

XI@N†!F☒ Mini-festo (Version 1.0)

A Telephone Triangulation for Xianarchism

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As of today, I am an Xianarchist.

Xianarchism {(Xian)*(Anarchism)} – is pronounced “exy-anarchism” : One of many political and religious projects aimed at total liberation which passes through transnesses, Christian traditions, anarchisms, and creative practices.

On this ship’s manifest there will surely be stowaways, which is why I’m shrinking the scope of this piece to that of a minifesto. This is a living, breathing piece of documentation of a personal process, not a call to a movement or to follow me. Rather, for those looking to understand what my work is about and where I’m coming from, I want to orient myself in a much broader landscape of voices. I exist as a small part of larger traditions in embodied, volant convergence. My project is oriented as *one* of many still-materializing alternatives to Christian Anarchisms of the past which attempted to negotiate Christian and Anarchist syntheses while retaining a primarily Christian orientation (whatever that means). I affirm, as stated by Maki Ashe Van Steenwyk in *That Holy Anarchist*, that:

“There is something deeply lacking when we imagine a Christian anarchism that simply “slaps together” one’s Christianity and one’s anarchism. It is not only possible, but (I believe) necessary to have an anarchism that flows out of one’s spirituality (or, perhaps, vice versa).”

Debates on whether “Anarchist Christianity”, “Anarcho-Christianity”, “Christian Anarchism”, “Christ-Anarchy” or other options could serve as the name for a radical re-imagining of theopolitics have been one preoccupation of this conversation. As a result, depending on who you ask, each of these has a subtly different meaning. Briefly, some imply that Christianity is the dominant informative component of the equation that leads logically to anarchist conclusions, while others see Christianity as in need of an anarchist reformation. Some even suggest that Christians are the only true anarchists, and others push for a specifically Biblical anarchism. I must say up front that I reject hierarchies among anarchisms that fit the basic requirement that they are definitionally opposed to hierarchy. This relates back to something I attempted to illustrate in my comic *Why I Am An Anarchist*, which was that I believe in and try to practice an understanding of anarchism that de-centers the state as the central object of critique and broadens it to all hierarchical power structures. In a world traumatized by Christendom, certainly any political or theological conception that places Christians over anyone else engaged in struggle against oppression must be defied. I repudiate any suggestion that one theological negotiation of Scripture and tradition is the Biblical one. I urge self-reflection to especially white, cishet Christian-anarchists who use proof-texting, appeals to authority, or mystification to suggest that Christian perspectives of anarchism must take one specific form, imply deference to authority, or subsume the historical diversity among radical Christianities into a label or program we like.

I also acknowledge, with a growing segment of professing Christians within the prophetic tradition, that for us, faith and politics are mutually constitutive and one cannot be separated one-from-the-other. If we’re serious about “God-talk”¹, we have to move in self-awareness as political beings in a way that lives that out. Likewise, everything within God-talk is political and

¹”God-Talk” is a term I first encountered in Williams, Delores S. *Sisters in the Wilderness : the Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1993. Print.

operates within and around power. Theopoetically, this looks to me like one well-worn verse of process panentheism- that god is in the world, and the world is in god.²³

Still, Van Steenwyk emphasizes later on that same page, that “Language will always fail to describe the strange relationship between the Way of Jesus and anarchistic political impulses.” I agree strongly with her here, because even though we have a duty to use political speech thoughtfully, a serious problem with certain strains of both Christian thought and Anarchist theory is something called *phallogocentrism*.⁴ We must remember that the right words will not liberate us, and we have, as Mia Mingus once said in a talk I attended, “more than enough smarts already...if having the right ideas brought about the changes we want, it already would have happened. What we need, rather, is practice in [putting those ideas to work].”⁵

The work of adrienne maree brown also reminds me that I’m “always practicing something.”⁶ As a person of faith raised in the Protestant-Evangelical milieu, I’m drawn to connecting this to the insight from James 2, that “...*faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.*”⁷ Growing up a WASP in the early 2000s and 2010s, any notion that *works* had to do with social justice was culturally marginalized, but I was pulled into conversation with it from a relatively young age through exposure to contemporary social issues by my parents as well as my own radicalization by my transqueerness, voices within Progressive Christianity, and most importantly, thinkers and actors from outside of my denominational/creedal tradition (and also racialization, gender, etc) who I met personally or encountered parasocially.

