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The Letter 'I' Paradox

Disjointed Musings from a Dialectical
Transfeminist

Nsambu Za Suekama

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October 10, 2023

Retrieved on 3 November 2023 from
medium.com/@riptide.1997/the-letter-i-paradox-some-more-musings-from-a-dialectical-transfeminist-8f45d73b7d1e

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tics, strategies, and methods used both ideologically and practically in the form of social configurations that disorganize and then reorganize the corporeal locus (biological-abiotic environment) under the valence of the dominant Nexus. She theorizes three continuums of truncation (parallel, lateral, vertical) that are involved in the substitution of non-dualist “nexing-forms” with a dualist nexing-form. At the global level, truncation is a gradual process; at the regional level, truncation is an open & contested process. (see: *Nexus Hypothesis — An Introduction series on prezi dot com*)

Valence, valency — in chemistry, refers to ability of an atom (or group of chemically bonded atoms) to either replace or form chemical bonds with other atoms (or group of chemically bonded atoms). In NZ Suékama’s body of work, valency describes how a Nexus (or nexing-form) disorganizes and reorganizes the traits and interactions of the corporeal locus. The combining and displacing power exhibited by these nexuses vis-a-vis a given set of socio-ecological questions is tied to the sociogenic principle (see Sylvia Wynter). Each given society has one or several nexuses that exhibit different valences, although in some instances two or more nexuses may be co-valent. In this way some nexuses may not necessarily exhibit valene in the same way or for every feature of a given society, or in the same way for all societies as a different nexus. All nexuses stabilize how substructural and superstructural relations are embodied, but not in a closed process. For NZ Suékama this is why the patriarchal nexus is to be viewed as a contingent and emergent phenomenon (see: *Nexus Hypothesis — An Introduction series on prezi dot com*)

Free the body!

Free the land!

(x4)

No bosses, lords, masters

No genre of Man!

No classes, caste, or party

Just the magic of these hands!

(x3)

I.

The first object of violence in any anti-colonial struggle is never other humans: it is always first property, machinery, and also the ideas of the mind which put fear in the oppressed’s heart.

By the time the gun has been turned on civil society, there was already first militancy in the spirit, and militancy of letters and words. The fear was externalized, ideas of the mind flipped over. Petitions were made, demands were put forth, rallies held, demonstrations, meetings, even prayers and tongues for liberation had gone up. After that, the hostility of the oppressor and refusal to yield any measure of breathing room to those in cages becomes the catalyst for fiery rage. Fanon tells us decolonization is a violent phenomenon. It is so because the occupation of indigenous land, the exploitation of native bodies — this is violent and only relents in the face of more violence.

Once the tamer routes have been exhausted, the decisive factor take on a more mass appeal: tanks are overtaken, buildings leveled, walls torn down, prison gates flung open. This isn’t to say violent resistance and peaceful resistance do not co-occur: only that one begins to appear more prominent than the other as the repression and callousness of those in power remains unmoved in the face of civil disobedience. The unfor-

tunate consequence of this dialectic, however, is that once the dragon flies, and a precinct is set ablaze or a pig is slain, at some point does civilian casualties occur. Typically, it is those uninvolved in militancy — who may or may not have taken a “side” in the war.

Civil society does not exist in a vacuum, apart from the overall system of material and power relations. In fact, the bonds of civil society are threaded together at the very *nexus of substructure and superstructure* which ties the class relation and the political order. When said relation and order is at a point of instability, those bonds are frayed or perhaps even cut, and the bodies tied up within their web are inevitably wrapped about with conflict even if they have chosen to abstain. But also, when the substructure and superstructure is stabilized again, the civil bond wraps itself more firmly, and those entangled in it are at some point involved in the overall maintenance of the “peace” that has been restored to the system. It is in this way that *civil society is always already fraught with violence*. Be it the violence of the imposed and colonizing forces or that of the oppressed and colonized forces: in either the peaceful or chaotic phases, the tame or wild phase.

There is a paradox to be observed here, where two opposing tendencies seem unified. Some people have used the metaphor of a “horseshoe” to describe that. As a figure of speech, the “horseshoe” theory gives the impression that in any process of social change, those who start out on the left (progressive) end will descend into a path that leads them up towards the right (regressive) end. The image is that of a “U” shape. In this “U” shape, it is the very act of engaging in violence that overcomes a separation of left from right, easily allowing one travel between these poles. Otherwise, they are far apart from each other.

But the horseshoe is a misrepresentation of the dynamics involved in how or why progressive and regressive tendencies are united. When the political order and class relation is sta-

Substructure, substructural — in Marxist thought, refers to the economic base of society. The base reorganizes the relationship between the biological and abiotic environment. The most honest among Marxists will allow the idea that the “superstructure” can influence the “substructure.” This is like saying nurture affects nature. But very few would suggest that the former precedes the latter: ie, that nature is created by nurture. Which is to say, class always comes first, because the mode of production — if it does not determine everything else about social life — it is at best the primary condition of possibility for the other phenomena in human societies to occur (see: *Engels’ Letter to J Bloch*)

Superstructure, superstructural — in Marxist theory, refers to cultural and political phenomena which are caused by the base economic organization. Some Black radicals look at historical patterns in the organization socio-ecological life and activity that influence the “base” and seem to entrench or engender it, perhaps even determine its conditions. From this view, it would be culture, the State, metaphysics — the “superstructure” — which shapes the relationship between the biological and the abiotic environment, with the base arising out of that. In Fanon’s body of work there is such an overlap of substructure and superstructure in the colonies that the former is also the latter, the latter is also the former. This perspective is where NZ Suékama derives her “nexus” hypothesis (see: *The Wretched of the Earth, Frantz Fanon*)

