



imagined -in- place

The world is in the midst of attempting to systematically (mis-)manage the kind of catastrophe thus far relegated to history and sci-fi. In this situation, many find themselves disillusioned by the posturing of bureaucracy and/or the impulses of wide-eyed sheeple. Presently, sheltered-in-place, we find ourselves straddling feelings of empathy and solidarity for precarious¹ communities, alongside an old and familiar sense of embitterment. Beyond the current uncertainties, there has always been a small voice within us saying: *This. Is. Bullshit.* We believe our reflection is a sentiment widely felt, in unique ways. It's clear that the world's demands for emancipation from the totalizing subjugation of Western modernity are proportional to the enclosures and subjugation imposed. In this moment— where the coronavirus has accomplished an interruption of reality some claimed impossible— the ontological *bullshit* seems not only more discernible, but conceivably reproachable. It's relevant to note that, in some instances, *bullshit* has an elemental capacity to catalyze transformation— for better or worse.

With virological pandemic unfolding and many unable to generate income, there is relevant concern about the in-/stability of necessities

such as: well-being, housing, food, water, utilities, education, etc. In the US, leadership is scrambling to prevent the collapse of the un-/comfortable world as we know it. Arguments for universal healthcare are bound to be seriously re-/considered. While the present economic support of precarious peoples and places will be crucial, hopefully this situation doesn't push conversations towards universal incomes. It doesn't take a Marxist to realize that capitalism will eventually harness inflation to ultimately absorb any basic stipend. What we need is the universal opportunity to diverse and self-determined existence—static, mobile, and beyond—ideally through the abolishment of impairments, such as racial capitalism², privatized property³, borders⁴, and nationalism⁵.

As some of us absorb what it feels like to slow down and minimize direct relations, we wonder what possibilities may be generating from this aeration of modernity's bullshit. Navigating our own limbo—housed, but homeless—our hearts are pulled towards collective endeavors for well-being, while our physiologies are trapped by precarity and academia. Abstracted, we wonder about the systemic cracks that engaged activists and abolitionists are eagerly leveraging during this uncertain time. We wonder about the news that's not in the news.

It seems today's interruption of business-as-usual is a prime opportunity to promote the

Degrowth movement to Westerners. While the mainstream includes various lifestyles, it's important to recognize that (before coronavirus), "one middle-class person in the US consumes three-hundred times the food and energy mass of one Third World person."⁶ In other words, the Degrowth movement isn't a universal approach to addressing emerging crises. To exist within biophysical limits requires the constriction of meta-economies and harnessing of renewables. The goal is to maximize well-being and joy through integrated and non-extractive means—sharing work, consuming less, establishing local economies and currencies, while devoting more time to art, play, music, family, nature, culture and community.⁷ Degrowth strives for a social embodiment of ecological wisdoms—beyond eco-modernist innovations—and simultaneously rejects the swelling of capitalism's *green-wave*. Funny-not-funny, this informed and interdependent lifestyle doesn't seem so far-fetched anymore. Today's diminished well-being and economic recession are incongruent with the goals of Degrowth; yet, in tandem with other approaches, it's framework could help inspire some of us towards creating accountable and restorative eco-cultural communities.

Whatever may be next, what we know is that we are the results of histories we can never fully understand or be accountable to. Still, it is

our response-ability to contribute to persisting and emerging endeavors to reject the Western colonial legacy (e.g. reductionism; individualism; domination). Concepts like liberation and well-being are not merely subjective experiences; they are multi-faceted and integrally linked to the in-/direct relationships and systems which constitute all existence. In this sense, **none of us are free until all of us are free.** It is our response-ability to aspire and act for micro and macro transformation, restoration, and eco-centric mutuality. Our academic research is focused on exploring how and where accountable liberation is cultivated and/or spontaneously manifests for those that are constrained or erased by modernity's purported ideologies and bullshit. We are searching for the *visionary fictions*⁸-turned-realities, the emerging *Children of Compost*⁹, the decolonized *Neverlands*¹⁰, and beyond. The purpose of our inquiry is to radically: inspire and equip the playful; connect and embolden the post-capitalist freaks; help build unique coalitions; and, to find our home.

kiah, mercury, eli, and naybour
Sheltered-in-Fruitvale
27th March 2020

**ALSO UNDERSTAND THE
APOCALYPSE AS AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR RENEWAL.
A WORLD SHAKEN OFF ITS
FOUNDATION CAN BE BUILT
DIFFERENTLY, BETTER.
BUT WE HAVE TO HOLD A
VISION OF WHAT FUTURE
WE REALLY WANT
SO AS NOT TO RE-CREATE THE
MESSSES WE HAVE NOW.
- MIA BIRDSONG**

contributing to the end of the world as we knew it...