I know firsthand that this search for actualizations of the anti-kingdom Reign of god takes intention and persistence for so many of us. I also know that *so many wonderful people* are addressing this through books, podcasts, music, YouTube, infographics, tweets and, yes, newsletters like this one. So, in the current plethora of Substackers and writers, what can more thinking and talking coming from someone like me really achieve? How does this fit into my practice of life (in a wider co-breathing and particular enacting of *calling*, beyond the Protestant work regime)? My practice here, as of this writing, appears before me as two things:

First, I seek to build thought out of not just practice, but specifically practice as playing out in my own life, and put it into aesthetic, philosophical, theological, political, and practical conver-

² The easy version of Panentheism: Bishop, James. “What Is Panentheism?” jamesbishopblog.com, February 1, 2022. <https://jamesbishopblog.com/2021/11/21/what-is-panentheism/>.

³ An excellent resource on Process thought is provided here from a writer whose acquaintance I am honored to have met and hope to collaborate with: Kyle Sumner. “Process & Anarchism: New Possibilities in Process Political Theory.” March 4, 2023. Garden of Potential. Substack.com. <https://gardenofpotential.substack.com/p/process-and-anarchism>

⁴ Addicott, James. (2014). Phallogocentrism the Politics of Binaries and Strategic Writing in Female/Male Ethnography. pg 1. “Phallogocentrism” is defined by Jacques Derrida as: ‘the system of metaphysical oppositions’ (1978: 20) predominant in Western philosophy that has until recently been written by men. Donna Haraway argues that this black/white and divisive logic has produced ‘dualisms’ that ‘have all been systemic to the logics and practices of domination of women, people of colour, nature, workers, animals’. The examples she offers of these ‘troubling dualisms’ are ‘self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive, reality/appearance, whole/part, agent/resources, maker/made, active/passive, right/wrong, truth/illusion, total/partial, God/man’. These divides have been *written into* Western culture and it is difficult to conceive of society and culture, or produce knowledge about the phenomenon of the world, without the use of them. Haraway determines that ‘the phallogocentrism of the West’ as being inscribed by ‘White Capitalist Patriarchy’ (1991:117; 175; 197).” I personally don’t endorse everything in this essay, but I use this quote works as a brief definition.

⁵ From Transformative Justice 101 w/ Mia Mingus with SOIL: A Transformative Justice Project.

⁶ Brown, Adrienne. 2017. Emergent Strategy. Edinburgh, Scotland: AK Press. pg 206.

⁷ James 2:17-26 (NRSVUE).

sation with what I'm learning from people with different experiences from me. This leans into examining my standpoint not for self-gratifying {me}moir (mapping out my self-actualization on an insulated individualist journey), but as a conscientization⁸ towards seeing how lives and histories consigned to the margins of mine by institutional structures have implications on mine and vice versa. Thus, through this process we can think and work all sorts of directions of liberation out of each of our nodes of manufactured ignorance and stagnancy and into recognition—hearing *many voices* speak on their own terms. While this node of the practice requires me to listen to my own life speaking, which has me turn inward at times, it seeks to cultivate listening more than narration and turn out the kind of person who can hear not only my own voice developing beyond the carceral “panopticon”⁹, but also all the other (similarly and differently developing) voices who have been speaking and acting defiantly this whole time.

I specify this piece as a ‘Telephone Triangulation’ because I must emphasize that I take no ownership of the ideas I present—not even the ones I concoct seemingly independently from others. I do not claim to be what Kim Tallbear calls a “digital ear accepting signals for a universal knower.” If I believe in god, god is not this kind of Perfect Knower, either. Everyone is bound together in what the Weelaunee Web Collective calls the “Sacred Web of Abundance,”¹⁰ and what feminist psychoanalyst-philosopher Bracha Ettinger terms the ‘Matrixial Sphere’ or ‘Matrixial Borderspace’. My ideas do not, and indeed no ideas, explode fully-formed from a vacuum, and I work to *curate* concepts in a confabulation that seems closer to a game of telephone, animated by both fugitive whispers and shouts from the mountaintops. For me to take credit, especially as an educated white settler currently existing on Miami, Shawnee, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Yuchi tribal land, would be to desecrate this Web. I am just one finite, fleshy node of the larger web—and that’s plenty beautiful.

As Nsambu Za Suekama incisively notes, it’s both shortsighted and insulting for white settlers to interact with perspectives to which we don’t have direct access as “nothing more than an extension of the academic public intellectual economy” integrated into a white, colonial framework.¹¹ These days, I’m trying to learn how to engage more appropriately so as to dis-establish myself from a solidified kind of certainty about everything (via collecting an Infinity Gauntlet of Good Takes™ from all the right categories of people). Something I think a lot of Christians are still deconstructing (myself included) is that we shouldn’t amplify disempowered voices to become more right. Instead, each of us must discursively and actionably help move who and what is at the margins to the center in order for any of us to actually be liberated.