Transect — a straight line across an expanse of ground used to take ecological measurements, continuously or at regular intervals. In Anarkata thought, transfeminism is central to “transecting” Black gender struggles under racial capitalism. This is done by merging Sylvia Wynter’s analysis of humanism with Afropessimist theories of ungendering derived from Hortense Spillers. (see: *Anarkata — A Statement*)

Truncate — means “to cut down” or “to cut short.” In NZ Suékama’s body of work, “truncation” describes the exact tac-

Minor (style, order) patriarchy — in Sanyika Shakur’s body of work, refers to a patriarchal “network” as it emerges among the colonized and subjugated societies under “grand” patriarchy. NZ Suékama uses the concept with nod toward Maria Lugones’ theory of a “dark sode side of the coloniality of gender.” NZ Suékama also draws on WEB du Bois’ notion of the “color line” to describe how the “minor peoples” relate to other nations through patriarchal statecraft. (See: *The Pathology of Patriarchy* and see: *Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System* by Maria Lugones)

Nexus — refers to a connection (or series of connections) that links two or more things. In NZ Suékama’s body of work, there are social forms at the “nexus” of the substructure and the superstructure. These anchor configurations of human embodiment in the local material and power structure. For NZ Suékama, these “nexuses” stabilize how one’s position in the mode of production and patterns of (social) reproduction is negotiated or navigated. She derives the “nexus” hypothesis from Sanyika Shakur’s notion of a “good ole boy network.” NZ Suékama argues that there are a variety of gendered and non-gendered “nexuses” for each given society that have implications for things like the division of labor and more (see: *Pathology of Patriarchy* and see: *They Thought They Could Bury Me But Didn’t Know I Was a Star Queen*)

Sociogeny — the study of socio-cultural phenomena. Focuses on both myths/consciousness and politico-economic configurations of the body. In Frantz Fanon’s body of work, sociogeny should be used to clarify relations between colonizer and colonized. In Sylvia Wynter’s body of work, sociogeny can clarify all human environmental relations by elucidating the interpenetration of neurochemical behavior regulatory mechanisms with the ontologies and cosmologies of a given social order. (see: *Towards the Sociogenic Principle* & see: *Sylvia Wynter - On Being Human as Praxis*)

ble, the left and right sides of its spectrum are in their archetypal connection. Though separated, they work together. In the Horseshoe worldview, this occurs at the top end of the “letter” U shape: the poles are far apart enough where their distance from each other is visible. They are also high up enough that they are “civil”: there is nothing “barbaric” about their activities in the way is said about the people beneath them. The people beneath them are the engine of bloodshed and in a way that maneuvers across the spectrum, with no clear stance. Horseshoe theory is, in effect, about asserting that only the ruling class and those in power have acceptable orientation toward violence: due to their “high” level position in the overall “shape” of the system, maintained at a safe “distance” from each other. Distance, however, is a fiction. And the “descent” into violence that elides such a “distance” is not merely the purview of those on the “bottom.” After all, you cannot have the top of a “u” shape without the bottom.

In other words, the “chasm” between left and right needs a quotidian (everyday) violence to even cohere. The misery and callousness visited upon the poor and unhoused, the disappearance of battered women desperate to escape their abusive husbands, the stranglehold forced upon the mad, mentally ill, neurodivergent, disabled behind the auspices of care and medicine, the damn near witch hunt stirred up by religious ilk at the mere sight or mention of a trans or gay human being, the whips and rods brought down upon children of all kinds in the name of discipline, these and more are regular occurrences within civil society. And though the ones at the top might condemn and legislate around or invest in solutions to how these issues affect those beneath them, never are the vernacular horrors of our civil bonds viewed with the *levels* of disgust and vitriol as the spectre of decolonization, or of communism, or of autonomy as a revolutionary tendency. For these haunt the mind of the leaders of the world (and their acolytes) with the threat of complete change to the “shape” of things.

Indeed, the possibility of complete change is what occasions those moments when less “extreme” sources of violence (the ones that characterize civil society at a daily level) are given the type of repression and disdain foisted upon proponents of radical tendencies. Only when the more “regular” forms of violence — the “normal” crimes reported on the news, or watched as entertainment through podcasts, or discussed as frivolously as a weather forecast, or wailed about from the pulpit as part of the altar call — demonstrate or are received as capable of demonstrating an *asymmetry of effect* upon the integrity of the whole structure do we find that expression of “right wing” violence is triangulated with “left wing” rebelliousness via the false equivalence known as Horseshoe Theory.

