chains on nature: the planet and natural resources), freedom for Mind (abolition of chains on ideas of human nature: our psyche and consciousness), and freedom for Muntu (abolition of chains on humans as part of nature: on our people, full persons, living entities, our whole bodies, and our potential to act with and participate with one another and the non-human world).

Anarkatas seek an Abolition for the freedom of all Things currently encaged, so that all power may truly be brought to all the people!”

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