Second, I make the choice everyday to join into the collective labor of being ushers and bridge-builders for those looking to put their God-Talk and God-Walk in service of universal liberation from oppression and injustice *before anything else*. This bridge from the Church of Empire to the Procession of Liberation has had its manifestation since the beginning of the Jesus movement,

⁸ A pedagogical concept crafted by Paulo Freire and elaborated on in: Montero, M. (2014). Conscientization. In: Teo, T. (eds) Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7_55

⁹ Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish : the Birth of the Prison. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977. pp 205.

¹⁰ Weelaunee Web Collective. “Defending Abundance Everywhere.” crimethinc.com, February 3, 2023. <https://crimethinc.com/2023/03/02/defending-abundance-everywhere-a-call-to-every-community-from-the-weelaunee-forest>.

¹¹ Suékama, Nsámbu; Za. “The Left Cannot Just Denounce Cults/Abuse; We Must Undermine Its Conditions of Possibility.” Medium.com, August 31, 2021. <https://medium.com/@riptide.1997/the-left-cannot-just-denounce-cults-abuse-we-must-undermine-its-conditions-of-possibility-d1dd572ada43>.

albeit never centrally in mainstream Christian history and also never perfectly. This bridge also only has to cross one way, meaning, we Christians of the Bridge don't seek the conversion of those historically constructed as Other by Imperial Christianity (nor a chauvinistic subsumption of difference under a universalism that makes diversity irrelevant). A two-way bridge holds the door open to total religious conversion, still fears difference at root-level, essentializes 'Christian' as an identity people can take on in ignorance of the other traditioning we undergo, and only serves to 'other' people who aren't Christians further. Instead, our bridge is an un-bridge¹², which restores sovereignty over discursive and literal territories to those equipped with the historic perspectives and ancestral knowledge to treat them with dignity and with eyes toward doing justice in or against its structures. On the part of settlers like myself, "becoming indigenous-to-place" (not a linear, completable affair) must proceed on all levels of existence.

Within the conversation among Christians, this is not only vital, but central. Just as I reject the need for totalizing theology,¹³ the anti-kingdom ecology of god I profess does not deal in Western or statist conceptions of sovereignty.¹⁴ Instead, it manifests in a call to relinquish control of human and more-than-human others¹⁵-first within our oppressors and ourselves. This self-giving, I believe modeled by Jesus of Nazareth, has the power to enable us Christians currently holding power to purge false self-concepts of ourselves that require us to construct anything merely different as "abject"¹⁶ from us; indeed, any self-concept that forces a dichotomy between "inner and outer" life.¹⁷¹⁸

So rather than build something that seeks to reconcile the two words Christian and Anarchist, I choose to hold the tensions that naturally arise as I act first in service of liberation, rooted in a cosmology drawing from Christian sources. Because I believe that *kenosis* ('self-emptying' or

¹² The use of the "un-" prefix is inspired by Van Steenwyk's "un-kingdom" from *That Holy Anarchist*.

¹³ Bantum, Brian. "A Mosaic of Story." *The Christian Century*, February 2023. <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/features/asystematic-theology>.

¹⁴ For more on what "becoming indigenous-to-a-place" can mean, a good place to start is: Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Vancouver, B.C.: Langara College, 2022. "For all of us, becoming indigenous to a place means living as if your children's future mattered, to take care of the land as if our lives, both material and spiritual, depended on it." (pg. 21)

¹⁵ Debrea Rienstra. *Refugia Faith: Seeking Hidden Shelters, Ordinary Wonders, and the Healing of the Earth Fortress*, 2022. pg. 59.

¹⁶ More on how I'm using "abject" can be found in Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

¹⁷ Crawley, Ashon T.. *The Lonely Letters*, New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478009306>. "And it is to recognize there is no categorical distinction between the inner and outer life, that if there is a so-called outer life, it is suffused with the inner." (pg. 31.)

¹⁸ Admin. "Rethinking the Apocalypse: An Indigenous Anti-Futurist Manifesto." *Indigenous Action Media*, March 20, 2020. <https://www.indigenouaction.org/rethinking-the-apocalypse-an-indigenous-anti-futurist-manifesto/>. I note this to give credit to IA's formulation of the "Enemy Other," which has also impacted how I think about the larger conversation behind this paragraph.