Structural asymmetry is what perturbs the spirit here, and it invites comments about human nature, bringing about calls to remember what *civility* is or should be. On these grounds, we must find better metaphor for the entire situation, perhaps that of a Letter “I.” In the letter “I” there is a “top” bar and its two end points are actually part of the same line. Then there is a “bottom” bar and its two end points are also united in their same line. Finally, there is a middle bar, which bisects the top and bottom bars by running perpendicular to them at their centre, thus adjoining them. The left and right at the “top” have their central meeting place and no chasm between them can be observed on first glance; the left and right at the “bottom” have their central meeting place and no chasm between can be observed on first glance; and at these centripoints is another line which connects the top to the bottom, and connects the bottom to the top at that centrepoin. Concerning violence, then, the paradox of unity between opposing poles is no paradox at all: it is instead a question of interpenetration. “Interpenetration” is key to understanding why civil society shapes the locus of violence at which either stability or disruption of the overall material and power structure is negotiated. This is because interpenetration is what characterizes those bonds of interaction at

relations of the colonial-bourgeois and State system “overlap” at the site of more marginal social relations. Imbrication is a dynamic process that anchors the production and reproduction of the dominant system. For NZ Suékama, wherever imbrication occurs, there is a “disimbrication” of other material and power relations, with implications for productive and reproductive processes. NZ Suékama derives imbrication theory from theories of “interlocking domination” in Black feminism (see: *scholarship on Triple Jeopardy & the Third World Women’s Alliance*)

Locus — means a particular point, position, or place. In *The Dialectical Biologist*, the organism is considered a “locus” of “interaction” for external and internal factors like gene and environment (pg 89). For this reason, Lewontin and Levins argue that organisms are not “simply the passive object of autonomous internal and external forces; it is also the subject of its own evolution” — a perspective known as constructive development. NZ Suékama’s body of work builds on Lewontinian biology by suggesting a “corporeal locus” for both endogenous-exogenous interpenetration in metabolic interactions as well as sociogenic interactions. This is central to her understanding of bodily autonomy and a “science of self-determination.” (see: *Organism as Subject and Object of Evolution, Lewontin and Levins*)

Metabolic — in Marxist theory, this refers to exchanges between human organic matter and the inorganic conditions of their lives. Analyses of metabolic “life-activity” drew on natural science insights, but was at its core a materialist social science. Marx grounds this socio-ecological perspective in his analysis of labor. For NZ Suékama, socio-ecological metabolism is organized and disorganized by the valency of nexing-forms; this stabilizes the nature plus nurture dynamics of the labor process and other relations. (see: *works of John Bellamy Foster & see: Ariel Salleh — Ecofeminism as Politics: Nature, Marx, and the Postmodern*)

Endogenous — when something emerges internal to something else. Refers to any phenomenon, resource, data, object that is emerging or is discernible within the context of a given biological, social, or other kind of system and process. Very common in transgender healthcare, to refer to hormones produced within the body. In NZ Suékama’s body of work, “endogenous” is a transfeminist interpretation of “internal evolution” as described by decolonial Marxists like Walter Rodney (see: *Against Sex Class Theory, pt 1* & see: *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*)

Exogenous — when something emerges external to something else. Exogenous refers to phenomenon, resource, data, object that is introduced to a biological, social, or other kind of system and process from without. Very common in transgender healthcare to refer to hormones introduced to the body. In NZ Suékama’s body of work, “exogenous” is a transfeminist interpretation of “external factors” that influence societal evolution as described by decolonial Marxists like Amilcar Cabral (see: *The Weapon of Theory* and see: *Dispatches from Among the Damned — On the History and Present of Trans Survival*)

Grand (style, order) patriarchy — in Sanyika Shakur’s body of work, refers to a patriarchal “network” as it emerges from interaction of Greco-Roman and Abrahamic statecraft/class systems. NZ Suékama uses the concept with nod toward Maria Lugones’ theory of a “light side of the coloniality of gender.” NZ Suékama also draws on WEB du Bois’ notion of the “color line” to describe how the “grand peoples” relate to other nations through patriarchal statecraft. (See: *The Pathology of Patriarchy* and see: *Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System* by Maria Lugones)

Imbrication — literally means “overlapping at the edges.” Fish scales, shingles on a roof, the tips of an asparagus, and some flower petals are arranged through imbrication. In NZ Suékama’s body of work, the dominant system is arranged in relation to other systems through imbrication. This means the

the nexus of substructure and superstructure which “tie” civil society together.

Free the body!

Free the land!

(x4)

No bosses, lords, or masters

No genre of Man!

No class, caste, or party

Just the magic of these hands

(x3)

II.

Interpenetration as a tool (heuristic) for understanding history is most commonly associated with Marx’s method. But, it is a response to and must be contextualized in terms of a certain more *mainstream* philosophical and “scientific” worldview. In that worldview, “modern” history and its social systems have “developed” from “premodern” history and social systems. This evolution is assumed to be linear. The “right” and “left” wings of that evolutionary “flight path” are only in tension because of different approaches to the same “developmental” trajectory of history. One seeks to conserve the essentials of what supposedly “caused” the development to emerge; and the other seeks progress in how the consequences of that development are distributed or arranged. At the heart of this seeming polarity is the same common ground: a “social contract” with the State, which safeguards a certain interest — namely the entrepreneurial and innovative endeavors of the bourgeoisie.

Against this ideological backdrop, comes an interpenetrated view where the same productive tension of “right” and “left” could be applied to how “modernity” itself relates to “premodern” systems. The difference is, unlike the bourgeois and

liberal-state philosophical and scientific program, Marxism strove to reveal how the dialectic did not mean “advancement” for all of humanity. So-called “development” and “evolution” came with massive environmental and social costs for those exploited by the bourgeoisie and who lived under the political rule of the bourgeois state. This “contradiction” was no paradox, however.

According to the “interpenetrated” understanding, the very nature of an ensemble of parts is to be defined in the context of when they are assembled as a whole (parts only acquire traits, qualities, properties on account of their presence in a particular whole). So, if parts are isolated from a particular whole or assembled as parts of different whole, then they cannot still retain the same properties from when they were assembled differently (ie, Parts acquire properties from one another whenever assembled, and they impart qualities to the particular whole itself within which they are assembled).