And just like that, everything changed. In the early days of *during-virus*, schools were closed, cages were opened, and cells were emptied. Since in-personal contact put the collective at risk, social distancing was embraced. This required people to shift into lifestyles grounded by critical intimacy. Many relations and exchanges became distanced, without touch, and often virtual. Sheltered-in-place, they waited in limbo. Some were still. Some were scared. People shared stories with each other for comfort and entertainment amidst the unknown. Virological and ecological uncertainty woke the world from its monotony with unforeseeable actions. Suddenly, the reified was demystified.

During-virus they collectively made meaning personal by sharing stories and enriching lives, which led to creating contextual rituals-of-connection. With raw memories they sat in various circles, shared stories, and learned to hold and transcend differences. A hidden gift *during-virus* was that of imposed stillness, a time where they could be more reflective-- inquiring, challenging, and shifting. Actively and accountably engaging inner- and inter-personal conflict led them to unprecedented growth. Eventually this process taught them that everyone has value

and something important to offer-- even and especially the Other. They came together in coalitions and generated radical transformations. In contrast to beliefs *before-virus*, they recognized that shame, vilification, and punitive responses to dissent only perpetuated and exacerbated domination. Cages, cells, and exile were tools of torture for control by way of trauma. They realized that hurt people hurt people. In circles, they recognized that the closest they could come to any sort of full understanding was if they drew a web between all perspectives-- entangling symbolic, spiritual, phenomenological, structural, physical, social realms, and beyond. In circles justice was redefined from that which reproduces harm to that which produces healing. Without punitive responses to conflict, people were able to accountably self-determine their existence within mutuality. Unique and creative ontologies flourished.

After-virus was chaotic, to say the least. They scrambled between worlds, floating from past familiarities and plunging into unwritten futures. Some had the privilege of working from home, while others had to forge new paths to meet their needs. This distorted sociality pushed work to be re-imagined beyond traditionally prescribed mechanical transactions. They wrestled with change while grieving all they had lost. Some hung

to memories of the days before, desperately trying to climb old ladders of status and authority, but as they rose, the rungs between their hands and under their feet would give way. History had repeatedly proved traditional leaders and vanguards to be futile-- *during-virus* solidified that. People transformed work into participatory actions of care, support, vulnerability, and an embodiment of love. Circumstances divorced work from wages and reoriented it to forms of reciprocity and ecocultural economies. They came to recognize that all life thrives on the exchange of energetic and im-/material resources. Collaboration was all they needed, which they proved to themselves by building coalitions for plural existences and well-being.

Before-virus, evolution had been twisted and torched into a tool wielded by the economic elite for ceaseless domination and destruction under the guise of evolution. In their unfolding world, they were empowered to choose what growth and adaptation meant for them. Innovations became spontaneous responses to arising needs and instances, and included caring forethought of possible impacts. They squatted corporations, re-imagined technologies, and devised something horizontal. Elitist tools of over-consumption were repurposed into instruments for symbiosis, yielding a radical kind of growth-- one that is designed

by those effected, for those effected. They took a similar approach to schools, universities, municipalities, and healthcare sectors; squatting and response-ably reshaping everything. Micro and gift economies, co-ops, really really free markets, incandium libraries, and local currencies grew from the skeletons of speculative capital. They weeded through spaces, teased out what was helpful and mulched the rest. They blended the margins of work and play, while undoing notions of disposable things they could just throw away. Extraction and trash became words of the past as they devoted themselves to composting and repurposing.

This life of embeddedness conjured profound and dynamic beings that were unimaginable ^{before-} ~~before-~~ ^{virus.} Possibilities for family and kin sparked an eruption of multi-species relationships and systems of interconnection. From these relationships they were able to turn their human-centric world into realities of diverse ecologies. Without a script of nuclear existence they decided for themselves the meaning of consent, intimacy, and care. In these response-able realities, they formed unlimited bonds with the world around them, growing their capacity to love beyond difference. They composted old and polarizing categories like able/disable, boy/girl, black/white, rich/poor, harmful notions instilled by complicit embodiments of traditional families.