‘emptying-of-power’)¹⁹²⁰²¹²² is a central feature of what it means for god to be love, I choose to shorten Christ to X, as opposed to foregrounding it. Incidentally, X is also what many in my culture consider to be a transqueer sex signifier (perhaps fitting for those seeking to operate from trans standpoints such as myself), and Xian is a common academic shorthand for Christian (perhaps fitting for those Christian anarchists who draw on modern and post-modern scholarship like me).²³

My Christian faith and political radicalism (while only two of many facets of my being/becoming) come necessarily as a package deal. They cannot be extricated from one another. To avoid confusion, this is not to say that the only political project I would ever support would be an explicitly Christian-Anarchist one (god forbid!). Rather, I mean that there is not a single part of my faith that goes untouched by politics and the need for political analysis. In light of how my path to liberation is bound up with that of others’ in polyvalent ways (related to the systems I move through as someone white, queer, educated, working class, trans, settler, etc), I believe that my politics must manifest as some form of anarchism—albeit a maximalist²⁴, multitudinous²⁵²⁶ anarchism that does not seek to subsume or wipe out alternative paths, but bring many worlds to fruit through *insurrectionary mutual aid*.²⁷

This guides my preferred engagement of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, negotiated²⁸ Christian theologies, and constructed ethical sensibilities. These then provide me with an eclectic language for anarchism and personalize it with ideas that help move me closer to getting politically and spiritually free, internally and socially. One big reason I was drawn to anarchism was

¹⁹ Donohue, P. (2008). *Kenosis as Performance of Power in the Theology of Julian of Norwich* (Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd/1623>.

²⁰ Enns-Dyck, D. (2022). *The power of kenosis: a local vision of leadership through dispossession* (dissertation). St. Stephen’s University. <https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/services/services-libraries/theses/Pages/item.aspx?idNumber=1317092983>

²¹ Huffman, Dale T. *Kenotic Alterity: An Exegetical Study of the Ontological Essence of Leadership as the “Death” of the Leader in Johannine, Pauline, and Petrine Scriptures*, Regent University, United States – Virginia, 2016. ProQuest, <https://bunchproxy.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.bunchproxy.idm.oclc.org/dissertations-theses/kenotic-alterity-exegetical-study-ontological/docview/1819528881/se-2>.

²² Spellers, Stephanie. “On Kenosis, Solidarity and Stewardship of Privilege by Stephanie Spellers.” Medium, November 11, 2020. <https://revsteph.medium.com/on-kenosis-solidarity-and-stewardship-of-privilege-by-stephanie-spellers-30d5fce95152>.

²³ NOTE: While the academy as an institution is nothing to glorify, and my experiences with it have been mixed even as a white student, I am genuinely grateful for how the theology classes I have taken broadened my horizons and exposed me to God-talk I otherwise likely would never have encountered, when I embarked on the first steps of my deconstruction journey. The fact that my father went to seminary, too, is deeply related to my interest in theology from a young age, my exposure to liberal Christians, and my desire to venture deeper than most Evangelical, American sermons do. I credit my parents and professors for nurturing my curiosity and welcoming questions, which to some may seem small, but for many is the first step out of conservative ideology (or any kind, for that matter).

²⁴ Moore, John. 1998/2016. “Maximalist Anarchism/Anarchist Maximalism.” In *Anarchist Speculations*. pp. 9-14.

²⁵ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

²⁶ Anonymous. “The Anarchist Ethic in the Age of the Anti-Globalization Movement.” *The Anarchist Library*, 2009. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/anonymous-the-anarchist-ethic-in-the-age-of-the-anti-globalization-movement>.

²⁷ From the Curious George Brigade Zine. <http://aftershockaction.blogspot.com/2007/04/insurrectionary-mutual-aid.html>.

²⁸ For more on what I mean by this, check out how succinctly Dan McClellan puts it in this accessible video: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=2uFm9wlyytY&list=LL&index=29>. For more on his approach: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=-bvr839oRK0>.

my quest to emulate the person of Jesus the Nazarene. I have a deep commitment towards understanding and taking seriously Jesus's historical life and political context, and this has always interested me, even before I became anarchist. Because I really do believe in a god, albeit one more in line with transtheism than traditional theism, I profess that even though politics underlies religion, god permeates everything as a non-humanized, relational presence in process. Still, however, god must not be a tyrant, enslaver, or supremacist, but rather a friend, a presence that binds all related beings and things together, and a rushing current for just communal living.²⁹

In a sense, this seductive snake of a path is an Ouroboros, taking me through the dubious categories of religion and politics and back again—binding me, holding me, and directing me. A more etymological definition of religion could suggest something like 'the ties that bind', which of course can be both connective and restrictive, evoking both boundaries and bridges.³⁰³¹ As I navigate these alongside all the inherited ideologies and frameworks I'm still in the midst of deconstructing and unpacking (such as the of-course-intertwined whiteness, patriarchy, colonialism, racial capitalism³², Americanism, logocentrism, and evangelical fundamentalism to name a few), I try to work towards clarity and "baseline moral seriousness".³³ This is the space in which I dwell when considering how circular the Venn Diagram between these two things in my everyday beliefs and practices are.