When the “whole” being considered is a supposed linear trajectory of historical “development,” one part (A) might be the “premodern” end of the developmental trajectory and the other part (B) might be the “modern” end of the developmental trajectory. The interpenetration of the two would mean that so-called “premodern” social forces existed simultaneous to that of “modern” social forces. Some countries in Europe during Marx’s time, for example, were still feudal, while others were only newly industrializing. Dialectically, speaking, then, if there was a linear “development” or “evolution” adjoining these forces, it would actually be on account of how the whole acquires new properties from its parts, while also imparting new qualities to the parts themselves, and vice versa, so on and so forth.

The relationship between parts and wholes is what drives their co-evolution. But, the relationship itself, within which parts and wholes co-evolve, is also evolving. So the dialectic basically reveals how parts and wholes cannot exist without each

haviors, etc that are made possible by factors like biological inheritance/descent, etc. But biological potentiality argues that these factors do not determine the presentation and evolution of that range of traits. According to Stephen Jay Gould, biological potentiality means there is no “predisposition” towards any of the available subset of trait presentations. But biological potentiality does not mean there are infinite potentials contained in the genome, which the individual has determination over as something to personally unlock or unleash. That is a pseudo-Lamarckian view of epigenetic development pushed by the likes of Jordan Peterson. In Gouldian biology, which he offers as a complement to the Darwinian view of descent by modification, social structure exists in dialectic with biological potentiality, enabling an artificial selection from among the available range of human trait presentations. (see: *Who’s Man is This — Black Radical Ecology and the Anthropogenic Question* and see: *The Worldviews of Stephen Jay Gould An Overview of the Themes that Appear in Gould’s Writings* Lawrence N. Goeller)

Embodiment — in layman’s terms, the personified or incarnated form of an idea. NZ Suékama uses this term as a merger of material analysis and critical theory. Here, it describes how forms of metabolic life-activity become “embodied” or associated with particular roles or positions in societies and vice versa. NZ Suékama’s definition of embodiment draws from Marxist feminist thought that views the reproduction of human bodies as both a social and ecological question, not merely biological. NZ Suékama also draws heavily from Sylvia Wynter thought, understanding that self-concept, myths, and language play a central role in the social reproduction process. (see: *What Will Be The Cure? — An Interview With Sylvia Wynter and Bedour Alagraa* & see: “*Social Reproduction Theory,*” *Social Reproduction, and Household Production* by Kirstin Munro)

nexus, thus non-patriarchal forces of (artificial) “selection” from subsets of biologically potentiated trait expressions in our metabolic life.

Attention to other nexing-forms is a transfeminist synthesis of lessons from Worker’s, National, and Gender *Self-Determination* movements. It exposes how vulnerable everyone is to an metabolic (ecogenic) rift, getting closer to “grasping the root” of how alienation is *contested and maintained* without taking the conditions thereof as a given. This is the insight that must be brought about in the “quotidian” and everyday threads of violence. It strives towards the *articulation of bodily autonomy*. This is a dangerous concept to both the ruling class and those aspiring to be like them. Neither Grand and Minor Patriarchy can abide here. Striving toward *that* kind of universality, in the midst of revolutionary unrest, upheaval, and against counterrevolutionary attempts at repressing and invalidating said unrest and upheaval, is what will help us coordinate the next phase in our struggle for liberation. The work is already here; these words are an affirmation of it. More can be said on this, but for now I will conclude.

Free the body!

Free the land!

(x4)

No bosses, lords, or masters

No genre of Man!

No class, caste, or party

Just the magic of these hands

(x3)

Nsámbu’s Lexicon:

Biological potentiality — in contrast to biological reduction, biological potentiality emphasizes the range of traits, be-

other, even when thought of as “opposites.” They acquire their properties in consequence of their interpenetrated relationship, the latter of which is also evolving because of the same reason. Evolution of society in Europe was not merely a linear philosophical or scientific trajectory, then, but rather about how feudal elements (part A) became interpenetrated with post-feudal elements (part B) and how capitalist elements (part B) became interpenetrated with pre-capitalist elements (part A).

The interpenetrated view helped explain why there were social and environmental costs even as modernity seemed to come with so much scientific and philosophical “development” and “evolution.” The bourgeoisie and its statecraft violently restructured “premodern” systems, through a long history of accumulation, dispossession, and exploitation. So there was no paradox in how modern “advancement” could be rife with so much pollution and social unrest: the answer was in the very dialectical relationship itself and how it was embodied in real life by real persons in their real environments — namely a population of newly proletarianized human beings who suddenly were experiencing life as nothing more than a source of labor power. Yet, the interpenetrated view had limits. Marx’s method was applied to a particular time and particular place. Modern and premodern categories might make sense for the concerns of the European radical intelligentsia, but for the concerns of the colonized and the enslaved, the history of social systems could not be understood neatly in that manner.

And many European workers, intimately aware of that distinction, were becoming more and more invested in their “grand” style concerns while leaving the “minor” style concerns outside their Continent largely unaddressed. Workers in Europe even went so far as to engage in what we discussed first, tendencies that appear to be a metaphorical letter “u” shape (where a violent descent means left eventually becomes right). This was, in actuality, a metaphorical letter “I” shape: even as European history navigated tensions between those

who sought to conserve the essential dynamics “modernizing” their societies and those who sought progress in the spatial distribution of “modernizing” forces, the centrepoint of those struggles — a bourgeois class relation and the humanist political order — meant even the victims of the process found common ground via the imbrication of their “grand” societies in the First World at the expense of the “minor” peoples of the Second and Third World.