Without determinism, those new to the world had the opportunity to find themselves within their culture and beyond. They cultivated unique homes, supporting the growth of all inhabitants. Some laid roots, while others roamed. People lived diversely-- in mobile homes, tree forts, earthships, bungalows in the clouds, submarine abodes, and so much more. They all had or found places to belong.

After-virus, they recycled what were once walls, fences, and borders-- rejecting material disjunctions from futile ideologies, like divide and conquer. As privatized property degraded with the dead, possibilities emerged for collective stewardship and creativity. Old categories like park, city, and home were rendered meaningless as spaces were reclaimed by collectives of critters. Fueled by curiosity, realms of experimental ways of being emerged with intention and purpose. Trees grew from the shells of abandoned car yards. Entire habitats burst between cracks in concrete. The wounded waterways-- still poisoned from years of harm-- were nursed with care and concern. People showed up for the historical pains they were both subject and complicit to; uncertain where their efforts might flow. Regardless, empathy swelled and reminded them of the interconnections that are life.

It was unknown where they were going after-virus-- let alone, how they would get there. Nevertheless, what they did was together, in process, in understanding, in relation to life beyond the self. This embodiment of response-ability evoked a need for synthesis; to mesh art with life. They danced with the forests-- new and old. They sung with the ocean. They smashed statues of conquerors and used the rubble to conjure new futures. They created rituals of belonging, celebrating moments of becoming and undoing. Kin ceremonies, lust ceremonies, forgetting ceremonies, fluid ceremonies, celestial ceremonies- all to make meaning of their unknown journeys. When faced with complex transitions, they held each other in grief and joy. Together, they were uniquely shaped by moments of transcendence. They embodied life, embraced death, and relished the in-between. Festivals became critical tools to symbolize their processes of ongoing transformation. Joy became a tool for regeneration. Music, dance, story, and fire joined in darkness as bodies reveled in the beauty of being-with. They rejoiced in transcending who they had been to what they had become; all they had lost and the possibilities which lay ahead.

The unfolding of their new world wasn't without struggle-- there will always be conflict. From their trials, we have learned to cultivate our own mutually-determined reality where

accountability facilitates growth and radical joy. Together, we decide what is best for our well-being-- emerging ways of knowing, doing, and relating-- and coming generations will determine well-being for themselves. Although the memories of genocide, slavery, and domination were by their sides, we are committed to the never-ending journey to undo ourselves and the damage marked by their binary existence. We do not have static identities, and we do not define ourselves by tiny boxes of oppositional categorization. Our after-virus ancestors were both witness and accomplice to the death of nations. They said goodbye to a self versus an Other. And with this death came the rise of new life, which we see all around us today. Ways of being are still emerging 100 years after-virus. With linearity left behind, reality is bursting forth in circular motions as we radically embody the unfolding of existence together. We have entered a cyclical era of interdependence; moving into a whirl of overlapping spirals.

From the affirmative critiques and interpretive energies of:
kiah II, mercury V, eli III, naybour IV
on Ohlone land
March 27, 2120

**TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS
IS ULTIMATELY ABOUT
TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS
AMONG PEOPLE WHO
SHAPE THOSE SYSTEMS.**

- SENGE, HAMILTON, & KANIA

@mia.mingus's
FOUR PARTS TO
ACCOUNTABILITY

SELF
REFLECTION

APOLOGY

REPAIR

CHANGED
BEHAVIOR

Becoming socially and/or reflexively aware of our biases isn't punishment or vilification-- it is a gift that helps locate harmful beliefs and behaviors which privileges can keep us from knowing/feeling. Awareness of our biases provides us the opportunity to address and shift from perpetuating division and harm, to promoting connection and healing. An expression of gratitude and/or accountability is an appropriate response to such a gift.

IF WE VIEW CONFLICT AS AN OPPORTUNITY THEN THERE HAS NEVER
BEEN A GREATER OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO HEAL AND GROW.

- SHERRI MITCHELL

PARTICIPATORY ECONOMIES

RECIPROCITY



IN A PARTICIPATORY ECONOMY THERE IS NO PRIVATE OWNERSHIP NOR A CENTRALIZED STATE GOVERNANCE.

ORGANIZATIONS AND TRAJECTORIES ARISE FROM PARTICIPATORY PLANNING, RATHER THAN MARKETS OR CENTRAL PLANNING.