Xianarchists choose to move towards embodied conversations out of fundamentalisms of fascism, authoritarianism, and liberalism. Towards self-consciousness of the transqueer christian subjects enmeshed within both polyvalent oppressions and polyvalent paths out. Towards anti-fascist ecumenicisms that articulate, embrace, and intentionally navigate individuality and difference. Towards seeing productive conflict as it operates all around us. Towards "Ruthless Critique of All That Exists."³⁴ Towards seeing beauty where it conducts itself around us. Towards More Than One Thing. May we turn inwards and outwards to turn the world.

My writing is for...

THE LUDIC PHILOSOPHERS, INHABITANTS OF THE CO-CREATION

- **Those who are not threatened by paradoxes.**
- **Those who find themselves reaching out for 'both-and's for dear life.**

²⁹ Bass, D. B. (2021). *Freeing Jesus: rediscovering Jesus as friend, teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence*. First edition. New York, Harper One.

³⁰ Sarfati, Georges-Elia. "Understanding Religion." ourworld.co, December 18, 2019. <https://www.ourworld.co/understanding-religion/#:~:text=It%20is%20commonly%20accepted%20that,bind%E2%80%9D%20and%20%E2%80%9Cconnect%E2%80%9D>

³¹ A Latin Dictionary. Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary. revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten by Charlton T. Lewis, Ph.D. and Charles Short, LL.D. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1879. <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0059:entry=religo>.

³² Kelley, Robin D. G. "What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism?" Boston Review, November 14, 2022. <https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/robin-d-g-kelley-introduction-race-capitalism-justice/>.

³³ Dark, David. "Baseline Moral Seriousness." Baseline Moral Seriousness - by David Dark, September 1, 2021. <https://daviddark.substack.com/p/baseline-moral-seriousness>.

³⁴ Marx, Karl. "Letters from the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher Marx to Ruge Kreuznach, September 1843 in Marx Engels Collected Works, Volume 3, Pp. 133-145." Marxists Internet Archive. Accessed June 9, 2023. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/letters/43_09.htm#:~:text=But%2C%20if%20constructing%20the%20future,sense%20of%20being%20just%20as.

- Those who understand that serious doubt is on the side of liberation, not individualism.
- Those who seek to describe more than define towards the careful usage of language.
- Those who while negotiating the Biblical texts into configurations of meaning, suspect words like “justice”, “love,” “care”, “right-relation”, “belonging”, “healing”, “eco-complementarity”, “kenosis”, “truth”, and “god” point to the same thing or things.
- Those who see the Image of god everywhere in Creation. Those who suspect that creation is not a one-and-done event by one Sovereign but rather a medley, interweaving threads of multiple ongoing stories, and who know they are a participant-part of creation, not apart from it.³⁵³⁶³⁷³⁸
- Those who know that the sutures between past, present, and future are only half-visible.
- Those who seek to desacralize what is desecrating to Creation.
- Those who align their ethics with strategies and vice versa, their hearts with their means with their ends. Those who put this alignment in service of a hope that is “anxious”³⁹ for material change and that understands God has no hands and feet but ours.⁴⁰⁴¹

THE PROPHETIC IMPRECATORS, THE RELENTLESS DECONSTRUCTORS OF OPPRESSION

- The deconstructors who know the cure for too much deconstruction is more deconstruction– fracturing the fractures, un-dividing the “undivided”.⁴²

³⁵ Newman, Saul. 2020. Gustav Landauer’s anarcho-mysticism and the critique of political theology. *Political Theology*, 21(5), pp. 14.

³⁶ Reid-X, Mercedes Alayna. (2022). Octavia E. Butler’s Earthseed and the God of Change. In BSU Honors Program Theses and Projects. Item 560. Available at: https://vc.bridgew.edu/honors_proj/560 Copyright © 2022 Mercedes Alayna Reid-X.

³⁷ Schiffman, Richard, and Richard Schiffman. “Bigger than Science, Bigger than Religion.” *YES! Magazine*, March 27, 2020. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/together-earth/2015/02/18/bigger-than-science-bigger-than-religion>.

³⁸ Marchese, David. “You Don’t Have to Be Complicit in Our Culture of Destruction.” *www.nytimes.com*, January 30, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/01/30/magazine/robin-wall-kimmerer-interview.html>.

³⁹ Gordon, Uri. “Prefigurative Politics, Catastrophe, and Hope.” *CrimethInc.com*, June 12, 2018. <https://crimethinc.com/2018/06/12/prefigurative-politics-catastrophe-and-hope-does-the-idea-of-prefiguration-offer-false-reassurance>.

⁴⁰ Yecla, Gem. “Co-Creation Spirituality.” *Thinking Faith: The online journal of the Jesuits in Britain*, 2019. <https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/co-creation-spirituality>.