Because of this, the “grand” peoples scrambled to take the reins of a “modern” restructuring of “premodern” relations, seeking power within a racialized-imperial continuum of violence, enclosure, disablement, genocide and ultimately assimilate or integrate by aligning with the accumulation, dispossession, and exploitation that allowed the “grand” bourgeois its “advance.” The resultant violences, the ethnoreligious tensions within the borders of newly forming capitalist nation states, the pogroms and holocausts and world wars that occurred — these things have invigorated the philosophical and “scientific” program which lauded Europe as more “advanced” than Black/African and Third World communities. In reality, however, the issue at hand was fascism: for the “developed” nature of the colonizer’s “world” system, and even its post-war “conscience” on human rights, its creation of a state for the victims of the largest genocide within its regional bounds, its ensuing “cold war” commitment to “policing” the globe, its revitalized industries that would usher in a boom for agriculture, food production, consumer technologies, etc; even its capability for responding to the energy crisis and ecological crisis it then created towards the end of the 20th century, or capacity to provide legal protections and support for democracy and economic as well as social welfare for its newly “integrated” and “postcolonial” citizens and denizens — these did not simply “advance” because of how feudal elements (part A) became interpenetrated with post-feudal

sons in their real environments is not *overdetermined* by truncation.

To put this in perspective: drawing the letter “I” in our metaphor would require graphite being etched onto a paper, its composition thus broken up as the matter on its surface is transferred to another, much flatter surface. The force involved in achieving this, requires energy from the machine or person deploying the writing utensil, and even then, an entire socio-ecological process went into the creation of the paper or whatever surface the grapheme was drawn on, as well as the device used to write the letter “I” in the first place. All of this precedes the lateral, parallel, and vertical distribution of a continuum of points that compose the letter “I.” It also provides the conditions under which one might try to “flip the pencil over” and use an eraser to wipe away the character that was drawn. It does not guarantee that the shape won’t be or drawn again (by the same person or another), nor does it guarantee that the circumstances which prefigure the drawing or erasure of the letter “I” are free of domination or exploitation. But it allows us to become self-conscious in the whole situation, should we decide to draw a different grapheme, or maybe question the phoneme (the vowel sound “I”) or lexeme (the first person pronoun “I”) we have represented through the letter, or use a different writing surface or different utensil, or even escape the hypothetical circumstances altogether.

Taking it from metaphor to abstraction (and I admit this is a very wonky and haphazard thing to do): the interpenetrated view has a fourth maneuver, one that concerns how a patriarchal-dualist nexus is *negotiated* with regard to other nexuses. This is what I propose as a transfeminist, with a concern for how the “grand” order and “minor” order material/power relations is *navigated* vis-a-vis other substructural and superstructural forms of socio-ecological organization. And it concerns the alternative configurations of the corporeal locus that might be *constructed* with regards to these non-hegemonic

rates is a common suggestion among liberals. Some feminists will step in by reframing this as a matter of women's liberation (something the environmental journalist David Roberts advocated for, as an example). Contrasting themselves with the "magical thinking" of the native, others might claim to promote healthcare and rights, but end up pushing institutions that speak highly of workforce development, or provision of safety to sexually trafficked and otherwise exploited children, women, marginalized genders. Yet, they push for carceral industries that fail to address how and why illicit networks and the failures of so-called "backward" religious leaders outside the West—ultimately funnel resources from out of the Global South into the Global North. The silence here is because of the occasion for more imperialist "intervention." The integrity of the structure remains in place.

IV.

The moral triangulation weaponized against revolutionary violence, and the religious as well as philosophical-scientific context thereof — it is unsurprisingly going to remain hypocritical about the violences of the system it emerges from. This hypocrisy is itself no mere contradiction or paradox, however. It is a matter of interpenetration. Proportional to the metabolic/ecogenic rift entrenched by capitalist statecraft and colonial domination of the Third World is a disimbrication of the valency exhibited by non-dualist substructural and superstructural nexuses. Disimbrication imposes constraints on the colonized's capacity for militant self-defense, because it rearticulates the sociogenic valence of *other* nexuses. The "spiritual" content of revolutionary violence is why I have derived such an hypothesis: if there is a sociogenic valence exhibited by other, non-dualist nexuses, the real interactions that concern real per-

elements (part B) and how capitalist elements (part B) became interpenetrated with pre-capitalist elements (part A).

Colonized intellectuals, especially Afrikan/Black radicals, had to clarify the actual nature of the dialectic. These would introduce their own theories, focusing on the forces "endogenous" (internal) to their respective societies and their dialectical interpenetration with the forces exogenous (imposed) on their respective societies by the colonizer and slaver. Rather than a response to the philosophical and scientific ideology of "development" and "advancement," furthermore, colonized radicals were responding to the ideology behind the supposed "underdeveloped" and "backwards" character of our social systems. Because this latter ideology was directed at us simultaneously to the first ideology, though, it meant that the "interpenetrated" view among Third World radicals was robust. It could account for the "grand" concerns of the European radicals and our own "minor" concerns.

Again, this has to do with the fact that the very nature of an ensemble of parts is to be defined in the context of when they are assembled as a whole (parts only acquire traits, qualities, properties on account of their presence in a particular whole). So, if parts are isolated from a particular whole or assembled as parts of different whole, then they cannot still retain the same properties from when they were assembled differently (ie, Parts acquire properties from one another whenever assembled, and they impart qualities to the particular whole itself within which they are assembled). When the "whole" being considered is a supposed trajectory of "underdevelopment" among the colonized, one could not start with the social forces that predate "modernity" (part A) and those which came with "modernity" (part B), because of a need to account for the ways a "grand" (colonial) system stands above the "minor" (subjugated) system.