NESTED COUNCILS AND BALANCED JOB COMPLEXES DETERMINE WORK AND RESOURCES.

REMUNERATION IS BASED ON EFFORT AND SACRIFICE, RATHER THAN FOR PROPERTY, INHERITANCE, POWER, OR OUTPUT.

- MICHAEL ALBERT

What my community needs to make this all possible...

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

CIRCLES

HOW DO WE HEAL AND TRANSFORM RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURES IN THE WAKE OF HARM?

Circle practices originate from indigenous traditions and have been transformed by folk endeavoring for micro and macro radical social and racial justice.

Some types of circles include: talking circles, understanding circles, restorative justice circles, transformative justice circles, and peace-making circles.



CIRCLES USE THE HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE OF EVERYONE IN THE CIRCLE TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION AND LOOK FOR A GOOD WAY FORWARD- NOT THROUGH LECTURING OR GIVING ADVICE OR TELLING OTHERS WHAT TO DO, BUT THROUGH SHARING STORIES OF STRUGGLE, PAIN, JOY, DESPAIR, AND TRIUMPH. PERSONAL NARRATIVES ARE THE SOURCE OF INSIGHT AND WISDOM IN CIRCLES.

- KAY PRANIS

STAYING WITH THE TROUBLE REQUIRES MAKING ODD KIN-- OR, OTHER-THAN-CONVENTIONAL BIOGENETIC RELATIVES-- THAT IS, WE REQUIRE EACH OTHER IN UNEXPECTED COLLABORATIONS AND COMBINATIONS, IN HOT COMPOST PILES.

WE BECOME-WITH EACH OTHER OR NOT AT ALL.

- DONNA HARAWAY

Imagine a radical notion of family--
What does it look like?

Use this tree to fill in the multi-species
relationships that inform the roots,
core, and canopy of your life story.

KIN BUILDING ECO-CENTRIC PHILOSOPHIES

IT'S NOT THE FUTURE OF THE EARTH THAT IS
THREATENED BY HUMAN ACTIONS BUT OUR RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE EARTH, WITH OTHER SPECIES AND WITH OTHER
HUMAN BEINGS, INCLUDING FUTURE GENERATIONS.

- RAY ISON

WE ARE ALL WE
REALLY HAVE

*Any kind of systematic
change we want to make
will require us to work
together to do it. And we
have to have relationships
strong enough to hold us
as we go up against
something as powerful as
the state, the medical
industrial complex, the
prison system, the gender
binary system, the
church, immigration
system, the war machine,
global capitalism.*

- Mia Mingus

**BUILDING
COALITIONS
IN CRITICAL
TIMES**



WE ARE ALL WE
REALLY NEED

SOME BAY AREA RESOURCES

SOLIDARITY NETWORKS: [HTTPS://BIGDOORBRIGADE.COM](https://bigdoorbrigade.com)

TANC TENANTS AND NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS: [WWW.BAYTANC.COM](http://www.baytanc.com)

BAY AREA TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE COLLECTIVE: [HTTPS://BATJC.WORDPRESS.COM/](https://batjc.wordpress.com/)

SOGOREA TE' LAND TRUST: [HTTPS://SOGOREATE-LANDTRUST.COM/](https://sogoreate-landtrust.com/)

THE VILLAGE: [HTTPS://THEVILLAGEINOAKLAND.ORG](https://thevillageinoakland.org)

CRITICAL RESISTANCE: [WWW.CRITICALRESISTANCE.ORG/CHAPTERS/CR-OAKLAND/](http://www.criticalresistance.org/chapters/cr-oakland/)

CANTICLE FARM: [HTTPS://CANTICLEFARMOAKLAND.ORG](https://canticlearmoakland.org)

PLANTING JUSTICE: [HTTPS://PLANTINGJUSTICE.ORG](https://plantingjustice.org)

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES LAW CENTER: [WWW.THESEL.C.ORG](http://www.theselc.org)

Play Kyma Dawson's song and create your story...
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxP8Z...WR-FA>

Drawings and dreams...

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10. Here *Neverland* revers to the Peter Pan stories; not to Michael Jackson's Neverland ranch.

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Videos

"Building Accountable Communities with Transformative Justice" (<https://berw.barnard.edu/building-accountable-communities/>)

"The Surprising Science of Motivation" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAKYX4Y4GQA&feature=youtu.be>)

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Other Resources

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