⁴¹ CatholicLink. “St. Teresa of Avila Quote: Christ Has No Body but Yours.” *Catholic-Link.org*, June 8, 2021. <https://catholic-link.org/quotes/st-teresa-of-avila-quote-christ-has-no-body-but-yours/>.

⁴² Palmer, Parker J. “Living an Undivided Life.” *onbeing.org*, January 25, 2019. <https://onbeing.org/blog/living-an-undivided-life/>.

- **The deconstructors who find themselves to be insufferably ‘political’ and simultaneously refuse to bow to the first ideologies calling themselves ‘leftist’ and ‘progressive’ to waltz through the door. Those for whom deconstruction is a politics of its own.**
- **Those who seek to practice prophecy against idols of abstraction such as capital, authority, and oppressive social structures.**
- **Those who decline to let their deconstruction journeys stop short of deconstructing electoral politics, bourgeois democracy, bestowed rights, secure freedom, and individualism and still push towards communal politics of care.**
- **Those whose transness and/or queerness must be intolerant of Christo-fascism, and whose antifascism can no longer bear the burden of liberalism.**
- **The so-called leftists, anarchists, Marxists, and progressives who find others using those terms about them more often than themselves.**
- **Those who believe god is a trans anarchist on the side of creation, storytelling, and art, even more deeply than they know that god exists.**
- **Those who’ve seen god in drag queens, marronage, black bloc, leather nuns and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, the John Brown Gun Club, Eli Lilly impersonators, prison breaks, abortion providers, seminary dropouts, eco-sabotage, teens filming the police, distroists, reading groups, riots, and the land.**
- **The few whose pursuit of dual power⁴³ is fueled and fielded by third things⁴⁴, productive internal antagonisms⁴⁵, and soul force.⁴⁶**

THE TRANSGRESSIVELY ANTI-COLONIAL LOVERS OF LAND, THE HE(ART)FUL ABOLITIONISTS

- **Those who find that calls to metaphorically ‘decolonize one’s faith’ without literal, actual, political decolonization through the rematriation⁴⁷ of particular lands by**

⁴³ Learn more about dual power here: ROAR Collective. “Dual Power Then and Now: From the Iroquois to Cooperation Jackson.” ROAR Magazine, Autumn 2019. <https://roarmag.org/magazine/dual-power-then-and-now-from-the-iroquois-to-cooperation-jackson/>.

⁴⁴ “Third things” are valuable pedagogical and community-building tools described by Parker Palmer here (and which I would also connect to/expand to encompass “Third Places” as described in the book *The Great Good Place* by Ray Oldenburg): <https://couragerenewal.org/library/chapter-7-common-ground-third-things%E2%80%9C/>.

⁴⁵ Rollins, Peter, Jemimah McAlpine, and David Blower. “Peter Rollins - Radical Theology.” Nomad Podcast, October 7, 2022. <https://www.nomadpodcast.co.uk/peter-rollins-radical-theology-n231/>.

⁴⁶ Needless to say, I don’t care for Gandhi as a person or Gandhism, but here I’m placing James Lawson’s appropriation of his term ‘soul force’ into context and shucking off the view that ‘nonviolence is a one-size fits all strategy and worldview’ which Lawson holds. I cite this because I still have an appreciation of the inherent power that witnessing to a moral truth may provide in moments of social confrontation. <https://wagingnonviolence.org/2021/10/clash-between-history-movements-conversation-rev-james-lawson/>.

⁴⁷ Cardoza, Nicole. “Moving Past Acknowledgment to Rematriation.” *Anti-Racism Daily*, November 22, 2022. <https://the-ard.com/2022/11/22/land-rematriation-and-the-land-back-movement/>.

particular Indigenous peoples, ring hollow.⁴⁸ Those who know some institutions cannot be decolonized.⁴⁹⁵⁰⁵¹

- Those who know that processes perceived to be on the margins of society—the caging of people in prisons, the erecting and defending of borders, the waging of war on the imperial periphery, the political disabling of disabled folks, the lives and stories of the disenfranchised wretched of the earth⁵²—actually operate at the center of both the strategies of kyriarchy⁵³ and the best responses for self-liberators.⁵⁴⁵⁵ Those who understand that Ekklesia is found in the Wilderness.⁵⁶
- Those who know, as Elle Dowd says, there are no cops in heaven.⁵⁷ For whom god is an abolitionist, not a Supercop. For whom god sets the prisoners free, from prisons of the heart, prisons of particular politics, and literal physical prisons and jails.
- Those who find themselves disturbed by retributive cosmic atonement theories⁵⁸⁵⁹⁶⁰ and top-down conversionism⁶¹, and yet in awe of the Jewish Palestinian human/godforsaken god on the Roman cross.⁶²

⁴⁸ Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, education & society*, 1(1).