This is why the lens of endogenous-exogenous interpenetration is useful. As the whole acquires new properties from its

parts, it also imparts new qualities to the parts themselves, and vice versa, so on and so forth (the relationship between parts and wholes is what drives their co-evolution. But, the relationship itself, within which parts and wholes co-evolve, is also evolving). If there is a trajectory of “underdevelopment,” then, the dialectical basis is in how historical forces — be these “pre-modern” or “modern” — internal to colonized societies (part A) become interpenetrated with historical forces — again, be these “premodern” or “modern” — imposed on those societies (part B), and how historical forces — “premodern” or “modern” — imposed on colonized societies (part B) become interpenetrated with historical forces — “premodern” and “modern” — internal to those societies (part A).

This more complicated view of interpenetration became useful in explaining how it was that despite supposed environmental and social “backwardness” of colonized peoples, our communities had continued to resist and lead liberation struggles for centuries outside the models typical of European radicals, including the first ever successful slave revolt in human history (Haitian Revolution), and then the wave of successful anti-colonial and anti-segregation/anti-apartheid movements of the 20th century that altered the landscape of class relations and statecraft to this day. Since, the “modern” restructuring of “premodern” systems rested upon the domination of the “minor” peoples by the “grand” peoples, this meant the creation of a proletariat and even the unrest associated with the earliest members of that class in Europe could not have occurred if not for the genocidal invasion of the so-called Americas and the genocidal trafficking of human beings and natural resources along the African coasts and through the Continent’s interior. Raw materials and tools harvested and birthed by slave labor enabled the creation of a bourgeois mode of production and provided the bedrock to the accumulation, dispossession, and exploitation at the heart of either conservative or progressive approaches in the bourgeois

trait expressions. These processes concern the sociogenic valence of patriarchy, and anchor the rift in the spiritual and social dimensions of the local people’s metabolic (ecogenic) lives that was brought by the colonial-capitalist system.

Spiritual disimbrication and its embodied consequences (be these gendered/sexual, more broadly behavioral, or concerning other traits and forms of life-activity) may not always possess an antagonistic face. Alongside conservative backlash against the native and the enslaved, the occupied and imprisoned, the ghettoized and the wretched — there is a more “inclusive” or altruistic face. They are typically the moralizers carting out notions of a “horseshoe theory” in response to the violent resistance of the oppressed. They share in the same paternalistic mindset as their more right-wing countryfolk, even as they seem to call for peace and an end to “all” violence. For them, the religion and spirituality of the downtrodden is inhumane, irrational, and sexually immoral — because of its barbaric treatment of women, gay and trans people. The charge of barbarism doubles as a commentary on the supposed anti-scientific practices that leaves the life and health of disabled people in colonized nations subject to the whims of backward religious leaders. Similarly, the environmentalists wield it to scandalize the spiritual and cultural relationships to wildlife among indigenous peoples.

This collaboration of these divergent milieus is no more clear than in how regular there is criminalization of indigenous peoples on their own lands by barons of the oil industry and wildlife protection agencies alike. Just as chasm between green and meat industry is fictive, their imbrication occurring at a patriarchal nexus, so also those pursuing natural resources in the Third World are actually in unity with those claiming to protect those resources. Hence, the predominance of Malthusian and neo-Malthusian rhetoric in contemporary environmental discourse. Sterilization of Third World populations under the idea that peace and resources could be preserved by lowering birth

for decades underwent regime change in part because of US anti-communist activity during the Cold War! Caught in the throes of this are often women and other marginalized genders, who are made frontline as organizers in peasant and indigenous struggle against not just patriarchal violence, but fights against climate devastation, and struggles to preserve ancestral faith and healing practices in the Third World. This example is just one of the many real life issues concerning real persons in real environments, which the dialectic helps us clarify without slipping into reductive “dualist” misinterpretation and mystification.

Concerning the violence that would contest the system, the forces which rearticulate more-than-human phenomena in the manner previously exemplified also rearticulate human subversive expressions. Geography specific modes of environmental inhabitation exist across cultures, with their own patterns of material provisioning and their own ways of understanding themselves and the universe. The occupying agents regularly act against the rituals or spiritual beliefs within the occupied nation, for the latter people often revitalize their ceremonies as part of revolt or uprising. The paternalistic mind of the colonizer regards the religion of the oppressed and enslaved as inhumane, irrational, and will ultimately frame it as sexually immoral. The Man moves against these objects of rite and worship, demonizing spiritual roles and the cosmology of the oppressed, and especially targets them for their potentials to “go beyond” a certain binary or certain “proper” way of aligning with said binary. This is part of the counterrevolution. And yet, it’s also about how bodies in space are to be configured. The colonizer is displacing people from lands, subjecting territory to political and economic and military domination. There is a need to regiment and segregate the subjugated into isolated, atomized units. There is also a sexual division of labor imposed, along with coercions of bodily autonomy that pathologize “variance” and regulate behavior, neurotype, and other

interest. There is nothing paradoxical about how or why the “underdeveloped” regions of the world would be rife with so much emancipatory fervor and impulse even amidst the mass levels of ecological devastation: the answer was in the very dialectical relationship itself and how it was embodied in real life by real persons in their real environments, namely populations of the Third World who had experienced a certain concentration of capital into the hands of a ruling class occur *by way of the color line* and an overall racialized-imperial continuum of violence, enclosure, disablement, genocide, and more.