⁴⁹ Challenger, Scott. "Introduction: 'Not Only a Metaphor.'" Post45, August 10, 2021. <https://post45.org/2021/07/introduction-not-only-a-metaphor/>.

⁵⁰ Saini, Rima. "From Management Meetings to Meaningful Change: Risks of Institutional Capture in the Decolonisation of UK Higher Education and Recommendations for Delivering Structural Change." *blogs.lse.ac.uk*, November 17, 2022. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2020/08/11/from-management-meetings-to-meaningful-change-risks-of-institutional-capture-in-the-decolonisation-of-uk-higher-education-and-recommendations-for-delivering-structural-change/>.

⁵¹ Hill, Karlos K. "The University Cannot Be Decolonized." *thenation.com*, March 16, 2022. <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/kehinde-andrews-interview/>.

⁵² Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1968.

⁵³ Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth (2009). "Introduction: Exploring the Intersections of Race, Gender, Status and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies". In Nasrallah, Laura; Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth (eds.). *Prejudice and Christian beginnings: investigating race, gender, and ethnicity in early Christian studies*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. ISBN 978-1451412840.

⁵⁴ Dolmage, J. (2016). *Disability rhetoric*. Syracuse University Press. pg. 31.

⁵⁵ hooks bell. 2000. *Feminist Theory : From Margin to Center*. 2nd ed. Cambridge MA: South End Press.

⁵⁶ Williams, Delores S. *Sisters in the Wilderness*.

⁵⁷ Dowd, Elle. *Baptized in Tear Gas from White Moderate to Abolitionist*. Broadleaf Books, 2021.

⁵⁸ For an exploration of why many Womanist scholars, and in particular, Delores Williams reject atonement theories, see: Calloway, J. A. (2021). The Purpose of Evil Was to Survive It: Black and Womanist Rejecting the Cross for Salvation. *Feminist Theology*, 30(1), 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09667350211031176>.

⁵⁹ The original piece: Williams, Delores. "Black Women's Surrogacy Experience and the Christian Notion of Redemption." In *Cross Examinations*, edited by Marit Trelstad, 19-32. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006.

⁶⁰ Simplified version of the argument: White, Erin. "Delores Williams: 'Black Women's Surrogacy Experience and the Christian Notion of Redemption.'" *theolowhat.wordpress.com*, May 20, 2015. <https://theolowhat.wordpress.com/2015/05/19/delores-williams-black-womens-surrogacy-experience-and-the-christian-notion-of-redemption/>.

⁶¹ Clark, Fred. "I Believe in Conversion, but Not in 'Conversionism.'" *slacktivist*, November 9, 2015. <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/slacktivist/2015/11/09/i-believe-in-conversion-but-not-in-conversionism/>.

⁶² Cone James H. 2011. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Maryknoll N.Y.: Orbis Books.

- **Those who give no quarter to abuse, knowing it to be a vector of interpersonal fascism.⁶³ Those who understand that considering reconciliation, repentance, and rehabilitation is secondary to restoring the embodied subjectivation and choosing-power of survivors/victims.⁶⁴**
- **Those who know and respect that deconstruction and decolonization can lead people both into and out of the Church and Christianity.**
- **Those who seek to converse with both their ancestors and the stories of those they ignored.**
- **Those who know the value of lament.⁶⁶**
- **Those for whom solidarity implies witness and witness implies solidarity.⁶⁷**
- **Those who seek to be guided into constant attentiveness to histories and presents of subjugation, colonialism, and exploitation, emptying the emptiness of the West’s purportedly preordained cultural centering of whiteness, masculinity, coloniality, fungibility⁶⁸, binarism, and all other reductive essentialisms.**
- **Those who treasure the particulars in a spirit of justice, rather than universalizing the particulars. Those who see unity and multiplicity as two axes of the same wheel.⁶⁹**
- **Those who say ‘comrade’ interchangeably with ‘sibling in Christ’ among their fellow-believers (as well as those who respect the boundaries of differently-believing fellow travelers).**

⁶³ Shevek, Lee. “Intimate Authoritarianism: The Ideology of Abuse.” [theanarchistlibrary.org](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/lee-shevek-intimate-authoritarianism?v=1673581698), January 11, 2023. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/lee-shevek-intimate-authoritarianism?v=1673581698>.

⁶⁴ Ellison, Estelle. “Pushing Back against Mass Abuse Apologism.” Medium, August 11, 2022. <https://abolish-time.medium.com/pushing-back-against-mass-abuse-apologism-8a27a9f21d0>.

⁶⁵ Coleman, Monica A. *The Dinah Project: A Handbook for Congregational response to sexual violence*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010.

⁶⁶ Rah, Soong-Chan. *Prophetic Lament : a Call for Justice in Troubled Times*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2015. Print.

⁶⁷ This is inspired by the term ‘wit(h)nessing’ from Bracha Ettinger, described by Griselda Pollock as such: “[Ettinger] expands a word’s conceptual range from the legal and testimonial meaning of bearing witness to the crime against the other, to being with, but not assimilated to, and to being beside the other in a gesture that is much more than mere ethical solidarity. There is risk; but there is also a sharing.” Source: Pollock, GFS (2010) *Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma*. *EurAmerica: A Journal of European and American Studies*, 40 (4). 829 - 886. ISSN 1021-3058. Cited in: <https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/bearing-withness-the-art-of-kandis-williams>.

⁶⁸ I first came across the formal usage of this term “fungibility” Black Studies via: Snorton, C Riley. “Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity.” Minneapolis, MN : University of Minnesota Press, 2017. pg. 22.

⁶⁹ Partly inspired by Deleuze and Guattari’s aphorism “pluralism=monism”, which is further elaborated on here: Schumacher, Hannes. “Pluralism = Monism: A Study on Deleuzian Dialectics,” presented at the conference *Unity between East and West* Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait, February 2019.

- **Those who steal seasons and moments of mutinous eternity rather than imperial or industrial measurements of time.**⁷⁰⁷¹⁷²
- **Those who live in Apocalyptic⁷⁴, not seeking to immanentize the eschaton, but seeking to eschatonize the inbreaking immanent in imaginative, plural, and concrete realizations of the already-fulfilled new political.**
- **Those who stand not for liberal or reactionary visions of Progress⁷⁵ but for radical breaks into continuity and the deterritorialization⁷⁶ of hierarchies into relationships of loving-kindness.**
- **Those who want to fall in love, not in line.**

If you read all of this, I greatly appreciate you humoring my flow of thoughts. It's so important to remind myself how I'm enfolded into a tradition, and that as Fred Moten says, I'm joining an ongoing struggle, rather than just fighting my own fight.⁷⁷ Being a little "inebriated" by the vast wonder of "continuity", as the hosts of Drunk Church like to say⁷⁸, is good for taking the edge off. I'm but a message, sent by messages, receiving and transmitting other messages on a homemade tin can telephone, and I look forward to exploring and growing together.

In Solidarity,
jules leslie

"He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty."

-Mary, the Mother of God as described in Luke 1:52-53 (NRSV)

⁷⁰ Andrewism. "The Tyranny of the Clock," YouTube.com, Sep 15, 2021. <https://youtube.com/watch?v=LsoT6do7OBQ>.

⁷¹ Woodcock, George. "The Tyranny of the Clock." War Commentary—For Anarchism, March 1944. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/george-woodcock-the-tyranny-of-the-clock>.

⁷² Mumford, Lewis and Langdon Winner. 2010/1962. *Technics and Civilization* University of Chicago Press ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pg 21-26.

⁷³ Segall, Matthew David. "Minding Time: Chronos, Kairos, and Aion in an Archetypal Cosmos." Footnotes2Plato.com, April 13, 2023. <https://footnotes2plato.com/2015/05/15/minding-time-chronos-kairos-and-aion-in-an-archetypal-cosmos/>.

⁷⁴ This styling of Apocalyptic life is inspired by: Dark, David. *Everyday Apocalypse: The Sacred Revealed in Radiohead, The Simpsons, and Other Pop Culture Icons*. Brazos Press, 2002.

⁷⁵ Dunne, Luke. "Walter Benjamin on the Philosophy of History (and the End of It)." thecollector.com, May 26, 2023. <https://www.thecollector.com/walter-benjamin-philosophy-of-history/>.

⁷⁶ Deterritorialization is also based loosely on what I understand of Deleuze's use of it in *A Thousand Plateaus*, explained more succinctly here: <http://www.artandpopularculture.com/Deterritorialization>.

⁷⁷ Moten, Fred, and Stefano Harney. "Millennials Are Killing Capitalism: 'Wildcat the Totality' - Fred Moten and Stefano Harney Revisit the Undercommons in a Time of Pandemic and Rebellion (Part 1) on Apple Podcasts." Millennials Are Killing Capitalism, July 3, 2020. <https://podcasts.apple.com/gh/podcast/wildcat-the-totality-fred-moten-and-stefano/id1292638162?i=1000482485213>.

⁷⁸ concordia, cosima bee, and Aurora Laybourn. "Drunk Church: Christian Mysticism & the Philosopher of Holes ... - Apple." Drunk Church, 2022. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/christian-mysticism-the-philosopher-of-holes/id1633726351?i=1000574617670>.

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