Yet, in the 21st century, we start to see pitfalls in the dialectic of anti-imperialism. Social unrest and environmental devastation is at an all time high even as innovation and scientific mastery have reached unprecedented levels. The stark difference between Global North and Global South remains ever glaring in terms of ecological health, access to medicine, jobs and education, political rights, and more. Liberation movements have, furthermore, begun to demonstrate what we discussed first, what appears to be a metaphorical letter “u” shape (where a violent descent means left eventually becomes right). This is, in actuality, a metaphorical letter “i” shape: the “minor” peoples of the Global South, far beneath the “grand” peoples of the Global North, have our own tensions between those who seek to conserve the essential dynamics endogenous to our societies and those who seek progress in those endogenous dynamics. And just as the “grand” right-left dichotomy has its centrepiece — the bourgeois class relation and the humanist political order — so also the “minor” progressive and conservative factions have common ground via the imbrication of the class relations and political order *which was exogenously imposed*.

Because of this, the “minor” peoples may scramble to take the reins of a “modern” restructuring of “premodern” relations, seeking power within a racialized-imperial continuum

of violence, enclosure, disablement, genocide and ultimately assimilate or integrate by aligning with the accumulation, dispossession, and exploitation that allowed the “grand” bourgeois its “advance.” The resultant violences, the ethnoreligious tensions within the borders of newly decolonized nation states, the coup detats and military takeovers, the poaching and trafficking networks, the mountains of unprocessed trash, the shanty towns and continuous waves of migrant and refugee crises, the atrocious record on human rights law especially for gender/sexual minorities — these things have reinvigorated the philosophical and “scientific” program which lauds Europe as more “advanced” than Black/African and Third World communities. In reality, however, the issue at hand is neocolonialism: for the “underdeveloped” nature of the colonized world’s human rights paradigm, of its responses to energy crisis and ecological crisis, of its productive capacities regarding various industries and necessary municipal services, its legal capacities regarding the criminal underground, its governmental commitments to democracy and to the economic as well as social welfare of its citizens and denizens — these things are in disarray because of how internal/endogenous elements (part A) remain interpenetrated with imposed/exogenous elements (part B) and how imposed/exogenous elements (part B) remain interpenetrated with internal/endogenous elements (part A).

Free the body!

Free the land!

(x4)

No bosses, lords, or masters

No genre of Man!

No class, caste, or party

Just the magic of these hands

(x3)

which are now rearticulated in a metabolic (ecogenic) rift. The structural consequences of this is a conflict between and within and among the spandrels of embodiment: most pronounced in the violence between persons that maintains the system. Even more-than-human phenomena are swept up into this process: for example nutritional content in the soy plant that was first selected for and cultivated for centuries in Asia is overlooked on account of the presence of phytoestrogens by the Orientalist mind, who regards isoflavones in soy (and their potentiality to bind with estrogen receptors in the human body) as a plot from either “big pharma” or “green” policy to supposedly “effeminize” American so-called males. This in turn incites sinophobic stereotypes, heightens cissexism and transmisic rhetoric, foments anti-scientific or pseudoscientific understanding of hormones, and invests a population in the meat industry, while stirring up nationalist refusals address the environmental and health (for the animals, workers and the consumers) costs of said industry.

Meanwhile, soybean meal provides the bulk of the animal feed upon which the neat industry is reliant, the largest producers of soybeans are not Asian nations, and (according to the world wildlife federation) soy production is the second largest agricultural driver of deforestation in the world after the beef industry (which is ranked number 1). Both industries are deeply interwoven, despite superficial opposition in media narratives, and together contribute to theft and usurpation of indigenous lands in a number of Global South (especially South American) countries, all to meet both the soy and beef protein production and consumption demands of capitalism especially for the First World. Furthermore, these indigenous communities, like the Ava Guarani in Paraguay, have to deal with the runoff and other pollutants created by the capitalist agribusiness while landed beneficiaries of agrarian reforms (that buttress the beef and soy agribusiness) benefit from inequities with the help of a government apparatus which

In other milieus, part A could be recast for those scrambling towards the top in positive terms of emotion and nurturance balanced in “modern” advancement; with the cast of part B perhaps lacking that balance as a zone of masculine “backwardness” (this is what the Grand Patriarchy bequeaths to the Third World in the form of “girlboss” feminists from the West who blame “underdevelopment” on non-western religious control of women’s rights). There are so many other possible substitutions and reformulations, much more than I could devote space to here, possibility which is not simply a trivial and abstract issue. Parts acquire properties from one another whenever assembled, and they impart qualities to the particular whole itself within which they are assembled. If the whole (ensemble of truncated embodiments at the nexus of substructure and superstructure) acquires new properties from its parts (alienated traits/features of biological-abiotic locus recast as dualism and dimorphism), it also imparts new qualities to the parts themselves, and vice versa, so on and so forth. This relationship between parts and wholes, even if “selected” for artificially/anthropogenically, is what drives their co-evolution; and the relationship itself, within which parts and wholes co-evolve, is also evolving. Parts and wholes cannot exist without each other, only acquiring their properties in consequence of their interpenetrated relationship, the latter of which is also evolving because of the same reason.

If there is a natural or cosmic context for these patriarchal configurations, the dialectical basis is in how a sociogenic “nexus” (part A) whereby material and power relations are imbricated is interpenetrated with the “locus” (part B) of corporeal (biological-abiotic) interactions, and how the “locus” (part B) of corporeal (biological-abiotic) interactions is interpenetrated with a sociogenic “nexus” (part A) whereby material and power relations are imbricated. The valency of the nexus is in dialectic with the biological potentiality for subsets of trait expression within the locus, the dynamics of

III.

The imbricated class interest and political order is how those at the “top” maintain their relationship to those at the “bottom,” and by extension it is why those among the “minor” peoples appear to “become who they hate” (as the proponents of a horseshoe theory call it) in patterning the violences of the “grand” peoples. The “overlapping” character of this problem not a paradox, not a mystery of the human condition, nor a rejection of “civility,” but rather a dialectic embodied in real life by real persons in their real environments with the help of the civil bond itself. The national liberation philosophy is not enough to clarify interpenetration at *this phase*, however, for the same reasons that Marxism needed to be “stretched” in dealing with the colonial problem, and why the mainstream philosophical and “scientific” paradigm needed to be exposed. Common to all such frameworks, endogenous and exogenous dynamics in societies (whether they are considered “premodern” or “modern”) are substituted with naturalistic fallacy. The dialectic is reduced to the body itself or to nature alone, to the genome, the chromosome, the hormone, the genital or the gamete, the skin color or the hair texture, or the neurotype.

Our letter “I” metaphor is once again relevant. The fallacy provides a smokescreen for those positioned along “lower bar” as they try to ascend the “middle bar” towards the “upper bar.” It, of course, functions similarly for those positioned along the “upper bar” as they try to push others down the “middle bar” to the “lower bar.” Unity of opposites here, since they run parallel to each other, and are adjoined at the same centrepoin even if they contain their own lateral distinctions (their respective left-right dichotomies). It is the medial line we must assess to understand the implications this has for how people are positioned in bourgeois productive and reproductive relations; and how civil bonds guarantee protections, gains, and “rights” to some within those positions, but not to others.

The medial line articulates a “nexus” in the substructure and superstructure, whereby human embodiment becomes atomized amidst the steady march of capital being concentrated in the hands of a few. It adjoins the centrepieces (imbrication of both “grand” order and “minor” order material and power relations) because as a substructural/superstructural “nexus” it truncates the *corporeal locus* of endogenous-exogenous interpenetration and “modern”-“premodern” interpenetration. Truncation of this corporeal locus occurs in accordance to a *sociogenic principle*, one that exhibits a *patriarchal valency*: organizing and disorganizing the features, traits, qualities of *biological-abiotic interactions*. Neither the “grand” peoples’ supposed “advancement” nor the “minor” peoples’ supposed “backwardness” could persist if not for the aforementioned, as this what *alienates living persons from the living environment* which is always part of human life-activity as much as we are part of it. Some Marxists speak of a metabolic rift; as a transfeminist I regard it as a problem of ecogeny, thus simultaneously material and metaphysical.

The ideology which emerges around this metabolic (ecogenic) rift recasts truncated embodiments under the sign of *ontological dualisms and/or biological dimorphism* (subject and object, male and female, reason and emotion, damned and redeemed, light and dark, holy and profane, rational and insane, mind over matter etc). Such an ideology seeks to obscure the dynamics of the metabolic (ecogenic) rift, by naturalizing or to sacralizing the “grand” style patriarchy and/or of “minor” style patriarchy, and thereby *justifying the imbrication* of bourgeois class system and humanist statecraft (in their conservative as well as their progressive expressions) that *entrenches such a rift* and its attendant alienation.

Still, the essence of an ensemble of parts is to be defined in the context of when they are assembled as a whole (parts only acquire traits, qualities, properties on account of their presence in a particular whole). If the whole is an ensemble of truncated

embodiments at the nexus of substructure and superstructure, part A may be cast as those scrambling toward the top, supposedly governed by nurture and reason/mind, who are historical subjects, heterosexual, cis, rational, free, etc. and the vanguard of “modern” advancement; while part B might be cast as those being pushed to the bottom, governed by nature and emotion/passion who are historical objects, queer, trans, insane, slave etc and the quintessence of “premodern” backwardness. The selection of the points that have been drawn into such metaphysical dualisms and physical dimorphism cannot be isolated from a different whole as such or assembled as parts of different whole while still retaining the same properties from when they were assembled differently. This is why Patriarchal ideology’s appeals to nature and appeals to tradition actually fall apart. The selection is neither natural nor divinely-willed.

But the Grand Patriarchy and the Minor Patriarchy proceed in falsely universalizing the business of artificial and anthropogenic selection anyway. So, then we have them try substituting any of the named “dimorphic” variables for the other, most especially in the eclectic “marketplace of ideas” approach to life under a consumerist technoculture. We see this all across the promulgation of pop-science and pop-psych, self-help and fitness/wellness culture, prosperity gospel and new age spirituality, establishment overestimation of the Promethean (STEM) impulse as well as “anti-establishment” conspiracies which similarly regard technical mastery uncritically, etc. In some of those milieus, Part A might be recast for those scrambling towards the top in terms of not their positive capacity to reason but in their negative capacity for a “field of sensations” (to quote Leopold Senghor’s vision in “African Socialism,” per Kwame Nkrumah); and thus the cast of part B would have to valorise those at the bottom through taking the opposing terms at face value, the embodied consequences of which include a certain race-reductionism preferred by the bourgeois nationalists (representatives of Minor Patriarchy).